

**MOSLEM AND FRANK; OR,
CHARLES MARTEL AND THE RESCUE
OF EUROPE FROM THE THREATENED
YOKE OF THE SARACENS. VOL. I OF
THE HISTORIC SKETCHES**

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G. L. STRAUSS

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M O S L E M

AND

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FROM THE THREATENED YOKE
OF THE SARACENS.

BEING

VOLUME I. OF THE HISTORIC SKETCHES.

DESIGNED FOR THE INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT OF
OLD AND YOUNG.

By G. L. STRAUSS, Ph.D.

In magnis voluisse est.



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PREFACE.

"Story I bless you—I have none to tell."—*Canning's Knifegrinder.*

It is an old and trite saying: "Good wine needs no bush," and even the finest and most flourishing bush will fail to put either body or flavor into the growth of a bad vintage. It is left to the reader of this little volume to decide whether or not the author has succeeded in producing an acceptable and readable book.

July 1, 1854.

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PART I.

THE MOSLEMIN.

CHAPTER I.

ARABIA AND ITS INHABITANTS.—LIFE AND DOCTRINE OF MOHAMMED.

THE Arabian peninsula, called by the natives *JESIRA-AL-ARAB*, by the Persians and Turks *ARABISTAN*, forms the south-westernmost part of Asia. It is bounded on the north by Syria and the river Euphrates, on the east by the Persian Gulf, on the south by the Indian Ocean, on the west by the Red Sea, or Arabian Gulf. Including the north-eastern desert, it occupies an area ten times the extent of that of Great Britain and Ireland. The connecting link between Asia and Africa, to which latter continent it is joined by the Isthmus of Suez, it presents in its natural features, a faithful copy of its colossal tropical neighbour, modified, however, by the imprint of a strongly marked individual character, the result of its peculiar isolated position. The attempted derivation of the name of the country from *EBER**, the common progenitor of the Jactanites and Ismaelites—the two races which are assumed to constitute the great bulk of the native population of Arabia—is, at the best, but very problematical; that from the word *ARABA*, the

* See Genesis, x. 25. *EBER* signifies a nomadic shepherd, one leading a roving pastoral life; it signifies, also, in Hebrew, *beyond, yon-side, the other side*: hence the name *HEBREW*, or *EBREW*, has been supposed also to be intended to designate immigrants into *Canaan* or *Palestine* from beyond the Euphrates.

name of a district of the province of Tehama, and which signifies a *level desert*, would seem to rest on a safer and more rational foundation, the far greater part of the country being indeed a dreary waste, a boundless level of sand, destitute of rivers, intersected by naked mountains, and barely relieved here and there by a shady grove or a green sward of aromatic herbs. The date-palm is often the solitary representative of vegetable life in these sterile tracts, which are scorched by a tropical sun, and hardly ever refreshed by a grateful shower. There are, however, some more favored districts, where the fertile soil produces dates and other palms, tamarinds, vines, rice, sugar, figs, tobacco, indigo, cotton, durra,* coffee, gum, benzoin, frankincense, manna, balsam, aloe, myrrh, spices, &c. The high lands in the south-west, that border on the Indian Ocean, are distinguished in this respect, above all other parts of Arabia, by a more temperate air, superior fertility, and comparative abundance of wood and water. No wonder, then, that the appellation *happy*, bestowed upon this blessed region by PTOLEMY, should have been generally adopted, although originating in a mistranslation of the word YEMEN, the Arabian name of this part of the peninsula, and which does not signify happy, but is simply meant to designate the land lying, with respect to the East, to the right of MECCA, just as AL-SHAM (Syria) means the land to the left of that city. PTOLEMY's division of the country into the *sandy*, the *petraic*, and the *happy* (*Arabia Deserta*, *Petræa*, and *Felix*), is, however, unknown to the Arabians themselves, who speak only of high land and low land. The epithet *stony*, so generally applied by geographers to the *petraic* division, is founded in error: PTOLEMY derived the word from PETRA, the name of the then flourishing capital of the Nabathæans, and not from the Greek word *petra*, a rock or stone. Ptolemy's Arabia Petræa forms now part of the province of HEJAZ, along the coast of the Red Sea. YEMEN, as we have seen, occupies the south-western coast. On the south-eastern coast lies the maritime district of OMAN; on the

* A species of millet, which compensates to some extent the scarcity of European grains.

Persian Gulf, the district of LAHSA: the inland space bears the name of NEGED, or NAGED.

Arabia is the true native country of the horse, and remains even at the present time the seat of the purest and noblest races of that generous animal. Asses, oxen, sheep, goats, and the swift gazelle, are also indigenous; and so is the *camel*, the "ship of the desert," nature's most precious gift in the sands of Africa and Arabia. Monkeys, pheasants, and pigeons inhabit the fertile districts. The lion, the panther, the hyena, the jackal, lurk in the desert. Ostriches and pelicans are among the birds of Arabia; locusts, that "plague of the fields," are among its insects. The coasts abound in fishes and tortoises; and the pearl-fishery flourishes more especially in the Persian Gulf.

Among the mineral products may be mentioned iron, copper, lead, coals, asphaltum; and precious stones, as the agate, the onyx, the carnelion, &c. Some of the ancient geographers speak also of the soil of Arabia as being impregnated with gold; and though no mines of that precious metal are at present known in the peninsula, who can say but that the treasures of another California lie hidden there?

The inhabitants of Arabia, whose present number may be estimated at about fifteen millions, are supposed to derive their origin partly from JOCTAN (in the Arabian language KAHTAN), one of the sons of EBER; and partly from ISMAEL, the son of Abraham and Hagar. The Joctanites, as the supposed original inhabitants of the country, have been called also true Arabians; the Ismaelites, as later immigrants, *mixed* Arabians. The ISMAELITES are the BEDOWEENS, or BEDOUINS, of our time, who to the present day continue to rove through the interior and the north of Arabia, as they did in the remote times of Job and Sesostris, depending partly on their flocks, partly on the transit trade of the caravans, but chiefly on plunder; * which latter is by these wild sons of the desert looked upon in the light of an honorable profession rather than of a disgraceful and

* "The Arabian tribes are equally addicted to commerce and rapine," as Pliny has it.