

of Muscat the coast stretches in rocky heights past Ras Mussendom, Katar, and the pearl islands of Bahrein. El Hassa has low, moist ground where rice grows, hot springs, ancient ruins, and is altogether a remarkable province. From the mouth of the Tigris-Euphrates to the city of Bagdad the land is blessed with wealth of palms, barley, and wheat. Arabia is not wholly a desert, nor is it deserted. The exact population is unknown. Albrecht Jehn, the best authority I know, estimates as follows in his book, "Arabiën seit hundert Jahren;" it will be noticed that he excludes the Euphrates valley in his summary :

Yemen and Asir.....	2,252,000
Hadramaût.....	1,550,000
Oman and Maskat.....	1,350,000
Bahrein, Katif . . . Nejd.....	2,350,000
Hedjaz, Anaeze, Kasim, Jebel Shammar.....	3,250,000
	<hr/> 10,752,000

Arabia political is a problem on a chess-board waiting solution. The Wahābee game has been left unfinished, and others have tried their hand.

Sinai is Egyptian, and also the two hundred miles south of the Gulf of Akaba. Hedjaz belongs to the Turk, and he also grasps (not holds) Yemen, Asir, El Hasa, and Irak. All the rest of Arabia yields neither love, obedience, nor tribute to the Sublime Porte. The oppressed tribes of Upper Yemen were recently crushed into submission, but do not despair of future revolution.* El Hassa frets like an Arab steed under the yoke of taxation, and Mecca itself dictates at times to the power behind the throne in Constantinople.† The tribes near Aden and the entire South coast, including Muscat, are in one way or other under subsidy or "protection" of the English, who rule the gulf and have a voice at Busrah and Bagdad. Wide, wild Nejd bends to the iron sceptre of that greatest Arab of our day, Ibn Rasheed, the Ameer of Jebel Shommär. For the rest, nomads roam the free desert, acknowledging no sultan save their sword; they hold the parliament of war or peace in the black tents of Kedar.

Thus, within the last fifty years have the schisms of Islam, the turmoil of nomad rebellion, and the diplomacy of English commerce burst the barriers of the land of Ishmael for the all-conquering son of Isaac; the very cradle of Islam is almost unveiled for the herald of the cross.

The strategic points for mission effort in Arabia must, from the nature of the case, be first on the coast, and they are six cities—Jeddah, Aden, Makallah, Muscat, Bahrein, and Busrah. Each of these has special claims as being the trade centre of a province, and each has peculiar advantages and therefore special plea for mission effort.

Says Doughty, than whom there is no better authority on Arabia

* See an article by W. B. Harris in *Blackwood's* for February, 1883.

† Snouck, "Hugronje's Mekka," Vol. I., 1883.