

One feature of the sea struck us immediately, which was unexpected to us, viz. the number of shoal-like points and peninsulas which run out into its southern part, appearing at first sight like flat sand-banks or islands. Below us on the south were two such projecting banks on the western shore, composed probably of pebbles and gravel, extending out into the sea for a considerable distance. The larger and more important of these is on the south of the spot called Birket el-Kkulil, a little bay or indentation in the western precipice, where the water, flowing into shallow basins when it is high, evaporates, and deposits salt.—This spot is just south of the mouth of Wady el-Khubarah. Opposite to this, nearly in the middle of the sea, is a long low narrow bank, also apparently composed of pebbles and gravel, running from N. E. to S. W., and joined towards the south end to the eastern shore by an isthmus of some breadth. This long peninsula extends towards the south beyond the western shoal or point above described; so that from the spot where we stood, they seemed to interlock, and we saw the end of the peninsula across the point of the shoal.

Towards the southern extremity of the sea a long low mountain was seen running out obliquely towards the S. S. E., extending from near the western cliffs apparently to the middle of the ghor. This our Arabs called Hajr Usdum, "Stone of Solomon," and said it was composed wholly of rock-salt, too bitter to be fit for cooking, and only used sometimes as a medicine for sheep. The sea washes the base of this mountain, and terminates opposite to its S. E. extremity as here seen; though, as we were still unacquainted with the features of that region, the water seemed to us to extend further south, and to wind around the end of the mountain. This appearance, as we afterwards found, must have arisen from the wet and slimy surface of the ground in that part; which, by reflecting the rays of the sun, presented the optical illusions of a large tract of water, and deceived us as to the extent of the sea in that direction.

The mountains on both sides of the sea are everywhere precipitous; those on the east were very very distinct, and obviously much higher at some distance from the shore than those upon the west. Across the isthmus of the low peninsula, towards the S. E. we could look up along a straight ravine descending from the east on a chain; at the head of which Kerak with its castle was visible, situated on a high precipitous rock far up near the summit of the mountains. Opposite to us was Wady el-Mojib; and farther north, Wady ez-Zurka. At the foot of these mountains there is a passage along the eastern shore for the whole distance to the south of the peninsula, but further to the north this would seem to be impossible. From the spot where we stood the line of the western cliffs ran in the direction about S. by W. 1/2 W., with a passage along the shore all the way south of Ain Jily. At nearly one-half the distance towards Usdum, just south of Wady es-Seyal, the next beyond the Khubarah, a ruin was pointed out on a high pyramidal cliff, rising precipitously from the sea, to which our guides gave the name of Sebbeh.

The features now described, together with flat shores, give to the whole southern part of the sea the appearance, not of a broad sheet of water, but rather of a long winding bay, or the estuary of a large river, when the tide is out and the shoals left dry. Only a comparatively narrow channel remained covered with water. This channel of the sea (so to speak) is in some parts quite narrow, and winds very much. Between the point of the western shoal and the peninsula, the distance cannot certainly be more than one-fourth or perhaps one-sixth of the whole breadth of the sea, if so much. The direction of the peninsula, and then that of Usdum, causes the channel apparently to sweep round first towards the west and afterwards towards the east, giving to this portion of the sea a very irregular form.—Our Arabs, both the Ta'anirah and Rashaideh, knew of no place where the sea could be forded. As we looked down upon it from this lofty spot, its waters appeared decidedly green, as if stagnant, though we afterwards saw nothing of this appearance from below. A slight ripple was upon its bosom, and a line of froth was seen along and near the shore, which looked like a crust of salt.—Vol. ii. pp. 204-208.

From the foot of the Dead Sea our travellers pursued their way to Wady Musa, and to the city

of Petra. But their departure from Petra was rather precipitate, on account of the turbulent and menacing conduct of the Arabs. Petra, with its wonderful ruins 'in the clefts of the rocks, its tombs, and its temples,' is as yet by no means exhausted. Dr. Robinson refers to the descriptions of the first travellers who visited this city, Berckhardt, and Irby and Mangles, as the most accurate. Laborde's views have made the singular site and character of the buildings known to the general reader; but, in all this region of Syria and its adjacent provinces, we still want a traveller of profound architectural knowledge, who has studied the art itself and the history of construction in all its various ages. Dr. Robinson, we doubt not, possesses a fair general knowledge on such subjects, and his remarks on the different styles of building appear, on the whole, judicious and trustworthy. We would have, however, an authority who shall discriminate, on scientific and historic principles, the periods to which the various magnificent ruins in all this region ought to be assigned. We would know whether, in Petra, or elsewhere, there are any or what remains of the old Asiatic form of building, the ante-Grecian epoch, that of the kings of Tyre or of Solomon—how far Egyptian forms had been adopted in those times—in what period of art the beautiful Grecian forms, the columns, the porticoes, the sculptured pediments, began to prevail—how much belongs to the more florid and gorgeous Roman period of the decline of art.

There can be no doubt that the greater part of the buildings at Petra are of this later period—the Roman-Grecian of the Antonines and their immediate successors: they belong to the Nabatean, not to the Edomite city. It is extraordinarily how entirely, how ingeniously ignorant, most writers on this subject have been concerning the rise and fall, the vicissitudes rather, of this remarkable city. That it stands on the site of the ancient city of Edom there can be no doubt; the graphic allusions of the Jewish prophets designate it with menacing accuracy. Nor can there be the least question that their awful denunciations were completely fulfilled in the utter devastations of this hostile city, and at the time and in the manner best fitted to vindicate their truth. We next truly presume that predictions of this kind against the enemies of the chosen people, who took the opportunity of their danger and desolation to league with their powerful foes the Assyrians or Chaldeans for their ruin, were designed to raise the hopes of the Israelites, and confirm their trust in their God; or as warnings to the neighbouring tribes, and assertions of the superior might of the God of Israel. Their own age, the existing generation, or that immediately following, no doubt beheld the full accomplishment of these fearful denunciations.

We content ourselves with thus directing attention to this curious subject. In the meantime, we conclude our observations on a work which, considering the beaten ground which the travellers have trod, by the industry, good sense, and erudition displayed throughout its pages, does great credit, and, we trust, is of happy omen to the rising literature of America.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE REV. DR. JOHN HARRIS, THE PRIZE ESSAYIST.

[CONCLUDED.]

SHORTLY after the publication of "Mannion," the Committee of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society offered a prize for best essay on the claims of seamen to the regard of the Christian world; when Mr. Harris again became the successful competitor, and published his work under the title of "Britannia," having first received from his late Majesty, William IV., a beautiful letter authorizing the dedication of the volume to His Majesty. This admirable work has also been republished in the United States, under the altered title of "Zebulun."

But we cannot now dilate, as we would, on his "Christian Citizen," his "Witnessing Church," his "Union." All these have combined with his previous labours to place him in the very first rank of theological authors. Nor will his eminence be at all lessened by the recent decision of such men as Drs. Welsh, Wardlaw, and Bunting, and the Rev. Messrs. Crisp and Melvill, that he is entitled to the prize of two hundred guineas for his essay on Christian Missions, about to be

published under the title of "The Great Commission." The theological chair at Chesham College having become vacant by the decease of the Rev. W. Broadfoot, the trustees of that Institution, in 1837, presented to Mr. Harris a most cordial and unanimous request to occupy it. He acceded to their wishes, and entered on his duties in the early part of 1839. Over this institution we pray that he may long continue to preside with the ability and success which have hitherto distinguished his career. In June of that year he became united in marriage with Miss Widdowham, of Epsom, a companion of the venerable Archbishop of that name; and in September following, the College of Amherst, in the United States, (the President of which, the Rev. Dr. Humphrey, had republished his "Great Teacher" with an able introduction) conferred on Mr. Harris the degree of D. D.

As a preacher, no man is more popular than Dr. Harris. With a beautifully sweet and distinct voice, he unites a most attractive manner, and style of delivery which commands general admiration, while the thoroughly evangelical character of his discourses makes them equally acceptable to believers in Jews of every class. This is indeed evident from the fact that Christians of every denomination invite his services, and flock by thousands to the chapels where he preaches; while the missionary societies connected with the Independents, the Wesleyans, and the Baptists, have all sought and been favoured with his aid on their anniversary meetings.

We have already intimated that the whole of Dr. Harris's works have been republished in the United States, where they have attracted unprecedented interest. We happen to know that when the Rev. Dr. Wayland, the distinguished President of Brown University, was lately in this country, he not only sought the society of Dr. H., and spoke of it as one of the highest treats he had enjoyed in England, but took to the library of the University over which he presides, the MSS. of all his works, esteeming them as some of its richest treasures.

We have spoken of Dr. Harris as a Sunday school teacher, and we know too much of the nobleness of his heart to believe that he would wish a fact so interesting to be withheld. We have heard an interesting account from his own lips, since he has attained his present eminence, of a visit he paid privately to the Tabernacle at Bristol, and of his placing himself on the seat which he once occupied as a Sunday scholar, that he might cherish feelings to be indulged in their full extent nowhere else. Would that we could know from his own pen what those feelings were! Still, from our own experience, we think we know something of them.

To Sunday school teachers we may be allowed to say that they never ought henceforth to think of the name of Dr. Harris, without deriving from his history inducements to a more vigorous and prayerful prosecution of their duties. How many men are there eminent for piety and usefulness, fulfilling the engagements of the Christian ministry in our land, and of the missionary in heathen climes, who were once in our schools. And has the Sunday school furnished all the agents for doing good which it is capable of doing? No; there are many yet in our classes who may become the heralds of salvation, or the Presidents of our colleges. Sunday school teachers, "Attempt great things!" Your work is God's, your object is His glory; the result of your labours will characterize eternity.

ACTIVITY.—I have often had occasion to observe that a warm blundering man does more for the world than a frigid wise man. A man who gets into a habit of enquiring about prophecies, and expeditions, and occasions, often spends his life without doing any thing to purpose. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action that every thing seems to say loudly to every man, "Do something!"—"do it!"—"do it!"—*Ced.*

ALL FOR THE BEST.—As all the rivers upon the face of the globe, however circuitous they may be in their course, meet at last in the ocean, and there contribute to increase the mass of water, so all seemingly discordant events in the life of a good man, are made to preserve upon the whole an unerring tendency in his good, and to concur and conspire for promoting it at the last.