

she came to Jerusalem with a very great train—Heb. “with a very heavy force, or host.” This some understand to mean a large military escort. No doubt she had a sufficient number of soldiers with her for protection, but the principal part of her retinue would be the camels bearing provisions and presents and the necessary attendants upon the queen when travelling thus in state. The distance was 1500 miles across a desert and the journey would require about three months at the rate travelled by camels. The royal party must have been exposed to much hardship and danger. With camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones—The spices of Arabia have always been famous. The mariners at sea were said to be able to smell the perfume-laden air of Yemen. Milton speaks of

Sabaeen odors from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest.

The chief of these spices were “myrrh, opobalsam, frankincense, gum tragacanth and ladanum.” (This last is not *laudnum*, which is a preparation from the poppy, but the resinous exudation of a fragrant shrub called *lada*). Gold is not found in Arabia now, but ancient writers state that it was at one time (Ps. 72: 15). Strabo relates that the Sabaeans were enormously wealthy, and used gold and silver in a most lavish manner in their furniture, their utensils, and even on the walls, doors, and roofs of their houses. (Rawlinson). Amongst precious stones, the onyx, emerald and turquoise are still found in Arabia. In former times the variety was much greater. (Hammond). In making an ordinary visit, amongst orientals, it was, and is, customary to bring a present, the value of which would accord with the wealth and dignity of the host and his guest. And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart—Doubtless they had frequent interviews, and besides exchanging riddles, they talked about the great questions of religion and statesmanship. “She knew that she could not every day meet with a Solomon, and, therefore, she makes her best use of so learned a master; now she empties her heart of all her doubts, and fills it with instruction.” (Bp. Hall). 3. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not—We cannot suppose

that these “questions” were all, or mainly, curious puzzles invented only to display cleverness and tax mental ingenuity. Such royal trifling was scarcely worth such a journey, or an enshrinement in sacred literature. The numerous legends which profess to preserve some of the tests to which she put the wisdom of Solomon are no more likely to be true than the stories regarding the infancy of Jesus. The graver topics of religion, philosophy and statesmanship doubtless furnished the themes of their discourse. 4. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built—Solomon’s wisdom was displayed in a more practical manner than in solving riddles. There were evidences of his administrative ability on every hand. His palace particularly excited the queen’s admiration. It had occupied thirteen years in building and was probably situated at the south-east corner of the modern Haram area. It was doubtless the most splendid royal residence then in the world. Josephus says that she was specially astonished at the house of the forest of Lebanon. 5. And the meat of his table—Its quantity, variety, &c. (ch. 4: 22, 23). All the table service was of gold (verse 21). And the sitting of his servants—Here “servants” signifies the officers and distinguished persons who were privileged to sit at the king’s table, and were arranged according to rank, at the royal banquets. (Lumby). And the attendance of his ministers—Marg. “standing.” This refers to those who stood to serve the guests (Acts 13: 5). (Lumby). And their apparel—“There were numerous guests sitting, handsomely dressed in fringed robes, with armlets on their arms, attendants standing behind them, and magnificent drinking cups, evidently of costly metal, in the hands of the guests, which were filled from a great wine bowl at one end of the chamber.” (Rawlinson). The rich and costly dress of eastern courtiers and attendants is sometimes furnished by the king (Gen. 45: 22; 1 Sam. 18: 4; 2 Kings 5: 5; Dan. 5: 7; Esther 6: 8). And his cupbearers—Those who served wine to the king and his guests (Neh. 1: 11; Gen. 40: 21). And his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord there was no more spirit in her—R. V. marg. “and his burnt-offerings which he offered in the house of the Lord.” If we take the