

third century of the Christian era. "The natives of Judea," says, he, "generally circumcise their children on the eighth day; but the Ishmaelites who inhabit Arabia universally practise circumcision in the thirteenth year. For this history tells us concerning them." This writer, like Josephus, lived near the spot, and had the best opportunities of obtaining correct information respecting the Arabians. It is evident, therefore, beyond contradiction, from his words, that the fact of their derivation from Abraham through Ishmael was an established point of historical record, and not of mere traditionary fame, at the period at which he wrote,

The direct testimony to the Ishmaelitic extraction of the Arabs furnished by the earliest records of the Bible, and confirmed as we see by foreign authorities, is strikingly corroborated by repeated references, bearing upon the same point, in later inspired writers, particularly the prophets. Through the long course of sacred history and prophecy, we meet with reiterated allusions to existing tribes of Arabia, descending from Ishmael, and bearing the names of his several sons, among which those of Nebajoth and Kedar usually predominate. Thus the Prophet Isaiah, in foretelling the future conversion of the Gentiles, makes mention of the Gentiles, makes mention of the "rams of *Nebajoth*," the eldest, and "all the flocks of *Kedar*," the second of the sons of Ishmael; that is, of the Arab tribes descending from these brothers; a passage which not only affords strong proof of our main position, but conveys also an intimation of the future in-gathering of the Mohammedan nations into the Christian Church. The same Prophet, in another part of his predictions, notices "the cities of the wilderness, that *Kedar* doth inhabit." And again, when denouncing impending calamity upon the land of Arabia, he foretells how "all the glory of *Kedar* shall fail;" he employs the name of this single tribe as synonymous with that of the entire peninsula. In this connexion the words of the Psalmist may be cited:—*Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.*" These words are supposed by some of the Jewish commentators to have been written by David, under the influence of inspiration, as the prophetic plaint of the Christian Church, labouring and groaning, as it sometimes done, under the yoke of Mohammedan oppression. In Jeremiah, also, we find mention of Kedar. He speaks of it as "the wealthy nation that dwelleth without care, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone." Ezekiel, moreover, prophesies conjointly of "Arabia and all the princes of *Kedar*." An allusion to Tema, the ninth son of Ishmael, as the name of a warlike people of Arabia, occurs as early as in the book of Job: "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them." Lastly, the tribes sprung from *Jetur* and *Naphish*, the tenth and eleventh sons of Ishmael, are commemorated in the first book of Chronicles, who are there called *Hagarites*, from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, and of whom a hundred thousand male captives.

When to this mass of Scripture evidence of the descent of the Arabs from Ishmael we add the acknowledged coincidence between the nation-