

and myself. In his Oriental hyperbole, he told us that this part of the road to Julamerk was so frightful to travel, that a fat, spirited horse would, in a single day, suffer so much from terror, that before night he would become as thin as a knife blade! Caution is necessary to avoid meeting with horses in narrow parts of the road; and fatal accidents are said to have happened through neglect in this particular.

The patriarch, having heard of my approach, sent a horse, with some of his own men, to escort me to his dwelling, which stands far up on the mountain side. Our course continued about N.E., till we came in sight of his residence, when we recrossed the river on our right, at the mouth of a considerable creek which waters the district of Diss. A Koordish castle, the summer residence of Suleiman Bey, the second chief of the Hakyary tribes, stands upon an eminence commanding this bridge, from which the mansion of the patriarch is distinctly visible, distant a little more than half a mile. A party of Koords who met us scrutinized me very closely, but offered no molestation. From a distance, I could see the patriarch looking out of his chamber window with a small spy-glass, to get a view of his strange visitor from the New World. According to their system of geography, the earth is a vast plain surrounded by the ocean, in which *leviathan* plays around to keep the water in motion, and prevent its becoming stagnant and putrid; and this leviathan is of such enormous length, that his head follows his tail in the circuit round the earth! That I had crossed the ocean, where I must have encountered the monster, was a thing almost incredible.

At half-past twelve, I found myself in the presence of the Patriarch of the East, the spiritual head of the Nestorian church, who gave me a cordial welcome, but without that flow of heartless compliment and extravagant expression of pleasure which is so common in the mouth of a Persian. He said that he had been looking for a visit from some of our mission for a very long time, till he had begun to think we should never arrive; but, now that I had taken such a long and difficult journey to see him, he could not doubt that we would have given him the pleasure of an interview at an earlier day, but for an apprehension of the dangers to which I had alluded as the reason of our long delay. "And now," he added, "you are doubly welcome; my heart is rejoiced that I see your face; and you will make my house your own, and regard me as your elder brother. It is a happy day for us both. May your journey be blessed."

The patriarch is thirty-eight years of age, above the middle stature, well proportioned, with a pleasant, expressive, and rather intelligent countenance; while his large flowing robes, his Koordish turban, and his long gray beard, gave him a patriarchal and venerable aspect, which is heightened by a uniformly dignified demeanour. Were it not for the youthful fire in his eye, and his vigour and activity, I should have thought him nearer fifty than thirty-eight. But his friends assured me that the hoariness of his beard and locks was that of care, and not of age.

His situation is certainly a difficult and responsible one, since he is, in an important sense, the temporal as well as the spiritual head of his people. To preserve harmony, and settle differences between the various tribes of his spirited mountaineers, and with the Koords by whom they are surrounded, is a labour that would tax the wisdom and patience of the greatest statesman; and I could hardly wonder that the hoar-frost of care was prematurely settling upon his locks. It was quite evident that the patriarch's anxiety extended not less to the temporal than to the spiritual wants of his flock; as his first inquiries related particularly to their political prospects, the movements in Turkey, the designs of the European powers with regard to these countries; and why they did not come and break the arm of Mohammedan power, by which many of his people had been so long oppressed, and for fear of which the main body of them were shut up in their mountain fastnesses.

He is pacific in his disposition, and he carries his rifle in the anticipation of an encounter with the brown bear, the wolf, hyena, or wild boar of their mountains, rather than with the expectation of fighting their enemies the Koords. But, while the latter never enter the central parts of their country, they are sometimes brought into collision

with them on their borders, as already noticed. Such had recently been the case in Tehoma and Jehu; and, during my visit at the patriarch's, he was called upon to decide what should be done with two Koords who had been taken by his people from a tribe that had some time before put two Nestorians to death. Blood for blood is still the law; and custom requires that a tribe be held accountable for the conduct of each of its members. Hence, it mattered not whether the individuals they had taken were guilty of the murder; it was enough that they belonged to the same tribe, and by right they should die. The patriarch, however, was inclined to mercy, while his people, at the same time, must receive justice. After due deliberation and investigation of the case, the patriarch at length decided that, inasmuch as his people had brought the captive Koords into their own houses, they had, in a sense, become their guests, and, consequently, their lives must be spared. But they might accept a ransom from the Koords; and thus the matter was finally settled.

During five weeks which I spent at the patriarchal mansion, I had an opportunity to see Nestorians of the greatest intelligence and influence, from all parts of their mountain abodes, and to solicit from them such information as I had not an opportunity to collect in any other way. I endeavoured, by every possible means, to collect satisfactory statistical and other information, to which I shall have occasion to recur in other parts of this work. I also visited some of the villages and places of chief interest in the vicinity.

Calleh-d'-Sringa, an ancient castle, now in ruins, which I saw from a distance, is said to have been one of the outposts or strongholds of the Nestorians, in their early contests with their Mohammedan foes. It was perched upon the summit of an insulated cone of rock, which rises to the height of several hundred feet, and is so very precipitous that it could only be ascended by means of iron pins driven into the rock. As it was said that these pins had mostly given place to wooden ones, I did not feel disposed to risk my neck by making the ascent. It stands in an opening near the foot of Mount Derrik, which separates Diss from Jehu. This mountain is regarded as the highest land in these parts; and when I arrived at the patriarch's on the 26th of October, it was covered with such a mass of snow that mules could not cross it.

While snow remains in large quantities at all seasons in the ravines of the highest mountains, the summits of none in this vicinity are entirely covered through the whole year.

Among the multitude of invalids who were brought to me while I remained with the patriarch, was a man from the neighbouring tribe of Jehu. While passing the mountains, his strength failed him, and he was likely to remain and perish in the snow. In this dilemma, his faithful wife took him upon her shoulders, and carried him safely over the mountain summit! The women of that district are more accustomed than most others to perform the arduous labour of men, and they thus acquire their strength. So rocky and barren is their country, that many of the men are accustomed to spend a part of each year in making baskets, or in other mechanical employments, in the neighbouring Turkish provinces. Many from the adjacent tribe of Dass also spend their winters in a similar manner, returning to their homes in the spring. But the inhabitants of Tiyary and the other independent tribes seldom leave their own mountain fastnesses.

Those Nestorians who live under the government of the Koords occasionally seek relief from rapine and oppression, and their consequent poverty, among their brethren of the plain. The heads of some of the Nestorian tribes collect a small sum as a present for the independent Hakyary chief; but they profess to regard it only as a present, and they regulate their own civil affairs.

Their form of church government is essentially episcopal; but, with a single exception in the Jehu tribe, there is not a bishop among the independent Nestorians, where their religious forms have been preserved the most exempt from any foreign influence. It was a singular fact, to which my attention was first called by the testimony of Dr. Buchanan, that there is not a word in the Syriac language expressive of the office of bishop. The Nestorians, in common with the other Syrians, have borrowed the Greek term

episcopos. This is the more remarkable, considering the fact that the Syriac language was extensively used in Palestine in the days of our Saviour, and was spoken by our Lord himself; and considering also the very early date of the Syriac version of the Scriptures, as early as the beginning of the second century. In every case where the term bishop occurs in our version, in theirs it is rendered presbyter or priest. I make these statements with the single remark that, while this form of church government may be the best for the Nestorians in their circumstances, there is enough in the facts I have mentioned to caution us about too hasty an inference concerning the apostolic origin of episcopacy, on the ground that it exists in a church which was founded by the apostles.

Of the patriarch's official functions, and many other particulars, I shall have occasion to speak in another place. His income is moderate, and he lives in a plain, patriarchal style. Two brothers, and a younger sister about twenty-two years of age, with five or six servants, male and female, comprise his household. As the patriarchs never marry, his domestic affairs were managed by his favourite sister, who supplied our table in the best and neatest style.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE AND PERFECTIONS OF A SUPREME BEING.

"He hangeth the earth upon nothing."

You can scarcely find a more powerful argument in favour of a great First Cause, than what is affirmed of him in Holy Writ, that "He hangeth the earth upon nothing." Job is perhaps affirming here what he did not sufficiently comprehend. It is not probable that, in those days, they had such correct notions of the earth, and how it is supported. For many ages after this, even after mankind had made considerable improvement in navigation, they had the most crude ideas of the figure and situation of the earth. The fact, however, is now well known to be what Job says of it, that it is hung upon nothing. It has been sailed round in all directions. It has no pillar, no visible support, no material substance whereon to rest. How astonishing the power that produces this wonderful effect! If we look up into the heavens, nothing is more natural than to suppose, at first sight, that the sun and moon and stars are fixed to something solid, to the azure vault of heaven. But the astronomer, on the best grounds, assures us, that these bodies are all at different distances, some nearer: the moon first, and then the sun and planets; others at a distance inconceivably great; but that they are all hung upon nothing—that they all roll in the immensity of space—and that our earth is supported in the very same manner.

The philosopher comes forward, and attempts to account for these things. He tells us of gravitation, of attraction and repulsion, of centripetal and centrifugal forces. We sometimes cover our ignorance by words without knowledge. Now suppose that these philosophers have discovered these grand secrets of nature, and that those are the very laws that govern the universe; we next ask, who imposed those laws, so perfect, so effectual, and permanent, which all things steadfastly obey? We think you cannot say that chance did this—that it was the effect of necessity—that it is the operation of nature. This is making chance, necessity, and nature, powerful, wise, intelligent, and good beings. These are no more than pitiful evasions, unworthy of reason or philosophy—shameful abuses of language, and a wanton trifling with the dearest interests of man.

Nothing can be more manifest, from a view of the works of the universe, than that the same Providence extends to all, from the minutest atom to the utmost boundary of existence. All keep their regular stations, and perform their appointed revolutions, without the smallest deviation from their course. What wonderful knowledge and wisdom must that be, that has so nicely balanced all these jarring motions, and so correctly, that no mistake has ever arisen, and no error to disturb the revolutions of the universe, and to throw every thing into confusion.

[To be continued.]