

The second of these vast systems of error, viz., the religion of Mahomet (or Islam), is of great interest to us, not only from its connection with the Eastern Question, but also from its romantic history, and the strange mixture of good and evil, gold and dross we find in its doctrines and practices. We propose, therefore, in two articles, to pass in brief review the leading points necessary to be understood to form a fair estimate of Mahomedanism, under the following heads: The native country of Islam—its first people—its prophet—its teachings and their value—its apostles and missionaries—its probable destiny—its voice to our own Dominion.

THE NATIVE COUNTRY OF ISLAM.

As one sails down the Red Sea, he finds to the east a desolate country of bare, burnt, and jaggy hills, wild rugged valleys, and desolate, parched plains. That is the Arabian peninsula, famous in the eyes of Jew and Christian as the country where Moses was forty years a shepherd; where the law was given from Sinai amid thunder and lightning, and where Israel wandered for forty years. That country, from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, is about four times the size of France. Portions of it are green and fruitful, but the greatest part of it consists of sharp and naked mountains, interspersed with wastes of level sand, scorched, without shade or shelter, by the direct rays of a tropical sun. It is not only a treeless, shrubless, country, except where irrigated and carefully tilled, but it is a country without rivers, without lakes, without springs, except in some fortunate spots. Of the thirty days stations between Cairo and Mecca, fifteen are without good water. The hardy plants that grow in the clefts of the rock, depend on the night dews for their nourishment, and men and cattle depend for water on wells, on cisterns, and on the few brooks that run in the rainy season.

This country is the home of the locust, whence they often issue (as from the sandy desert east of the Rocky Mountains on this continent,) to lay waste the surrounding land. From this very land a strong east wind brought the plague of locusts on Egypt—"the