

3,640 feet, while the former has a fall of 368 feet and a width of 5,300 feet. In this little-known country is scenery as tropical as any found in Ceylon and as rugged as that which fights with the storms on the heights of the Himalayas.

Wandering over this vast domain are 200,000,000 people, representing nearly every known tribe of earth, and speaking something like 866 languages and dialects.

In the morning of the world's history Africa held a very important place. No one can wander among the ruins of Egypt without being awed to silence by the evidences of an ancient civilization that grew old and died before the beginning of authentic history. Four thousand miles south of Egypt a new field of research is opening to the archeologist in the recent discovery of the Zimbabwe ruins. Here are the remains of at least 500 stone cities, where the treasure-houses, forts, astronomical observatories, and ~~slave~~ quarters prove that the country was inhabited more than 3,000 years ago by a vigorous people. Mr. Telford Edwards, the best authority on the mines of Rhodesia, estimates that the value of the ancient output of gold at Zimbabwe was not less than \$375,000,000. There is little room for doubt that the Ophir of the Bible, from which Solomon drew such vast quantities of gold, is the country known at present as Rhodesia, and that the Zimbabwe ruins mark the center of the mining operations.

Many centuries ago Africa lost step with the world's progress and came to be known as the "Dark Continent"; but the last few years have brought

great changes to Africa, for the explorer, the trader and the missionary have gone to every part of that hitherto "unknown country." As a result of the onward march of civilization, "the iron horse" pulls his load of passengers and freight over 7,000 miles of steel rails into the heart of Africa, and electricity flashes the news of the world to every important center. In a short time one will be able to ride in comfort from Cairo to Cape Town. Palatial hotels for both summer and winter guests are doing a thriving business where a few years ago the cannibal roamed at will.

The Christian churches are not indifferent to the changed conditions and needs of Africa. The various denominations are increasing their force and strengthening their work. This renewed activity is coming none too soon, for Islam is making vigorous efforts to make Africa Mohammedan, and whether that condition would be better than heathenism is a question.

It is evident that Africa is again destined to play a prominent part in the history of the world. The country is a synonym for vast territory and limitless wealth, all of which is at the very door of Europe and America. Present movements indicate very clearly that the trader, explorer, and politician are all active. For the Church of God to be inactive in the presence of such opportunities would be inexcusable blindness and unpardonable sin. The sins of civilization are fast finding their way to the children of nature in the heart of Africa. The Church of God owes it to itself and to these children of nature to remove the reproach cast upon the religion of Christ by the traders.

WHY ARABIA?

BY REV. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D., F.R.G.S.

The editor of the "Encyclopedia of Missions," in an article on the unoccupied fields of the world, raises the question whether it is good mission strategy to fight against great obstacles in some of these hard fields, while other populous lands are wide open and eager for the Gospel. "Religious fanaticism," he says, "is a problem in such countries as Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Arabia, while the attitude of the state religion in Siberia, Indo-China and Tibet is an obstacle which is most serious. A serious question may be raised here; namely, the difficulties connected with all these lands, *except possibly Arabia*, where the missionary contingent is so meager and is needed so sorely in countries where there is perfect freedom of action and greater numbers without the Gospel."

The italics are ours, but why is Arabia excepted? Surely because of its strategic importance, which is second to no other land in the world to-day. The importance of Arabia is out of all proportion to its area and population. Its strategy is seven-fold.

I.—Geographically

Arabia lies at the cross-roads of the commerce of the world, and it was once and will soon become again the bridge between Asia and Europe, the causeway between Asia and Africa. The importance of the coming Bagdad railway, which will bring together India and England by a direct route through the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates Valley, can not be overestimated. The Mecca Railway will be completed in 1911, and with a branch to Jiddah, will greatly increase the pilgrim traffic and develop com-

merce in the Red Sea. Altho Arabia has a population of only eight millions, it has an area of nearly a million square miles,—four times the size of France and larger than the United States east of the Mississippi River.

II.—Politically

A writer in the *New York Journal of Commerce* recently said: "We have, from time to time, endeavored to make it plain to our readers that since the effective arrest of Russian ambitions in eastern Asia, the international center of Asiatic politics must be sought in the Persian Gulf." Arabia is the fulcrum of future politics in Asia.

The present political condition in Arabia deeply interests not only Great Britain and Germany, but France and Russia. Turkish rule exists in only three of the seven provinces, and British influence obtains along the entire coast of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The Persian Gulf has practically become an English lake, and British rule has extended far inland from Aden, while her influence is supreme in the province of Oman.

"A foreign power," said Dr. Rohrbach in *The Spectator*, "holding the harbor of Kuwait, could close or open the entire European trade with India by the Bagdad route in the middle, at the most vital spot. To England, as soon as the Bagdad line is running, Kuwait would be, if not wholly, very nearly as important a position as the entrance to the Suez Canal. If we do nothing to stop England from holding Kuwait, we virtually renounce in the future the power to turn to our account the immense commercial and political consequences of the Bagdad route to southern Asia."

According to Dr. Rohrbach, if Germany is to seize the trade which England has hitherto monopolized, now is the time to act, before the Russian engineers have brought their railway to Bandar Abbas, whence it will undoubtedly be extended along the gulf to Bushire and Basra. He appeals to Germans to remember their diplomatic successes in Siam and on the Yangtse and take their courage in their two hands. To shrink back now from an opportunity so favorable, he urges, would be throwing away a winning card, and he concludes with the words, in emphatic type: "Kuweit must remain Turkish."

In Yemen, the rule of the new Turkish party may result in an open door for the Gospel throughout all of that populous province. Politics and missions are closely related in these days of commercial expansion, and there may be a partition of Arabia, as there was of Africa, or at least, the opening of doors closed for centuries will follow exploitation and political and commercial ambition in the neglected peninsula. We must unfurl the banner of the cross *now* in every one of the provinces.

III.—Because of Language

Arabia is important because of the Arabic speech. Some time ago a typewriter firm, in advertising a machine with Arabic characters, stated that the Arabic alphabet was used by more people than any other. A professor of Semitic languages was asked: "How big a lie is that?" He answered: "It is true."

According to this authority there are no less than five hundred million people who have adopted the Arabia alphabet, while the Arabic language

is spoken by at least forty-five million. The Arabic language is growing in influence and power and is one of the great living languages of the world. The Arabic Koran is a text-book in the day-schools of Turkey, Afghanistan, Java, Sumatra, New Guinea, and southern Russia. Arabic is the spoken language not only of Arabia proper, but forces the linguistic boundary of that peninsula three hundred miles north of Bagdad to Diarbekr and Mardin, and is used all over Syria and Palestine and the whole of northern Africa. Even at Cape Colony there are daily readers of the language of Mohammed.

Arabic literature is found throughout the whole Mohammedan world, and the Arabic language, which was the vehicle for carrying Islam, will yet become the great vehicle for the Gospel in Africa and Asia among Mohammedans. The Arabs themselves say: "Wisdom hath alighteth upon three things, the brain of the Franks, the hands of the Chinese and the tongue of the Arabs." This wonderful, flexible, logical speech, with its enormous vocabulary and delicacy of expression, can only be won for Christianity when Arabia is won for Christ.

IV.—Because of the Arabs

Two religions contend for the mastery of the world,—Christianity and Islam; two races are striving for the possession of the Dark Continent, the Anglo-Saxon and the Arab. No race has shown itself so strong as a colonizing power or so intrepid in the genius of exploration as has the Arab race. The Arabs crossed Africa long before Livingstone, and had reached Canton in China in sailing-

ships twenty years after the death of Mohammed.

Physically, they are undoubtedly one of the strongest and noblest races of the world. Baron de Larrey, surgeon-general of the first Napoleon, said: "Their physical structure is in all respects more perfect than that of Europeans; their organs of sense exquisitely acute, their size above the average of men in general, their figure robust and elegant, the color brown; their intelligence proportionate to their physical perfection, and without doubt superior, other things being equal, to that of other nations.

Intellectually, they have a glorious history and literature and take second place to no other race, while for religious enthusiasm and devotion there is no people that can compare with them. If this race can be won for Christ they will do for Him what they once did for Mohammed. It is a virile, conquering race and not a dying one.

"It surely is not without a purpose," says Edson L. Clark, "that this widespread and powerful race has been kept these four thousand years, unsubdued and undegenerate, preserving still the simplicity and vigor of its character. It is certainly capable of a great future; and as certainly a great future lies before it. It may be among the last peoples of southeastern Asia to yield to the transforming influence of Christianity and a Christian civilization. But to those influences it will assuredly yield in the fulness of time." The fulness of time is now.

V.—Because of Islam

What Jerusalem and Palestine are to Christendom, this, and vastly more, Mecca and Arabia are to the Moham-

medan world. Not only is this land the cradle of their religion and the birthplace of their prophet, the shrine toward which, for centuries, prayers and pilgrimages have gravitated; but Arabia is the stronghold of Mohammedanism, the center and fulcrum of this world-wide faith. Every year 70,000 pilgrims from the most distant Mohammedan lands come to Mecca, and the occupation of Arabia by Christian missions is a challenge not only to the Arabs, but to the entire Mohammedan world. In 1888 Mackay of Uganda made a strong plea for missions in Arabia for the sake of Africa; and asked that "Muscat, which is, in more senses than one, the key to Central Africa, should be occupied by a strong mission. It is almost needless to say that the outlook in Africa will be considerably brightened by the establishment of a mission to the Arabs in Muscat."

Because of its religious importance and pilgrim centers Arabia is in closest touch also with India, Malaysia and Central Asia. The influence of the Arabian Mission, since it was established, on missions for the Mohammedan world has been such that if it could point to no other results, this indirect influence would have justified its inauguration and all the years of service.

VI.—Because of Results

Since 1889 the Arabian Mission has sent out twenty-nine missionaries to the field,—sixteen men and thirteen women. During the twenty years one has been recalled and one permanently invalided, while five have gone to their reward, leaving twenty-two still on the rolls of the mission. The entire amount of money invested during