

universal traffic with India and the eastern coasts of Africa. The natural products of these countries were interchanged for those of Hadramaut and Yemen. "All they from Sheba shall come," sings the Prophet Isaiah of the dromedaries of Midian; "they shall bring gold and incense."* Petra was the emporium for the costly wares destined for Tyre and Sidon, and the principal settlement of the Nabatæi, a people once mighty in commerce, whose primitive seat is supposed by the philologist Quatremère to have been situated among the Gerhæan Mountains, on the Lower Euphrates. This northern portion of Arabia maintained an active connection with other civilized states, from its vicinity to Egypt, the diffusion of Arabian tribes over the Syro-Palestinian boundaries and the districts around the Euphrates, as well as by means of the celebrated caravan track from Damascus through Emesa and Tadmor (Palmyra) to Babylon. Mohammed himself, who had sprung from a noble but impoverished family of the Koreischite tribe, in his mercantile occupation, visited, before he appeared as an inspired prophet and reformer, the fair at Bosra on the Syrian frontier, that at Hadramaut, the land of incense, and more particularly that held at Okadh, near Mecca, which continued during twenty days, and whither poets, mostly Bedouins, assembled annually, to take part in the lyric competitions. I mention these individual facts referring to international relations of commerce, and the causes from which they emanated, in order to give a more animated picture of the circumstances which conduced to prepare the way for a universal change.

The spread of Arabian population toward the north reminds us most especially of two events, which, notwithstanding the obscurity in which their more immediate relations are shrouded, testify that even thousands of years before Mohammed, the inhabitants of the peninsula had occasionally taken part in the great universal traffic, both toward the West and East, in the direction of Egypt and of the Euphrates. The *Semitic* or *Aramæic* origin of the Hyksos, who put an end to the old kingdom under the twelfth dynasty, two thousand two hundred years before our era, is now almost universally admitted by all historians. Even Manetho says, "Some maintain that these herdsmen were Arabians." Other authorities call them Phœnicians, a term which was extended in antiquity to the inhabitants of the Valley of the Jordan, and to all Arabian races. The acute Ewald refers especially to the *Amalekites*,

* Isaiah. ch. lx., v. 6.