

or, as some say, 371; so that he lived 88 or 89 years (lunar reckoning). In the year 311, being then about 29 years old, he became a prisoner among the *Ḳarmaṭees*, falling to the lot of a party of Arabs of the Desert. Among these people he appears to have remained several years; for he is related to have mentioned his having passed two winters with them in *Eṣ-Ṣammán*, but usually to have wintered with them in the *Dahnà*. And while wandering and sojourning with them in these and other parts of Central and Northern Arabia, he collected many words and phrases, which he has mentioned in his *Lexicon*; but expressly distinguishing them as having been heard by him from the Arabs or from Arabs of the Desert (in both cases meaning the same) or as having been heard by him in the Desert, lest he should be supposed to claim for them less questionable authority. His opinion of these additions to the "*Tahdheeb*" is shown by his insertion of them, and also by a citation from a statement in his own handwriting, that in the speech of the people among whom he was in captivity, themselves Arabs of the Desert, a gross inaccuracy or mistake was seldom or never found. Thus we learn a very important fact respecting the gradual corruption of the dialects of Arabic: the utmost that can be said of the dialect spoken by the wandering tribes more than nine centuries ago in the North-Central region, where the vernacular language has continued to the present day to be least exposed to foreign influences and therefore least affected thereby, is, that it was free from gross inaccuracies. That the language of the settled inhabitants throughout Arabia had long before become too much corrupted for their words or phrases to be cited in lexicons, unless for the purpose of discriminating them as post-classical, is admitted and affirmed by all the lexicologists who have had occasion to mention the subject: but the language now spoken in the towns of the North-Central region (which language is well known by reason of that region's being still traversed by one of the great pilgrim-routes and often visited by learned men from Egypt and from Syria) is said to be less corrupt than are the dialects of the *Bedawees* of the same and of other parts.

More than seventeen hundred printed pages of my *Lexicon* are now before me; and when it is considered that this portion comprises about thrice as much matter as the corresponding portion (one half) of *Freytag's* unabridged *Lexicon*, I hope that the time which the printing has occupied will not be thought unreasonably long. Notwithstanding the time and pains that I have devoted to the scrutiny necessary for the detection and correction of typographical and other errors, the errata that I have since casually observed and noted down are not so few as I hoped and expected them to be: but I have generally found them to be such as any one qualified to make a profitable use of my work may easily discover and rectify without my aid.

E. W. L.

*December, 1869.*