ness rewarded, for Raphael, one of the seven angels that present the prayers of the saints before God, is sent in human form to conduct Tobias on his journey. Thus aided, Tobias not only recovers his father’s money, but by killing a fish which attacks him as he washes his feet in the Tigris, becomes possessed of two invaluable drugs, its liver with the heart and its gall. By fumigation with the former he drives away the demon Asmodeus, who had slain the seven bridegrooms of a virtuous Jewish maiden, Sara of Ecbatana, his own kinswoman, and so wins a good wife, and with the gall he heals his father’s eyes. In spite of the absurd machinery and other puerilities, the story is ingeniously constructed, and the picture of Tobit’s piety is natural and touching, so that the whole is a very good exhibition of the weakness and the strength of Judaism as it was among the Israelites of the dispersion.

The date of the book cannot be precisely determined. It was written before the destruction of the temple (xiv. 5), and is cited by early Christian writers. On the other hand, it is in the highest degree probable that the Greek text is original,@@1 in which case the book can hardly be earlier than the 2d century B.c. A date about the middle of this century, or a little earlier, at the time of bitter conflict with the Greeks, seems to accord best with the tone of the book. The sympathy shown for the victims of tyranny, to whom burial was denied, acquires fresh mean­ing when compared with such a passage as 2 Mac. v. 10, and the prominence given to eschatological hopes in the closing verses fits a time when interest in the prophecies of Israel’s future glory was revived by the struggle for national independence in Judæa.

That Tobit was written by a Jew of the Eastern dis­persion (so, *e.g.,* Ewald, *Gesch.,* iv. 269) will hardly be maintained by any one who accepts the Greek text as original. The book remained almost unknown to the Syriac church, a fact which tells strongly against the hypothesis of an Eastern origin ; and at the period to which the work can be best referred Egypt is the only probable place for a Jewish-Greek composition. The writer knows nothing about the geography of the East beyond a few names which every Jew must have heard,— the Tigris, which, by an error common among the Greeks but hardly possible to an Oriental Jew, he regards as flowing between Nineveh and Media ; Rhagæ, which was a royal residence of the Parthians; the famous city of Ecbatana; and Elymais (ii. 10), which was associated with the disaster of Antiochus Epiphanes. And in both forms of the Greek text (vi. 9 in the common text, and v. 6 in the longer) Rhagæ is falsely represented as quite near Ecbatana.@@2 Nöldeke surmises, as others have done before him, that the “ fish ” which attacked Tobias was the Egyptian crocodile, and this conjecture is raised almost to certainty when we read in Kazwini i. 132 that the smell of the smoke of crocodile’s liver cures epilepsy and that its dung and gall cure leucoma, which was the cause of Tobit’s blindness.@@3 Thus the cures of Sara and Tobit are natural *(cf.* the longer Greek text, vi. 4 *sq.)* ; the angel’s help is necessary only to secure the medicaments and explain their use.

But though the story may have been written in Egypt it contains Persian elements. There is no inconsistency in

this, for the authors of Jewish Haggada generally borrowed the themes which they embellished, and that from very various quarters. In fact, at the close of our book there is a brief allusion to another story,@@4 quite unknown to us, which the author evidently did not invent. The proof of a Persian element in the tale lies, not in the localities, but in the angelology and demonology. Asmodeus is the Iranian evil spirit Aeshmâ Daevâ, and Raphael, as the guardian of Tobias, has a strong resemblance to the Iranian Çraosha. Such precise adaptations of Zoroastrian ideas were hardly the common property of Judaism at so early a date; they lead us to conjecture that the writer borrowed from an Iranian story.@@5 And only in this way can we explain the appearance of the dog who goes out and returns with Tobias and Raphael. This trait is so inconsistent with Jewish feelings towards the unclean animal that it is omitted in the Hebrew and Chaldee versions. But to the Iranians the dog was not only a sacred animal, the pro­tector of herds and homes, but was the companion of the protecting spirit Çraosha *(Bundahesh,* chap. xix.), to whom Raphael in our tale corresponds.

The Greek text of Tobit is found in a shorter recension (the usual text) and in a longer form preserved in the Codex Sinaiticus (published by F. H. Reusch, 4to, Bonn, 1870). There are frag­ments of another form of the longer text in several cursives. All the forms are given in Fritzsche’s Libri Apocryphi, Leipsic, 1871. The shorter text, in the judgment of Fritzsche and Nöldeke, is the earlier. The longer text is also represented by the Latin versions, the second part of the rare Syriac version (the first part is from the hexaplar Greek), and two closely allied Jewish versions, the Aramaic (published by Neubauer, from a unique Midrash in the Bodleian, Oxf., 1878) and the Hebrew, first printed in Constantin­ople (1516), reprinted by Münster in 1542 (whence its common name Hebræus Munsteri) and included in Neubauer’s edition. The Aramaic seems to be a late form of the text known to Jerome, and of which he made use for the Vulgate Latin; it is certainly a translation from the Greek. There are recent commentaries on Tobit by Fritzsche (Kurzgef. Huηclb. zu den Apocr., ii., Leipsic, 1853), Keusch (Freiburg, 1857), Sengelmann (Hamburg, 1857), and Gutberlet (Theissing, 1877). Nöldeke’s paper already quoted is indispensable. For other literature, see Schürer, NTliche Zeit- gesch., ii. 609. (W. R. S.)

TOBOLSK, a government of Western Siberia, having the Arctic Ocean on the N., Archangel, Vologda, Perm, and Orenburg on the W., Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk on the S., and Tomsk and Yeniseisk on the E., is one of the largest provinces of the Russian empire, occupy­ing nearly 7 per cent. (531,980 square miles) of its total area. It borders on the Arctic Ocean, from the river Kara to the Bay of the Ghida, the broad peninsula of Yalmal projecting between the Kara Sea on the west and the Bay of the Ob; this last penetrates into the continent for more than 550 miles, with a width of from 60 to 70 miles, and receives another long and wide outlet—the bay of the Taz (Tazovskaya). Another wide bay of the Kara Sea—the Baidaratsk, or Kara Bay—runs up into the Yalmal peninsula from the north-west. The islands be­longing to the government are few ; Byelyi, at the ex­tremity of Yalmal, and a few small ones along the west coast of the peninsula, as also in the Obi Bay, are for the most part ice-bound. This extensive province occupies the greater part of the lowlands of north-western Asia, which extend eastward from the Urals, and only in the far north does it include the eastern slopes of these mountains. The Pai-ho coast-ridge only touches Tobolsk with its south­eastern extremity. The Urals proper, which run south­west from the Kara Sea as far as to the Tell-pöss group (5540 feet), and thence take a southerly direction, form the boundary between Tobolsk and Vologda as far as the

@@@1 See the arguments of Nöldeke, Monatsb. Berl. Ak., 1879, p. 45 sq. This paper also contains the best discussion of the relation of the various texts of the book.

@@@2 Nöldeke shows that the same error in a less gross form appears in both texts in chap. ix. The further erroneous statement of the longer text that Ecbatana lies in a plain occurs also in Diod., ii. 13, 6, in a passage dependent on Ctesias, from whom the addition may have been taken.

@@@3 Very similar statements as to the medical virtues of the crocodile (aquatic or terrestrial) occur in Greek and Latin writers.

@@@4 The story of Nadab and Achiacharus. The names are uncertain, and one text substitutes Aman (Haman) for Nadab. But the allusion is not to the book of Esther.

@@@5 Compare what is said under Thousand and One Nights (p. 312) as to the probable influence of an Iranian legend on the book of Esther.