plains. The temperature of the coast area varies from 65° F. in the night to 85° F. in the day—in the hot season it may reach 95° F. ; and on the mountains (3500 ft.), from 52° F. to 72° F. In the low grounds fever of an acute and hematuric form is very prevalent.

*Flora and Fauna.*—The fauna contains no indigenous mammals, a wild ass which roams the eastern plains, perhaps its oldest denizen, is probably of Nubian origin; while the domestic cattle, a peculiar, unhumped, small, shapely, Alderney-like breed, may be a race gradually developed from cattle imported at a distant period from Sind or Farther India. There are 67 species of birds known from Sokotra, of which 15 are endemic; of 22 reptiles, 3 genera and 14 species are peculiar ; and of the land and fresh-water shells, to whose distribution great importance attaches, 44 species out of 47 are confined to the island. Among the other invertebrate groups there is also a large proportion of endemic species.

The flora is even more peculiar than the fauna. Aloes, dragon’s- blood *(Dracaena),* myrrh, frankincense, pomegranate, and cucumber *(Dendrpcycios)* trees are its most famous species. The phanerogams number 570, apportioned to 314 genera, and of these over 220 species and 98 genera are unknown elsewhere. The flora and also (though to a less degree) the fauna present not only Asian and Central African affinities, but, what is more interesting, Mascarene, South African and Antipodean-American relationships, indicating a very different distribution of land and water and necessitating other bridges of communication than now exist. The natural history of Sokotra, unravelled by the study of its geology and biology, has been summarized by Professor Balfour as follows:—

“.During the Carboniferous epoch, there was in the region of Sokotra a shallow sea, in which was deposited, on the top of the fundamental gneisses of this spot, .. . the sandstone of which we have such a large development in Nubia. . . . During the Permian epoch Sokotra may have been a land surface, forming part of the great mass of land which probably existed in this region at that epoch, and gave the wide area for the western migration of life which presently took place, and by which the eastern affinities in Sokotra may be explained. In early and middle Tertiary times, when the Indian peninsula was an island, and the sea which stretched into Europe washed the base of the Himalayan hills, Sokotra was in great part submerged and the great mass of limestone was de­posited; but its higher peaks were still above water, and formed an island, peopled mainly by African species—the plants being the fragmentary remains of the old African flora—but with an admixture of eastern and other Asian forms. Thereafter it gradu­ally rose, undergoing violent volcanic disturbance.”

By this elevation “ Madagascar would join the Seychelles, which in turn . . . would run into the larger Mascarene Islands. In this way, then, Africa would have an irregular coast-line, prolonged greatly south of the equator into the Indian Ocean, and running up with an advance upon the present line until it reached its north­west limit outside and south of Sokotra. Thence an advanced land surface of Asia would extend across the Arabian Sea into the Indian peninsula.” Sokotra thus “ again became part of the mainland, though it is likely for only a short period, and during this union the life of the adjacent continent covered its plains and filled its valleys. Subsequently it reverted to its insular condition, in which state it has remained.” The Antipodean-American element in the Sokotran flora probably arrived via the Mascarene Islands or South Africa from a former Antarctic continent.

*Inhabitants.—*The inhabitants, believed to number from 10,000 to 12,000, are composed of two, if not more, elements. On the coast the people are modern Arabs mixed with negro, Indian and European blood; in the mountains live the true Sokotri, supposed to be origin­ally immigrants from Arabia, who have been isolated here from time immemorial. Some of them are as light-skinned as Europeans, tall, robust, thin-lipped, straight-nosed, with straight black hair; others are shorter and darker in complexion, with round heads, long noses, thick lips, and scraggy limbs, indicating perhaps the commingling of more than one Semitic people. Their manner of life is simple in the extreme. Their dwellings are circular, rubble- built, flat, clay-topped houses, or caves in the limestone rocks. They speak a language allied to the Mahra of the opposite coast cf Arabia. Both Mahra and Sokotri are, according to Dr H. Müller, daughter-tongues of the old Sabaean and Minaean, standing in the same relation to the speech of the old inscriptions as Coptic does to that of the hieroglyphics. The Sokotran tongue has been, he believes, derived from the Mahra countries, but it has become so differentiated from the Mahra that the two peoples understand each other only with difficulty. Sokotri is the older of the two languages, and retains the ancient form, which in the Mahran has been modified by Arabic and other influences. Hadibu, Kallansayia and Khadup are the only places of importance in the island. Hadibu, or Tamarida (pop. about 400) the capital, is picturesquely situated on the north coast at the head of the open bay of Tamarida on a semicircular plain enclosed by spurs of the Haghier mountains. A dense grove of date palms surrounds the village.

*Trade and Products.—*The chief export is ghi or clarified butter, which is sent to Arabia, Bombay and Zanzibar. Millet, cotton and tobacco are grown in small quantities. The most valuable vegetable products are aloes and the dragon’s-blood tree. The Sokotran aloe is highly esteemed ; in the middle ages the trade was mostly in these products and in ambergris. The people live mainly on dates and milk. They own large numbers of cattle, sheep and goats. Dates are both home-grown and imported.

*History.—*Sokotra has claims to be reckoned one of the most ancient incense-supplying countries. Among the “ harbours of incense ” exploited by various Pharaohs during some twenty- five centuries it is impossible to believe that the island could be missed by the Egyptian galleys on their way to the “ Land of Punt,” identified by several writers with Somaliland; nor that, though the roadsteads of the African coast were perhaps oftener frequented, and for other freights besides myrrh and frankin­cense, the shores of Sokotra were neglected by such ardent explorers as those, for instance, of Queen Hatshepsut of the 18th dynasty. They would have found on the island, which is probably referred to under the name “ Terraces of Incense ” (from its step-like contours), the precious “ auta trees ”—whose divine dew, for use in the service of their gods, was their special quest—in greater abundance and in a larger number of species than any other country.

To the Greeks and Romans Sokotra was known as the isle of Dioscorides; this name, and that by which the island is now known, are usually traced back to a Sanskrit form, Dvïpa-Sak- hādhāra, “ the island abode of bliss,” which again suggests an identification with the νήσοι *ϵύδαίμονϵς* of Agatharchides (§ 103). The *Periplus* of the Erythraean Sea speaks of the island as peopled only in one part by a mixed race of Arab, Indian and Greek traders. It was subject to the king of the Incense Country, and was a meeting-place of Arabian and Indian ships. Cosmas in the 6th century says that the people spoke Greek and were largely Christian, with a bishop sent from Persia. The Arab geographers also had a tradition of an early Greek settlement (which they ascribe to Alexander), but also of later Persian influence, followed by a settlement of Mahra tribes, who partly adopted Christianity. The Sokotri appear to have remained Nestorian Christians, with a bishop under the metro­politan of Persia, through the middle ages, though there are indi­cations pointing to a connexion with the Jacobite church. As early as the 10th century Sokotra was a haunt of pirates; in the 13th century Abulfeda describes the inhabitants as "Nestorian Christians and pirates ” but the island was rather a station of the Indian corsairs who harassed the Arab trade with the Far East. The population seems in the middle ages to have been much larger than it is now; Arabian writers estimate the fighting men at 10,000.

The Portuguese under Tristão da Cunha and Albuquerque seized Sokotra in 1507 in pursuance of the design to control all the trade routes between Europe and the East, Sokotra being supposed to command the entrance to the Red Sea. But on the capture of Goa and the building of a fortress there Albuquerque caused the fort which da Cunha had had built at Coco (Tamarida to be dismantled (1511), and though Portuguese ships subse­quently raided the island they made no other settlement on it. The Portuguese found that Sokotra was held by Arabs from Fartak, but the “ natives ” (a different race) were Christians, though in sad need of conversion. This pious work Portuguese priests attempted, but with scant success. However, as late as the middle of the 17th century the Carmelite P. Vincenzo found that the people still called themselves Christians, and had a strange mixture of Jewish, Christian and Pagan rites. The women were all called Maria. No trace of Christi­anity is now found in the island, all the inhabitants professing Islam.

A certain dependence (at least of places on the coast) on some sovereign of the Arabian coast had endured before the occupa­tion of Tamarida by da Cunha, and on the withdrawal of the Portuguese this dependence on Arabia was resumed. In the 19th century Sokotra formed part of the dominions of the sultan of Kishin. The opening of the Suez Canal route to India led to the island being secured for Great Britain. From 1876 onward a small subsidy has been paid to the sultan of Kishin by the authorities at Aden; and in 1886 the sultan concluded