of the peninsula is about 11,200 square miles, the popula­tion is four to five thousand souls, chiefly Bedouins of various tribes, whose common name, derived from Túr, is Towára. They have sheep and goats, with which they retire in summer to the higher lands, where there is good pasture ground, and where springs are comparatively common. On the chalk and sandstone water is scarcer than among the primitive rocks, and often brackish. Though the rocks are bare, there is always vegetation in the dales, especially acacias and tamarisks ; from the latter *(T. mannifera)* manna is still derived in quantities that vary with the rainfall. On the hills grow aromatic plants, especially *Thymaceæ.* The fauna includes the ibex, hyrax, and hyæna ; the panther too is sometimes found. Flights of quail have been observed. In some valleys there are well-kept gardens and good date-palms ; the most noted oasis is that of Feiran, in the north-west of the peninsula, which is watered by a perennial stream. Whether Feiran is the Rephidim of Exod. xvii. is a question which, like the identification of the other stations of the Israelites, depends on the localization of the Mountain of the Law.

There is no genuine pre-Christian tradition on this subject. The chief authority for the ancient sanctity of Mount Sinai is Antoninus Martyr (end of the 6th century), who tells that the heathen Arabs in his time still celebrated a moon feast there. As *sin* means “moon,” this feast has been connected with the name of Sinai, but the proposed etymology is not certain. Of heathen origin, too, are the many Nabatæan inscriptions (see Nabatæans) of Sinai, found especially in the Wády Mokatteb (in the north-west), and sometimes accompanied by rude drawings. The language and character are Aramaic, but the proper names are mainly those of Arabs, who passing by graved their names on the rocks. That they were pilgrims to Sinai cannot be made out with certainty. The inscriptions date from the early years of the Christian era, when the Nabatæan kingdom was at its height.

In early Christian times many anchorites inhabited Sinai, living for the most part in the caves, which are numerous even in the primitive rocks. Then monasteries were built, the most famous being the great one of St Catherine in Wády el-Dér (the valley of the monastery). On Serbâl, too, there were many granite dwellings, and in the neighbouring Pharan (Phœnicion), which was a bishop’s see, there were, as the ruins show, churches and convents.

The question then is whether when the hermits first settled in the peninsula there existed a tradition as to the place of the Mountain of the Law, and whether they chose for their residence a spot which was already traditionally consecrated by memories significant to the Christian as well as to the Jew. No assertion of the existence of such a tradition is to be found in Josephus, who only says that Sinai was the highest mountain of the district—a descrip­tion which might apply to Serbâl as seen from the plain below. Eusebius uses expressions which may also seem to point to Serbâl as the place of the law-giving, and it must be admitted that the tradition which seeks the holy site in the group of Jebel Músá (*i.e*., the mass of which Mount Catherine is the highest peak) is not older than the time of Justinian, so that the identification with Mount Serbâl seems to have greater antiquity in its favour. In later times Jebel Músá and Serbál had each its own tradition, and the holy places were pointed out at each; thus from the monastery of St Catherine a path of granite steps was constructed up to “the Mountain of the Law,” but similar steps are found at Serbâl. That these traditions are not decisive, however, is admitted, more or less, even

by those moderns who, like Lepsius, Ebers, Bartlett, give their voice for Serbâl. Most authorities still prefer Jebel Músá or some point in that group, but they again differ in details. First of all there is much difficulty in determin­ing the route by which the Hebrews approached the mountain. Then comes the question of finding a suitable plain for their encampment under the mountain, which is best met if, with Robinson, Stanley, Palmer, and others, the plain is taken to be that of al-Ráhe and the overhang­ing mountain to be Jebel Sufsáfeh. The latter is over 6300 feet high, and consists of pasture ground; it does not fit all the details in Exodus, but this objection is quite as strong against the traditional site on Jebel Músá (Mount Moses), which lies farther to the south. Jebel Músá has been accepted by Tischendorf, Laborde, Ritter, Strauss, Farrar, and many others; on this view the Israelites must have encamped in the narrow Wády al-Seba'íyeh, north of the mount. But the absence of exact topographical detail on the part of the Biblical narrators, who always speak of Sinai as if it were a single summit and give no hint about several summits of which it is one, shows that in their time there was no real tradition on the matter, and that all attempts at identification are necessarily vain.

*Literature.—*Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria, &c.,* London, 1822; Leon de Laborde, *Voyage de l'Arabie Petrée,* Paris, 1830-36 ; Robinson, *Biblical Researches,* London, 1811 ; Lepsius, *Reise,* Berlin, 1845 ; Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine·,* Fraas, *Aus d. Orient,* Stuttgart, 1867 ; *Ordnance Survey of the Pen. of Sinai,* South­ampton, 1869, 3 vols. ; Palmer, *Desert of the Exodus,* Cambridge, 1871; Ebers, *Durch Gosen zum Sinai,* 2d ed., Leipsic, 1881; Baker Greene, *The Hebrew Migration,* London, 1883 ; Hull, *Mount Seir, Sinai, and West Palestine,* London, 1885. See also the Palestine Society’s *Quarterly Statement, passim.* (A. SO.)

SINCLAIR, Sir John, Bart. (1754-1835), a volu­minous Scottish author, was descended from the Sinclairs of Ulbster, a branch of the noble house of Caithness. He was the eldest son of George Sinclair and Janet, daughter of William, Lord Strathnaver, and was born at Thurso Castle, 10th May 1754. For a short time he had Logan the poet as a private tutor, and, after studying Greek and Latin at the high school of Edinburgh, entered the university in his thirteenth year. He was admitted a member of the faculty of advocates in 1775, and was subsequently called to the English bar (Lincoln’s Inn), but, prefering politics to law, was in 1780 elected member of parliament for his native county. As Caithness was then only alternately represented with Bute, he was in 1784 chosen for Lostwithiel, Cornwall, and in 1796 for Petersfield, Hampshire, his parliamentary career extending almost uninterruptedly over thirty years till July 1811. In 1782 he began the issue of those pamphlets on various subjects connected with the welfare of the nation which made him perhaps the most voluminous author of his time, his separate publications, as given in his *Memoirs,* amounting in all to three hundred and sixty-seven. His reputation as a financier and political economist was firmly established by his publication in 1784 of the *History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire,* to subsequent editions of which was added a *Review of the Financial Administration of the Right Hon. William Pitt.* The adoption of his plan for the issue of exchequer bills during the great commercial stagnation of 1793 pre­vented the ruin of a large number of merchants and manufacturers; and in 1797 Pitt consulted him when the treasury threatened to become exhausted, with the result that the scheme known as the “ loyalty loan ” was estab­lished. On 4th February 1786 Sinclair was created a baronet of Great Britain. After succeeding his father in 1770 he had set himself to improve the family estates, thus changing in a great degree the aspect of Caithness and affording employment to a largely increased number of the population. In 1791 he established at Edinburgh a society