

to the east, there are rather barren mountains. The country is very dry, though not nearly so dry as Egypt. Materials are preserved there far better than in Palestine but not in a way to compare with the preservation in Egypt. Comparatively little lasted through the ages in Mesopotamia about ^{vs} ground. A great deal was preserved there in the mounds which show the place where the ancient cities existed. In the Middle Ages, these mounds appeared simply as ~~holes~~ ^{hills} in the desert, and it was seldom suspected that they marked the site of ancient cities.

Thus we have both Egypt and Mesopotamia, lands which are produced by the flowing of a river through a desert, or we may say desert country. We have a remarkable dryness in Egypt, producing the almost unparalleled preservation of ancient buildings. In Babylonia, we have a comparatively dry country, though not to compare with Egypt. At one point, the two countries differ sharply from each other, that is in the point of isolation. Mesopotamia was not isolated as Egypt was. It was open to the southwest to the entrance of tribes from the Arabian Desert; at the north along the course of the Euphrates, at the south of the mountains, invaders could come from Syria and northern Palestine. To the east and north were the mountain districts which supported a vigorous population at all periods of Mesopotamian history. These mountain peoples were constantly making incursions upon the Mesopotamian territory.

One conquering race which played a great part in early Mesopotamian history, seems to have come up the Persian Gulf in boats. This cannot be proven, but it is ~~probably~~ the most common theory about the Sumerians today. The history of Mesopotamia consequently is a history of the interplay of many peoples, one conquering after another and of constant attempts to hold back the mountain folk. As a result, the civilization was a conglomeration of many different