

lamp and books, keeping vigil, is common in pre-Islamic poetry; and there were also Christian poets. As the Arabs became more intimately connected with the Romans, the progress of Christianity increased. The name of an Arabian queen is mentioned as a convert to the faith, and it is stated that she invited a Christian bishop to live among her people. An unfortunate circumstance for the progress of Christianity in north Arabia, however, was its location between the rival powers of Rome and Persia. It was a sort of buffer-state, and suffered in consequence. The Persian monarchs persecuted the Christian Arabs, and one of their allies forbade all intercourse with Christians on the part of his subjects. This edict, we are told, was occasioned by the success of the preaching of Simeon Stylites, the pillar saint, celebrated in Tennyson's poem. The progress or even the tolerance of Christianity seems to have been always dependent on the favor of the ruler of Persia. Some became Christians as early as 380 A. D. And one of the early converts proved the sincerity of his faith by melting down a golden statue of the Arabian Venus worshiped by his tribe and distributing the proceeds to the poor. Many of the tribe followed his example, broke their idols, and were baptized. So early was idolatry doomed in north Arabia—long be-