

## C H A P. VI.

*Queen of Saba visits Jerusalem—Abyssinian Tradition concerning Her—Supposed Founder of that Monarchy—Abyssinia embraces the Jewish Religion—Jewish Hierarchy still retained by the Falasha—Some Conjectures concerning their Copy of the Old Testament.*

IT is now that I am to fulfil my promise to the reader, of giving him some account of the visit made by the Queen of Sheba\*, as we erroneously call her, and the consequences of that visit; the foundation of an Ethiopian monarchy, and the continuation of the sceptre in the tribe of Judah, down to this day. If I am obliged to go back in point of time, it is, that I may preserve both the account of the trade of the Arabian Gulf, and of this Jewish kingdom, distinct and unbroken.

WE are not to wonder, if the prodigious hurry and flow of business, and the immensely valuable transactions they had with each other, had greatly familiarised the Tyrians and

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\* It should properly be Saba, Azab, or Azaba, all signifying *South*.

and Jews, with their correspondents the Cushites and Shepherds on the coast of Africa. This had gone so far, as very naturally to have created a desire in the queen of Azab, the sovereign of that country, to go herself and see the application of such immense treasures that had been exported from her country for a series of years, and the prince who so magnificently employed them. There can be no doubt of this expedition, as Pagan, Arab, Moor, Abyssinian, and all the countries round, vouch it pretty much in the terms of scripture.

MANY\* have thought this queen was an Arab. But Saba was a separate state, and the Sabeans a distinct people from the Ethiopians and the Arabs, and have continued so till very lately. We know, from history, that it was a custom among these Sabeans, to have women for their sovereigns in preference to men, a custom which still subsists among their descendants.

————— *Medis levibusque Sabæis,  
Imperat hos sexus Reginarumque subarmis,  
Barbariæ †, pars magna jacet.*

CLAUDIAN.

HER name, the Arabs say, was *Belkis*; the Abyssinians, *Maqueda*. Our Saviour calls her *Queen of the South*, without mentioning any other name, but gives his sanction to the truth of the voyage. “The Queen of the South (or Saba,  
“ or

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\* Such as Justin, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Cyril.

† By this is meant the country between the tropic and mountains of Abyssinia, the country of Shepherds, from *Berber*, Shepherd.

“ or Azab) shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here\*.” No other particulars, however, are mentioned about her in scripture; and it is not probable our Saviour would say she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, if she had been an Arab, and had near 50° of the Continent behind her. The gold, the myrrh, cassia, and frankincense, were all the produce of her own country; and the many reasons Pineda† gives to shew she was an Arab, more than convince me that she was an Ethiopian or Cushite shepherd.

A STRONG objection to her being an Arab, is, that the Sabean Arabs, or Homerites, the people that lived opposite to Azab on the Arabian shore, had kings instead of queens, which latter the Shepherds had, and still have. Moreover, the kings of the Homerites were never seen abroad, and were stoned to death if they appeared in public; subjects of this stamp would not very readily suffer their queen to go to Jerusalem, even supposing they had a queen, which they had not.

WHETHER she was a Jewess or a Pagan is uncertain; Sabaism was the religion of all the East. It was the constant attendant and stumbling-block of the Jews; but considering the multitude of that people then trading from Jerusalem, and the long time it continued, it is not improbable she was  
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\* Matth. chap. xii. ver. 42. Luke xi. 31.

† Pin. de reb. Solomon, lib. iv. cap. 14th.—Josephus thinks she was an Ethiopian, so do Origen, Augustin, and St. Anselmo.



a Jewels. "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame  
 " of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came  
 " to prove him with hard questions\*." Our Saviour, more-  
 over, speaks of her with praise, pointing her out as an ex-  
 ample to the Jews †. And, in her thanksgiving before So-  
 lomon, she alludes to *God's blessing* on the *seed* of Israel for ever ‡,  
 which is by no means the language of a Pagan, but of a  
 person skilled in the ancient history of the Jews.

SHE likewise appears to have been a person of learning,  
 and that sort of learning which was then almost peculiar to  
 Palestine, not to Ethiopia. For we see that one of the rea-  
 sons of her coming, was to examine whether Solomon was  
 really the learned man he was said to be. She came to try  
 him in allegories, or parables, in which Nathan had in-  
 structed Solomon.

THE learning of the East, and of the neighbouring kings  
 that corresponded with each other, especially in Palestine  
 and Syria, consisted chiefly in these: "And Joash king of  
 " Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle  
 " that was in Lebanon sent to the Cedar that was in Leba-  
 " non, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and  
 " there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and  
 " trode down the thistle."—"Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast  
 " smitten

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\* 1 Kings, chap. x. ver 1. and 2 Chron. chap. ix. ver. 1.

† Matt. chap. xii. ver. 43. and Luke, chap xi. ver. 31.

‡ 1 Kings, chap. x. ver. 9. and 2 Chron. chap. ix. ver 8.



“ smitten the Edomites, and thine heart lifteth thee up to  
 “ boast: abide now at home, why shouldest thou meddle  
 “ to thine hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Ju-  
 “ dah with thee \*?”

THE annals of Abyssinia, being very full upon this point, have taken a middle opinion, and by no means an improbable one. They say she was a Pagan when she left Azab, but being full of admiration at the sight of Solomon's works, she was converted to Judaism in Jerusalem, and bore him a son, whom she called Menilek, and who was their first king. However strongly they assert this, and however dangerous it would be to doubt it in Abyssinia, I will not here aver it for truth, nor much less still will I positively contradict it, as scripture has said nothing about it. I suppose, whether true or not, in the circumstances she was, whilst Solomon also, so far from being very nice in his choice, was particularly addicted to Idumeans †, and other strange women, he could not more naturally engage himself in any amour than in one with the queen of Saba, with whom he had so long entertained the most lucrative connections, and most perfect friendship, and who, on her part, by so long a journey, had surely made sufficient advances.

THE Abyssinians, both Jews and Christians, believe the xlvth psalm to be a prophecy of this queen's voyage to Jerusalem; that she was attended by a daughter of Hiram's from Tyre to Jerusalem, and that the last part contains a declaration

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\* 2 Chron. chap. xxv. ver. 18. 19.

† 1 Kings, chap. xi. ver. 1.

ration of her having a son by Solomon, who was to be king over a nation of Gentiles.

To Saba, or Azab, then, she returned with her son Menilek, whom, after keeping him some years, she sent back to his father to be instructed. Solomon did not neglect his charge, and he was anointed and crowned king of Ethiopia, in the temple of Jerusalem, and at his inauguration took the name of David. After this he returned to Azab, and brought with him a colony of Jews, among whom were many doctors of the law of Moses, particularly one of each tribe, to make judges in his kingdom, from whom the present Umbares (or Supreme Judges, three of whom always attend the king) are said and believed to be descended. With these came also Azarias, the son of Zadok the priest, and brought with him a Hebrew transcript of the law, which was delivered into his custody, as he bore the title of Nebrit, or High Priest; and this charge, though the book itself was burnt with the church of Axum in the Moorish war of Adel, is still continued, as it is said, in the lineage of Azarias, who are Nebrits, or keepers of the church of Axum, at this day. All Abyssinia was thereupon converted, and the government of the church and state modelled according to what was then in use at Jerusalem.

By the last act of the queen of Saba's reign, she settled the mode of succession in her country for the future. First, she enacted, that the crown should be hereditary in the family of Solomon for ever. Secondly, that, after her, no woman should be capable of wearing that crown or being queen, but that it should descend to the heir

heir male, however distant, in exclusion of all heirs female whatever, however near; and that these two articles should be considered as the fundamental laws of the kingdom, never to be altered or abolished. And, lastly, That the heirs male of the royal house, should always be sent prisoners to a high mountain, where they were to continue till their death, or till the succession should open to them.

WHAT was the reason of this last regulation is not known, it being peculiar to Abyssinia, but the custom of having women for sovereigns, which was a very old one, prevailed among the neighbouring shepherds in the last century, as we shall see in the course of this history, and, for what we know, prevails to this day. It obtained in Nubia till Augustus's time, when Petreius, his lieutenant in Egypt, subdued her country, and took the queen Candace prisoner. It endured also after Tiberius, as we learn from St Philip's baptizing the eunuch\* servant of queen Candace, who must have been successor to the former; for she, when taken prisoner by Petreius, is represented as an infirm woman, having but one eye†. Candace indeed was the name of all the sovereigns, in the same manner Cæsar was of the Roman emperors. As for the last severe part, the punishment of the princes, it was probably intended to prevent some disorders among the princes of her house, that she had observed frequently to happen in the house of David‡ at Jerusalem.

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\* Acts, chap. viii. ver. 27 and 38. † This shews the falsehood of the remark Strabo makes, that it was a custom in Meroë, if their sovereign was any way mutilated, for the subjects to imitate the imperfection. In this case, Candace's subjects would have all lost an eye.

Strabo, lib. 17. p. 777, 778.

‡ 2 Sam. chap. xvi. ver. 22. 1 Kings, chap. ii. ver. 13.



THE queen of Saba having made these laws irrevocable to all her posterity, died, after a long reign of forty years, in 986 before Christ, placing her son Menilek upon the throne, whose posterity, the annals of Abyssinia would teach us to believe, have ever since reigned. So far we must indeed bear witness to them, that this is no new doctrine, but has been steadfastly and uniformly maintained from their earliest account of time; first, when Jews, then in later days after they had embraced christianity. We may further add, that the testimony of all the neighbouring nations is with them upon this subject, whether they be friends or enemies. They only differ in name of the queen, or in giving her two names.

THIS difference, at such a distance of time, should not break scores, especially as we shall see that the queens in the present day have sometimes three or four names, and all the kings three, whence has arisen a very great confusion in their history. And as for her being an Arab, the objection is still easier got over. For all the inhabitants of Arabia Felix, especially those of the coast opposite to Saba, were reputed Abyssins, and their country part of Abyssinia, from the earliest ages, to the Mahometan conquest and after. They were her subjects; first, Sabeen Pagans like herself, then converted (as the tradition says) to Judaism, during the time of the building of the temple, and continuing Jews from that time to the year 622 after Christ, when they became Mahometans.

I SHALL therefore now give a list of their kings of the race of Solomon, descended from the queen of Saba, whose device is a lion passant, proper upon a field gules, and their motto,

motto, "*Mo Anbasa am Nizilet Solomon am Negadè Jude*;" which signifies, 'the lion of the race of Solomon and tribe of Judah hath overcome.' The Portuguese missionaries, in place of a lion passant, which is really the king's bearing, have given him, in some of their publications, a lion rampant, purposely, as is supposed, to put a cross into the paw of this Jewish lion; but he is now returned to the lion passant, that he was in the time of Solomon, without any symbol either of religion or peace in his paws.



## LIST

## LIST OF THE KINGS OF ABYSSINIA,

FROM

MAQUEDA, QUEEN OF SABA, TO THE NATIVITY.

Years.		Years.	
Menilek, or David I. reigned	4	Katzina reigned,	9
Hendedya, or Zagdur,	1	Wazeha,	1
Awida,	11	Hazer,	2
Aufyi,	3	Kalas,	6
Sawé,	31	Solaya,	16
Gefaya,	15	Falaya,	26
Katar,	15	Aglebu,	3
Mouta,	20	Alifena,	1
Bahas,	9	Brus,	29
Kawida,	2	Mohefa,	1
Kanaza,	10	Bazen,	16

MENILEK succeeded to the throne in the 986th year before Christ; and this number of years must be exhausted in the reign of these twenty-two kings, when each reign, in that case, will amount to more than forty-four years, which is impossible. The reign of the twenty-one kings of Israel, at a medium, is a little more than twenty-two years at an average, and that is thought abundantly high. And, even upon that footing of comparison, there will be wanting a great deal more than half the number of years between Menilek and Bazen, so that this account is apparently false. But I have another very material objection to it, as well as the preceding



preceding one, which is, that there is not one name in the whole list that has an Ethiopic root or derivation.

THE reader will give what credit he pleases to this very ancient list. For my part, I content myself with disproving nothing but what is impossible, or contrary to the authority of scripture, or my own private knowledge. There are other lists still, which I have seen, all of no better authority than this. I shall only observe, upon this last, that there is a king in it, about nine years before our Saviour's nativity, that did me the honour of using my name two thousand years before it came into Britain, spelled in the same manner that name anciently was, before folly, and the love of novelty, wantonly corrupted it.

THE Greeks, to divert the king, had told him this circumstance, and he was exceedingly entertained at it. Sometimes, when he had seen either Michael, or Fasil \*, or any of the great ones do me any favour, or speak handsomely of me, he would say gravely, that he was to summon the council to inquire into my pedigree, whether I was descended of the heirs-male of that Brus who was king nine years before the nativity; that I was likely to be a dangerous person, and it was time I should be sent to Wechné, unless I chose to lose my leg or arm, if I was found, by the judges, related to him by the heirs-male. To which I answered, that however he made a jest of this, one of my predecessors was certainly a king, though not of Abyssinia, not nine years before, but 1200 after our redemption; that the arms of my

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family

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\* What immediately follows will be hereafter explained in the Narrative.

family were a lion like his; but, however creditable his majesty's apprehensions as to Abyffinia might be to me, I could venture to assure him, the only connections I had the honour ever to have had *with him*, were by the *heirs-female*.

At other times, when I was exceedingly low-spirited, and despairing of ever again seeing Britain, he, who well knew the cause, used to say to the Serach Massery, "Prepare the Sendick and Nagareet; let the judges be called, and the household troops appear under arms, for Brus is to be buried: he is an Ozoro of the line of Solomon, and, for any thing I know, may be heir to the crown. Bring likewise plenty of brandy, for they all get drunk at burials in his country." These were days of sun-shine, when such jests passed; there were cloudy ones enough that followed, which much more than compensated the very transitory enjoyment of these.

ALTHOUGH the years laid down in the book of Axum do not precisely agree with our account, yet they are so near, that we cannot doubt that the revolt of the ten tribes, and destruction of Rehoboam's fleet which followed, occasioned the removal of Menilek's capital to Tigré\*. But, whatever was the cause, Menilek did remove his court from Azab to a place near Axum, at this day called *Adega Daid*, the House of David; and, at no great distance, is another called *Azabo*, from his ancient metropolis, where there are old remains of

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\* The temple which the Queen of Saba had seen built, and so richly ornamented, was plundered the 5th year of Rehoboam, by Sefac, which is 13 years before Menilek died. So this could not but have disgusted him with the trade of his ancient habitation at Saba.

of building of stone and lime, a certain proof that Axum was then fallen, else he would have naturally gone thither immediately upon forsaking his mother's capital of Azab.

THAT country, round by Cape Gardefan, and south towards Sofala, along the Indian Ocean, was long governed by an officer called *Babarnagash*, the meaning of which is, King of the Sea, or Sea Coast. Another officer of the same title was governor of Yemen, or Arabia Felix, which, from the earliest times, belonged to Abyssinia, down to the Mahometan conquest. The king himself was called *Nagash*, or *Najashi*, so were the governors of several provinces, especially Gojam; and great confusion has risen from the multitude of these kings. We find, for example, sometimes three upon the throne at one time, which is exceedingly improbable in any country. We are, therefore, to suppose, that one of these only is king, and two of them are the *Najashi*, or *Nagash*, we have just described; for, as the regulation of the queen of Saba banished the heirs-male to the mountain, we cannot conceive how three brothers could be upon the throne at the same time, as this law subsists to the present day. This, although it is one, is not the only reason of the confusion, as I shall mention another in the sequel.

As we are about to take our leave of the Jewish religion and government in the line of Solomon, it is here the proper place that I should add what we have to say of the *Falasha*, of whom we have already had occasion to speak, when we gave a specimen of their language, among those of the stranger nations, whom we imagine to have come originally from Palestine. I did not spare my utmost pains in inquiring into the history of this curious people, and li-



ved in friendship with several esteemed the most knowing and learned among them, and I am persuaded, as far as they knew, they told me the truth.

THE account they give of themselves, which is supported only by tradition among them, is, that they came with Menilek from Jerusalem, so that they agree perfectly with the Abyssinians in the story of the queen of Saba, who, they say, was a Jewess, and her nation Jews before the time of Solomon; that she lived at Saba, or Azaba, the myrrh and frankincense country upon the Arabian Gulf. They say further, that she went to Jerusalem, under protection of Hiram king of Tyre, whose daughter is said in the xlvth Psalm to have attended her thither; that she went not in ships, nor through Arabia, for fear of the Ishmaelites, but from Azab round by Masuah and Suakem, and was escorted by the Shepherds, her own subjects, to Jerusalem, and back again, making use of her own country vehicle, the camel, and that her's was a white one, of prodigious size and exquisite beauty.

THEY agree also, in every particular, with the Abyssinians, about the remaining part of the story, the birth and inauguration of Menilek, who was their first king; also the coming of Azarias, and twelve elders from the twelve tribes, and other doctors of the law, whose posterity they deny to have ever apostatised to Christianity, as the Abyssinians pretend they did at the conversion. They say, that, when the trade of the Red Sea fell into the hands of strangers, and all communication was shut up between them and Jerusalem, the cities were abandoned, and the inhabitants relinquished the coast; that they were the inhabitants of these cities, by  
trade

trade mostly brick and tile-makers, potters, thatchers of houses, and such like mechanics, employed in them; and finding the low country of Dembea afforded materials for exercising these trades, they carried the article of pottery in that province to a degree of perfection scarcely to be imagined.

BEING very industrious, these people multiplied exceedingly, and were very powerful at the time of the conversion to Christianity, or, as they term it, the Apostacy under Abreha and Atzbeha. At this time they declared a prince of the tribe of Judah, and of the race of Solomon and Menilek, to be their sovereign. The name of this prince was Phineas, who refused to abandon the religion of his forefathers, and from him their sovereigns are lineally descended; so they have still a prince of the house of Judah, although the Abyssinians, by way of reproach, have called this family Bet Israel, intimating that they were rebels, and revolted from the family of Solomon and tribe of Judah, and there is little doubt, but that some of the successors of Azarias adhered to their ancient faith also. Although there was no bloodshed upon difference of religion, yet, each having a distinct king with the same pretensions, many battles were fought from motives of ambition, and rivalry of sovereign power.

ABOUT the year 960, an attempt was made by this family to mount the throne of Abyssinia, as we shall see hereafter, when the princes of the house of Solomon were nearly extirpated, upon the rock Damo. This, it is probable, produced more animosity and bloodshed. At last the power of the Falasha was so much weakened, that they were obliged to leave

leave the flat country of Dembea, having no cavalry to maintain themselves there, and to take possession of the rugged, and almost inaccessible rocks, in that high ridge called the Mountains of Samen. One of these, which nature seems to have formed for a fortress, they chose for their metropolis, and it was ever after called the Jews Rock.

A GREAT overthrow, which they received in the year 1600, brought them to the very brink of ruin. In that battle Gideon and Judith, their king and queen, were slain. They have since adopted a more peaceable and dutiful behaviour, pay taxes, and are suffered to enjoy their own government. Their king and queen's name was again Gideon and Judith, when I was in Abyssinia, and these names seem to be preferred for those of the Royal family. At that time they were supposed to amount to 100,000 effective men. Something like this, the sober and most knowing Abyssinians are obliged to allow to be truth; but the circumstances of the conversion from Judaism are probably not all before us.

THE only copy of the Old Testament, which they have, is in Geez, the same made use of by the Abyssinian Christians, who are the only scribes, and sell these copies to the Jews; and, it is very singular that no controversy, or dispute about the text, has ever yet arisen between the professors of the two religions. They have no *keriketib*, or various readings; they never heard of *talmud*, *targum*, or *cabala*: Neither have they any *fringes*\* or *ribband* upon their garments, nor is there, as far as I could learn, one scribe among them.

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\* Numb. chap. xv. ver. 38, 39. Deut. chap. 22. ver. 12.



I ASKED them, being from Judea, whence they got that language which they spoke, whether it was one of the languages of the nations which they had learned on the coast of the Red Sea. They apprehended, but it was mere conjecture, that the language which they spoke was that of those nations they had found on the Red Sea, after their leaving Judea and settling there; and the reason they gave was certainly a pertinent one; that they came into Abyssinia, speaking Hebrew, with the advantage of having books in that language; but they had now forgot their Hebrew\*, and it was therefore not probable they should retain any other language in which they had no books, and which they never had learned to express by letters.

I ASKED them, since they came from Jerusalem, how it happened they had not Hebrew, or Samaritan copies of the law, at least the Pentateuch or Octateuch. They said they were in possession of both when they came from Jerusalem; but their fleet being destroyed, in the reign of Rehoboam, and communication becoming very uncertain by the Syrian wars, they were, from necessity, obliged to have the scriptures translated, or make use of the copies in the hands of the Shepherds, who, according to them, before Solomon's time, were all Jews.

I ASKED them where the Shepherds got their copy, because, notwithstanding the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, who was the foreign obstacle the longest in their way,

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\* We see this happened to them in a much shorter time during the captivity, when they forgot their Hebrew, and spoke Chaldaec ever after.

way, the Ishmaelite Arabs had access through Arabia to Jerusalem and Syria, and carried on a great trade thither by land. They professed very candidly they could not give a satisfactory answer to that, as the time was very distant, and war had destroyed all the memorials of these transactions. I asked if they really ever had any memorials of their own country, or history of any other. They answered, with some hesitation, they had no reason to say they ever had any; if they had, they were all destroyed in the war with Gragné. This is all that I could ever learn from this people, and it required great patience and prudence in making the interrogations, and separating truth from falsehood; for many of them, (as is invariably the case with barbarians) if they once divine the reason of your inquiry, will say whatever they think will please you.

THEY deny the sceptre has ever departed from Judah, as they have a prince of that house reigning, and understand the prophecy of the gathering of the Gentiles at the coming of Shiloh, is to be fulfilled on the appearance of the Messiah, who is not yet come, when all the inhabitants of the world are to be Jews. But I must confess they did not give an explanation of this either clearly or readily, or seem to have ever considered it before. They were not at all heated by the subject, nor interested, as far as I could discern, in the difference between us, nor fond of talking upon their religion at all, though very ready at all quotations, when a person was present who spoke Amharic, with the barbarous accent that they do; and this makes me conceive that their ancestors were not in Palestine, or present in those disputes or transactions that attended the death of our Saviour, and have subsisted ever after. They pretend that the book of

Enoch was the first book of scripture they ever received. They knew nothing of that of Seth, but place Job immediately after Enoch, so that they have no idea of the time in which Job lived, but said they believed it to be soon after the flood; and they look upon the book bearing his name to be the performance of that prophet.

MANY difficulties occur from this account of the Falasha; for, though they say they came from Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and from different tribes, yet there is but one language amongst them all, and that is not Hebrew or Samaritan, neither of which they read or understand; nor is their answer to this objection satisfactory, for very obvious reasons.

LUDOLF, the most learned man that has writ upon the subject, says, that it is apparent the Ethiopic Old Testament, at least the Pentateuch, was copied from the Septuagint, because of the many Grecisms to be found in it; and the names of birds and precious stones, and some other passages that appear literally to be translated from the Greek. He imagines also, that the present Abyssinian version is the work of Frumentius their first bishop, when Abyssinia was converted to Christianity under Abreha and Atzbeha, about the year 333 after Christ, or a few years later.

ALTHOUGH I brought with me all the Abyssinian books of the Old Testament, (if it is a translation) I have not yet had time to make the comparison here alluded to, but have left them, for the curiosity of the public, deposited in the British Museum, hoping that some man of learning or curiosity would do this for me. In the mean time I must observe,



that it is much more natural to suppose that the Greeks, comparing the copies together, expunged the words or passages they found differing from the Septuagint, and replaced them from thence, as this would not offend the Jews, who very well knew that those who translated the Septuagint version were all Jews themselves.

Now, as the Abyssinian copy of the Holy Scriptures, in Mr Ludolf's opinion, was translated by Frumentius above 330 after Christ, and the Septuagint version, in the days of Philadelphus, or Ptolemy II. above 160 years before Christ, it will follow, that, if the present Jews use the copy translated by Frumentius, and, if that was taken from the Septuagint, the Jews must have been above 400 years without any books whatsoever at the time of the conversion by Frumentius: So they must have had all the Jewish law, which is in perfect vigour and force among them, all their Levitical observances, their purifications, atonements, abstinences, and sacrifices, all depending upon their memory, without writing, at least for that long space of 400 years.

THIS, though not absolutely impossible, is surely very nearly so. We know, that, at Jerusalem itself, the seat of Jewish law and learning, idolatry happening to prevail, during the short reigns of only four kings, the law, in that interval, became so perfectly forgotten and unknown, that a copy of it being accidentally found and read by Josiah, that prince, upon his first learning its contents, was so astonished at the deviations from it, that he apprehended the immediate destruction of the whole city and people. To this I shall only add, that whoever considers the stiff-neckedness, stubbornness, and obstinacy, which were ever the cha-

raeters of this Jewish nation, they will not easily believe that they did ever *willingly* "receive the *Old Testament* from a " people who were the avowed champions of the *New*."

THEY have, indeed, no knowledge of the New Testament but from conversation; and do not curse it, but treat it as a folly where it supposes the Messiah come, who, they seem to think, is to be a temporal prince, prophet, priest, and conqueror.

STILL, it is not probable that a Jew would receive the law and the prophets from a Christian, without absolute necessity, though they might very well receive such a copy from a brother Jew, which all the Abyssinians were, when this translation was made. Nor would this, as I say, hinder them from following a copy really made by Jews from the text itself, such as the Septuagint actually was. But, I confess, great difficulties occur on every side, and I despair of having them solved, unless by an able, deliberate analysis of the specimen of the Falasha language which I have preserved, in which I earnestly request the concurrence of the learned. A book of the length of the Canticles contains words enough to judge upon the question, Whence the Falasha came, and what is the probable cause they had not a translation in their own tongue; since a version became necessary?

I HAVE less doubt that Frumentius translated the New Testament, as he must have had assistance from those of his own communion in Egypt; and this is a further reason why I believe that, at his coming, he found the Old Testament already translated into the Ethiopic language and character, because Bagla, or Geez, was an unknown letter, and

the language unknown, not only to him, but likewise to every province in Abyssinia, except Tigré; so that it would have cost him no more pains to teach the nation the Greek character and Greek language, than to have translated the New Testament into Ethiopic, using the Geez character, which was equally unknown, unless in Tigré. The saving of time and labour would have been very material to him; he would have used the whole scriptures, as received in his own church, and the Greek letter and language would have been just as easily attained in Amhara as the Geez; and those people, even of the province of Tigré, that had not yet learned to read, would have written the Greek character as easily as their own. I do not know that so early there was any Arabic translation of the Old Testament; if there was, the same reasons would have militated for his preferring this; and still he had but the New Testament to undertake. But having found the books of the Old Testament already translated into Geez, this altered the case; and he, very properly, continued the gospel in that language and letter also, that it might be a testimony for the Christians, and against the Jews, as it was intended.





## CHAP. VII.

*Books in Use in Abyssinia—Enoch—Abyssinia not converted by the Apostles—Conversion from Judaism to Christianity by Frumentius.*

THE Abyssinians have the whole scriptures entire as we have, and count the same number of books; but they divide them in another manner, at least in private hands, few of them, from extreme poverty, being able to purchase the whole, either of the historical or prophetic books of the Old Testament. The same may be said of the New, for copies containing the whole of it are very scarce. Indeed no where, unless in churches, do you see more than the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, in one person's possession, and it must not be an ordinary man that possesses even these.

MANY books of the Old Testament are forgot, so that it is the same trouble to procure them, even in churches, for the purpose of copying, as to consult old records long covered with dust and rubbish. The Revelation of St John is a piece of favourite reading among them. Its title is, *the Vision of John Abou Kalamfis*, which seems to me to be a corruption of *Apocalypse*.

AFTER the New Testament they place the constitutions of the Apostles, which they call *Synodos*, which, as far as the cases or doctrines apply, we may say is the written law of the country. These were translated out of the Arabic. They have next a general liturgy, or book of common prayer, besides several others peculiar to certain festivals, under whose names they go. The next is a very large voluminous book, called *Haimanout Abou*, chiefly a collection from the works of different Greek fathers, treating of, or explaining several heresies, or disputed points of faith, in the ancient Greek Church. Translations of the works of St Athanasius, St Basil, St John Chrysostome, and St Cyril, are likewise current among them. The two last I never saw; and only fragments of St Athanasius; but they are certainly extant.

THE next is the Synaxar, or the Flos Sanctorum, in which the miracles and lives, or lies of their saints, are at large recorded, in four monstrous volumes in folio, stuffed full of fables of the most incredible kind. They have a saint that wrestled with the devil in shape of a serpent nine miles long, threw him from a mountain, and killed him. Another saint who converted the devil, who turned monk, and lived in great holiness for forty years after his conversion, doing penance for having tempted our Saviour upon the mountain: what became of him after they do not say. Again, another saint, that never ate nor drank from his mother's womb, went to Jerusalem, and said mass every day at the holy sepulchre, and came home at night in the shape of a stork. The last I shall mention was a saint, who, being very sick, and his stomach in disorder, took a longing for partridges; he called upon a brace of them to come to him,

and immediately two roasted partridges came *flying*, and rested upon his plate, to be devoured. These stories are circumstantially told and vouched by unexceptionable people, and were a grievous stumbling-block to the Jesuits, who could not pretend their own miracles were either better established, or more worthy of belief.

THERE are other books of less size and consequence, particularly the Organon Denghel, or the Virgin Mary's Musical Instrument, composed by Abba George about the year 1440, much valued for the purity of its language, though he himself was an Armenian. The last of this Ethiopic library is the book of Enoch\*. Upon hearing this book first mentioned, many literati in Europe had a wonderful desire to see it, thinking that, no doubt, many secrets and unknown histories might be drawn from it. Upon this some impostor, getting an Ethiopic book into his hands, wrote for the title, *The Prophecies of Enoch*, upon the front page of it. M. Pierisc† no sooner heard of it than he purchased it of the impostor for a considerable sum of money: being placed afterwards in Cardinal Mazarine's library, where Mr Ludolf had access to it, he found it was a Gnostic book upon mysteries in heaven and earth, but which mentioned not a word of Enoch, or his prophecy, from beginning to end; and, from this disappointment, he takes upon him to deny the existence of any such book any where else. This, however, is a mistake; for, as a public return for the many obligations I had received from every rank of that most

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\* Vid. Origen contra Gellum, lib. 5. Tertull. de Idolol. c. 4. Drus in suo Enoch, Bangius in Cælo Orientis Exercit. 1. quæst. 5. and 6.

† Gassend in vita Pierisc, lib. 5.



humane, polite, and scientific nation, and more especially from the sovereign Louis XV. I gave to his cabinet a part of every thing curious I had collected abroad; which was received with that degree of consideration and attention that cannot fail to determine every traveller of a liberal mind to follow my example.

AMONGST the articles I consigned to the library at Paris, was a very beautiful and magnificent copy of the prophecies of Enoch, in large quarto; another is amongst the books of scripture which I brought home, standing immediately before the book of Job, which is its proper place in the Assyrian canon; and a third copy I have presented to the Bodleian library at Oxford, by the hands of Dr Douglas the Bishop of Carlisle. The more ancient history of that book is well known. The church at first looked upon it as apocryphal; and as it was quoted in the book of Jude, the same suspicion fell upon that book also. For this reason, the council of Nice threw the epistle of Jude out of the canon, but the council of Trent arguing better, replaced the apostle in the canon as before.

HERE we may observe by the way, that Jude's appealing to the apocryphal books did by no means import, that either he believed or warranted the truth of them. But it was an argument, *a fortiori*, which our Saviour himself often makes use of, and amounts to no more than this, You, says he to the Jews, deny certain facts, which must be from prejudice, because you have them allowed in your own books, and believe them there. And a very strong and fair way of arguing it is, but this is by no means any allowance that they are true. In the same manner, You, says Jude, do not be-  
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lieve the coming of Christ and a latter judgment; yet your ancient Enoch, whom you suppose was the seventh from Adam, tells you this plainly, and in so many words, long ago. And indeed the quotation is, word for word the same, in the second chapter of the book.

— ALL that is material to say further concerning the book of Enoch is, that it is a Gnostic book, containing the age of the Emims, Anakims, and Egregores, supposed descendants of the sons of God, when they fell in love with the daughters of men, and had sons who were giants. These giants do not seem to have been so charitable to the sons and daughters of men, as their fathers had been. For, first, they began to eat all the beasts of the earth, they then fell upon the birds and fishes, and ate them also; their hunger being not yet satisfied, they ate all the corn, all men's labour, all the trees and bushes, and, not content yet, they fell to eating the men themselves. The men (like our modern sailors with the savages) were not afraid of dying, but very much so of being eaten after death. At length they cry to God against the wrongs the giants had done them, and God sends a flood which drowns both them and the giants.

SUCH is the reparation which this ingenious author has thought proper to attribute to Providence, in answer to the first, and the best-founded complaints that were made to him by man. I think this exhausts about four or five of the first chapters. It is not the fourth part of the book; but my curiosity led me no further. The catastrophe of the giants, and the justice of the catastrophe, had fully satisfied me.

I CANNOT but recollect, that when it was known in England that I had presented this book to the library of the King of France, without staying a few days, to give me time to reach London, when our learned countrymen might have had an opportunity of perusing at leisure another copy of this book, Doctor Woide set out for Paris, with letters from the Secretary of State to Lord Stormont, Ambassador at that court, desiring him to assist the doctor in procuring access to my present, by permission from his Most Christian Majesty. This he accordingly obtained, and a translation of the work was brought over; but, I know not why, it has no where appeared. I fancy Dr Woide was not much more pleased with the conduct of the giants than I was.

I SHALL conclude with one particular, which is a curious one: The Synaxar (what the Catholics call their *Flos Sanctorum*, or the lives and miracles of their saints), giving the history of the Abyssinian conversion to Christianity in the year 333, says, that when Frumentius and Cædæsius were introduced to the king, who was a minor, they found him reading the Psalms of David.

THIS book, or that of Enoch, does by no means prove that they were at that time Jews. For these two were in as great authority among the Pagans, who professed Sabaism, the first religion of the East, and especially of the *Shepherds*, as among the Jews. These being continued also in the same letter and character among the Abyssinians from the beginning, convinces me that there has not been any other writing in this country, or the south of Arabia, since that which rose from the Hieroglyphics.



THE Abyssinian history begins now to rid itself of part of that confusion which is almost a constant attendant upon the very few annals yet preserved of barbarous nations in very ancient times. It is certain, from their history, that Bazen was contemporary with Augustus, that he reigned sixteen years, and that the birth of our Saviour fell on the 8th year of that prince, so that the 8th year of Bazen was the first of Christ.

AMHA YASOUS, prince of Shoa, a province to which the small remains of the line of Solomon fled upon a catastrophe, I shall have occasion to mention, gave me the following list of the kings of Abyssinia since the time of which we are now speaking. From him I procured all the books of the Annals of Abyssinia, which have served me to compose this history, excepting two, one given me by the King, the other the Chronicle of Axum, by Ras Michael Governor of Tigré.

## SHOA LIST OF PRINCES.

Bazen,	Araad,
Tzenaf Segued,	Saladoba,
Garima Asferi,	Alamida,
Saraada,	Tezhana,
Tzion,	Caleb, 522,
Sargai,	Guebra Mafcal,
Bagamai,	Constantine,
Jan Segued,	Bazzer,
Tzion Heges,	Azbeha,
Moal Genha,	Armaha,
Saif Araad,	Jan Asfeha,
Agedar,	Jan Segued,
Abreha and Atzbeha, 333,	Fere Sanai,
Asfeha,	Aderaaz,
Arphad and Amzi,	Aizor,
Del Naad, 960*.	

THIS list is kept in the monastery of Debra Libanos in Shoa; the Abyssinians receive it without any sort of doubt, though to me it seems very exceptionable: If it were genuine, it would put this monarchy in a very respectable light in point of antiquity.

GREAT confusion has arisen in these old lists, from their kings having always two, and sometimes three names. The

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\* The length of these princes reigns are so great as to become incredible; but, as we have nothing further of their history but their names, we have no data upon which to reform them.

The first is their christened name, their second a nick, or by-name, and the third they take upon their inauguration. There is, likewise, another cause of mistake, which is, when two names occur, one of a king, the other the quality of a king only, these are set down as two brothers. For example, Atzbeha is the *blessed*, or *the saint*; and I very much suspect, therefore, that Atzbeha and Abreha, said to be two brothers, only mean Abraham the *blessed*, or *the saint*; because, in that prince's time, the country was converted to Christianity; Caleb \* and Elefbaas, were long thought to be contemporary princes, till it was found out, by inspecting the ancient authors of those times, that this was only the name or quality of *blessed*, or *saint*, given to Caleb, in consequence of his expedition into Arabia against Phineas king of the Jews, and persecutor of the Christians.

THERE are four very interesting events, in the course of the reign of these princes. The first and greatest we have already mentioned, the birth of Christ in the 8th year of Bazem. The second is the conversion of Abyssinia to Christianity, in the reign of Abreha and Atzbeha, in the year of Christ 333, according to our account. The third the war with the Jews under Caleb. The fourth, the massacre of the princes on the mountain of Damo. The time and circumstances of all these are well known, and I shall relate them in their turn with the brevity becoming a historian.

SOME ecclesiastical\* writers, rather from attachment to particular systems, than from any conviction that the opinion they

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\* Caleb el Atzbeha, which has been made Elefbaas throwing away the t.

† Surius Tom. 5. d. 24. Oñ. Card. Baronius. Tom. 7. Annal. A. C. 522. N. 23.



they espouse is truth, would persuade us, that the conversion of Abyſſinia to Chriſtianity happened at the beginning of this period, that is, ſoon after the reign of Bazen ; others, that Saint Matthias, or Saint Bartholomew, or ſome others of the Apoſtles, after their miſſion to teach the nations, firſt preached here the faith of Chriſt, and converted this people to it. It is alſo ſaid, that the eunuch baptized by Philip, upon his return to Candace, became the Apoſtle of that nation, which, from his preaching, believed in Chriſt and his goſpel. All theſe might paſs for dreams not worthy of examination, if they were not invented for particular purpoſes.

TILL the death of Chriſt, who lived ſeveral years after Bazen, very few Jews had been converted even in Judea. We have no account in ſcripture that induces us to believe, that the Apoſtles went to any great diſtance from each other immediately after the crucifixion. Nay, we know poſitively, they did not, but lived in community together for a conſiderable time. Beſides, it is not probable, if the Abyſſinians were converted by any of the Apoſtles, that, for the ſpace of 300 years, they ſhould remain without biſhops, and without church-government, in the neighbourhood of many ſtates, where churches were already formed, without calling to their aſſiſtance ſome members of theſe churches, who might, at leaſt, inform them of the purport of the councils held, and canons made by them, during that ſpace of 300 years ; for this was abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve orthodoxy, and the communion between this, and the churches of that time. And it ſhould be obſerved, that if, in Philip's time, the Chriſtian religion had not penetrated (as we ſee in effect it had not) into the court of Candace, ſo much nearer Egypt, it did not ſurely reach ſo early into the  
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more distant mountainous country of Abyssinia; and if the Ethiopia, where Candace reigned, was the same as Abyssinia, the story of the queen of Saba must be given up as a falsehood; for, in that case, there would be a woman sitting upon the throne of that country 500 years after she was excluded by a solemn deliberate fundamental law of the land.

BUT it is known, from credible writers, engaged in no controversy, that this Candace reigned upon the Nile in Atbara, much nearer Egypt. Her capital also was taken in the time of Augustus, a few years before the Conversion, by Philip; and we shall have occasion often to mention her successors and her kingdom, as existing in the reign of the Abyssinian kings, long after the Mahometan conquest; they existed when I passed through Atbara, and do undoubtedly exist there to this day. What puts an end to all this argument is a matter of fact, which is, that the Abyssinians continued Jews and Pagans, and were found to be so above 300 years after the time of the Apostles. Instead, therefore, of taking the first of this list (Bazen) for the prince under whom Abyssinia was converted from Judaism, as authors have advanced, in conformity to the Abyssinian annals, we shall fix upon the 13th (Abreha and Atzbeha, whom we believe to be but one prince) and, before we enter into the narrative of that remarkable event, we shall observe, that, from Bazen to Abreha, being 341 years inclusive, the eighth of Bazen being the first of Christ, by this account of the conversion, which happened under Abreha and Atzbeha, it must have been about 333 years after Christ, or 341 after Bazen.

BUT we certainly know, that the first bishop, ordained for the conversion of Abyssinia, was sent from Alexandria by

St Athanasius, who was himself ordained to that See about the year 326. Therefore, any account, prior to this ordination and conversion, must be false, and this conversion and ordination must have therefore happened about the year 330, or possibly some few years later; for Socrates\* says, that St Athanasius himself was then but newly elected to the See of Alexandria.

IN order to clear our way of difficulties, before we begin the narrative of the conversion, we shall observe, in this place, the reason I just hinted at, why some ecclesiastical writers had attributed the conversion of Abyssinia to the Apostles. There was found, or pretended to be found in Alexandria, a canon, of a council said to be that of Nice, and this canon had never before been known, nor ever seen in any other place, or in any language, except the Arabic; and, from inspection, I may add, that it is such Arabic that scarce will convey the meaning it was intended. Indeed, if it be construed according to the strict rule of grammar, it will not convey any sense at all. This canon regulated the precedence of the Abuna of Ethiopia in all after councils, and it places him immediately after the prelate of Seleucia. This most honourable antiquity was looked upon and boasted of for their own purposes by the Jesuits, as a discovery of infinite value to the church of Ethiopia.

I SHALL only make one other observation to obviate a difficulty which will occur in reading what is to follow. The Abyssinian history plainly and positively says, that when Frumentius

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\* Ludolf, vol. 2. lib. iii. cap. 2...



Frumentius (the apostle of the Abyssinians) came first into that country, a queen reigned, which is an absolute contradiction to what we have already stated, and would seem to favour the story of queen Candace. To this I answer, That though it be true that all women are excluded from the Abyssinian throne, yet it is as true that there is a law, or custom, as strictly observed as the other; that the queen upon whose head the king shall have put the crown in his life-time, it matters not whether it be her husband or son, or any other relation, that woman is regent of the kingdom, and guardian of every minor king, as long as she shall live. Supposing, therefore, a queen to be crowned by her husband, which husband should die and leave a son, all the brothers and uncles of that son would be banished, and confined prisoners to the mountain, and the queen would have the care of the kingdom, and of the king, during his minority. If her son, moreover, was to die, and a minor succeed who was a collateral, or no relation to her, brought, perhaps, from the mountain, she would still be regent; nor does her office cease but by the king's coming of age, whose education, cloathing, and maintenance, she, in the mean time, absolutely directs, according to her own will; nor can there be another regent during her life-time. This regent, for life, is called *Itegbè*; and this was probably the situation of the kingdom at the time we mention, as history informs us the king was then a minor, and consequently his education, as well as the government of his kingdom and household, were, as they appear to have been, in the queen, or *Itegbè's* hands; of this office I shall speak more in its proper place.

MEROPIUS, a philosopher at Tyre, a Greek by nation and by religion, had taken a passage in a ship on the Red Sea to India, and had with him two young men, Frumentius and Cœdesius, whom he intended to bring up to trade, after having given them a very liberal education. It happened their vessel was cast away on a rock upon the coast of Abyssinia. Meropius, defending himself, was slain by the natives, and the two boys carried to Axum, the capital of Abyssinia, where the Court then resided. Though young, they soon began to shew the advantages attending a liberal education. They acquired the language very speedily; and, as that country is naturally inclined to admire strangers, these were soon looked upon as two prodigies. Cœdesius, probably the dullest of the two, was set over the king's household and wardrobe, a place that has been filled constantly by a stranger of that nation to this very day. Frumentius was judged worthy by the queen to have the care of the young prince's education, to which he dedicated himself entirely.

AFTER having instructed his pupil in all sorts of learning, he strongly impressed him with a love and veneration for the Christian religion; after which he himself set out for Alexandria, where, as has been already said, he found St. Athanasius\* newly elected to that See.

HE related to him briefly what had passed in Ethiopia, and the great hopes of the conversion of that nation, if proper pastors were sent to instruct them. Athanasius embraced that opportunity with all the earnestness that became his station

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\* Vid. Baron, tom. 4. p. 331. et alibi passim.

station and profession. He ordained Frumentius bishop of that country, who instantly returned and found the young king his pupil in the same good disposition as formerly; he embraced Christianity; the greatest part of Abyssinia followed his example, and the church of Ethiopia continued with this bishop in perfect unity and friendship till his death; and though great troubles arose from heresies being propagated in the East, that church, and the fountain whence it derived its faith (Alexandria,) remained uncontaminated by any false doctrine.

BUT it was not long after this, that Arianism broke out under Constantius the Emperor, and was strongly favoured by him. We have indeed a letter of St Athanasius, to that Emperor, who had applied to him to depose Frumentius from his See for refusing to embrace that heresy, or admit it into his diocese.

It should seem, that this conversion of Abyssinia was quietly conducted, and without blood; and this is the more remarkable, that it was the second radical change of religion, effected in the same manner, and with the same facility and moderation. No fanatic preachers, no warm saints or madmen, ambitious to make or to be made martyrs, disturbed either of these happy events, in this wise, though barbarous nation, so as to involve them in bloodshed: no persecution was the consequence of this difference of tenets; and if wars did follow, it was from matters merely temporal.



## C H A P. VIII.

*War of the Elephant—First Appearance of the Small-Pox—Jews persecute the Christians in Arabia—Defeated by the Abyssinians—Mahomet pretends a divine Mission—Opinion concerning the Koran—Revolution under Judith—Restoration of the Line of Solomon from Shoa.*

**I**N the reigns of the princes Abreha and Atzbeha, the Abyssinian annals mention an expedition to have happened into the farthest part of Arabia Felix, which the Arabian authors, and indeed Mahomet himself in the Koran calls by the name of the War of the Elephant, and the cause of it was this. There was a temple nearly in the middle of the peninsula of Arabia, that had been held in the greatest veneration for about 1400 years. The Arabs say, that Adam, when shut out of paradise, pitched his tent on this spot; while Eve, from some accident or other I am not acquainted with, died and was buried on the shore of the Red Sea, at Jidda. Two days journey east from this place, her grave, of green sods about fifty yards in length, is shewn to this day. In this temple also was a black stone, upon which Jacob saw the vision mentioned in scripture, of the angels descending, and ascending into Heaven. It is likewise said, with more appearance of probability, that this temple was built

built by Sefôftrîs, in his voyage to Arabia Felix, and that he was worshipped there under the name of Osiris, as he then was in every part of Egypt.

THE great veneration the neighbouring nations paid to this tower, and idol, suggested the very natural thought of making the temple the market for the trade from Africa and India; the liberty of which, we may suppose, had been in some measure, restrained, by the settlements which foreign nations had made on both coasts of the Red Sea. To remedy which, they chose this town in the heart of the country, accessible on all sides, and commanded on none, calling it Becca, which signifies the House; though Mahomet, after breaking the idol and dedicating the temple to the true God, named it Mecca, under which name it has continued, the centre or great mart of the India trade to this day.

IN order to divert this trade into a channel more convenient for his present dominions, Abreha built a very large church or temple, in the country of the Homerites, and nearer the Indian Ocean. To encourage also the resort to this place, he extended to it all the privileges, protection, and emoluments, that belonged to the Pagan temple of Mecca..

ONE particular tribe of Arabs, called Beni Koreish, had the care of the Caba, for so the round tower of Mecca was called. These people were exceedingly alarmed at the prospect of their temple being at once deserted, both by its votaries and merchants, to prevent which, a party of them, in the night, entered Abreha's temple, and having first  
burned

burned what part of it, could be consumed, they polluted the part that remained, by besmearing it over with human excrements.

THIS violent sacrilege and affront was soon reported to Abreha, who, mounted upon a white elephant at the head of a considerable army, resolved, in return, to destroy the temple of Mecca. With this intent, he marched through that stripe of low country along the sea, called Tehama, where he met with no opposition, nor suffered any distress but from want of water; after which, at the head of his army, he sat down before Mecca, as he supposed.

ABOU THALEB (Mahomet's grandfather, as it is thought) was then keeper of the Caba, who had interest with his countrymen the Beni Koreish to prevail upon them to make no resistance, nor shew any signs of wishing to make a defence. He had presented himself early to Abreha upon his march. There was a temple of Osiris at Taief, which, as a rival to that of Mecca, was looked upon by the Beni Koreish with a jealous eye. Abreha was so far misled by the intelligence given him by Abou Thaleb, that he mistook the Temple of Taief for that of Mecca, and razed it to the foundation, after which he prepared to return home.

HE was soon after informed of his mistake, and not repenting of what he had already done, resolved to destroy Mecca also. Abou Thaleb, however, had never left his side; by his great hospitality, and the plenty he procured to the Emperor's army, he so gained Abreha, that hearing, on inquiry, he was no mean man, but a prince of the tribe of Beni Koreish, noble Arabs, he obliged him to sit in his presence



fence, and kept him constantly with him as a companion. At last, not knowing how to reward him sufficiently, Abreha desired him to ask any thing in his power to grant, and he would satisfy him. Abou Thaleb, taking him at his word, wished to be provided with a man, that should bring back forty oxen, the soldiers had stolen from him.

ABREHA, who expected that the favour he was to ask, was to spare the Temple, which he had in that case resolved in his mind to do, could not conceal his astonishment at so silly a request, and he could not help testifying this to Abou Thaleb, in a manner that shewed it had lowered him in his esteem. Abou Thaleb, smiling, replied very calmly, If that before you is the Temple of God, as I believe it is, you shall never destroy it, if it is his will that it should stand: If it is not the Temple of God, or (which is the same thing) if he has ordained that you should destroy it, I shall not only assist you in demolishing it, but shall help you in carrying away the last stone of it upon my shoulders: But as for me, I am a shepherd, and the care of cattle is my profession; twenty of the oxen which are stolen are not my own, and I shall be put in prison for them to-morrow; for neither you nor I can believe that this is an affair God will interfere in; and therefore I apply to you for a soldier who will seek the thief, and bring back my oxen, that my liberty be not taken from me.

ABREHA had now refreshed his army, and, from regard to his guest, had not touched the Temple; when, says the Arabian author, there appeared, coming from the sea, a flock of birds called Ababil, having faces like lions, and each of them in his claws, holding a small stone like a pea,

which he let fall upon Abreha's army, so that they all were destroyed. The author of the manuscript \* from which I have taken this fable, and which is also related by several other historians, and mentioned by Mahomet in the Koran, does not seem to swallow the story implicitly. For he says, that there is no bird that has a face like a lion, that Abou Thaleb was a Pagan, Mahomet being not then come, and that the Christians were worshippers of the true God, the God of Mahomet; and, therefore, if any miracle was wrought here, it was a miracle of the devil, a victory in favour of Paganism, and destructive of the belief of the true God. In conclusion, he says, that it was at this time that the small-pox and measles first broke out in Arabia, and almost totally destroyed the army of Abreha. But if the stone, as big as a pea, thrown by the Ababil, had killed Abreha's army to the last man, it does not appear how any of them could die afterwards, either by the small-pox or measles.

ALL that is material, however, to us, in this fact, is, that the time of the siege of Meccâ will be the æra of the first appearance of that terrible disease, the small-pox, which we shall set down about the year 356; and it is highly probable, from other circumstances, that the Abyssinian army was the first victim to it.

As for the church Abreha built near the Indian Ocean, it continued free from any further insult till the Mahometan conquest of Arabia Felix, when it was finally destroyed in the Khalifat † of Omar. This is the Abyssinian account, and this

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\* El Hameely's Siege of Mecca.

† Fetaat el Yemen.

this, the Arabian history of the War of the Elephant, which I have stated as found in the books of the most credible writers of those times.

BUT it is my duty to put the reader upon his guard, against adopting literally what is here set down, without being satisfied of the validity of the objection that may be made against the narrative in general. Abreha reigned 27 years; he was converted to Christianity in 333, and died in 360; now, it is scarcely possible, in the short space of 27 years, that all Abyssinia and Arabia could be converted to Christianity. The conversion of the Abyssinians is represented to be a work of little time, but the Arab author, Hameefy, says, that even Arabia Felix was full of churches when this expedition took place, which is very improbable. And, what adds still more to the improbability, is, that part of the story which states that Abreha conversed with Mahomet's father, or grandfather. For, supposing the expedition in 356, Mahomet's birth was in 558, so there will remain 202 years, by much too long a period for two lives. I do believe we must bring this expedition down much lower than the reign of Abreha and Atzbeha, the reason of which we shall see afterwards.

As early as the commencement of the African trade with Palestine, the Jewish religion had spread itself far into Arabia, but, after the destruction of the temple by Titus, a great increase both of number and wealth had made that people absolute masters in many parts of that peninsula. In the Neged; and as far up as Medina, petty princes, calling themselves kings, were established; who, being trained in the wars of Palestine, became very formidable among the pa-



cific commercial nations of Arabia, deeply sunk into Greek degeneracy.

PHINEAS, a prince of that nation from Medina, having beat St Aretas, the Governor of Najiran, began to persecute the Christians by a new species of cruelty, by ordering certain furnaces, or pits full of fire, to be prepared, into which he threw as many of the inhabitants of Najiran as refused to renounce Christianity. Among these was Aretas, so called by the Greeks, Aryat by the Arabs, and Hawaryat, which signifies the *evangelical*, by the Abyssinians, together with ninety of his companions. Mahomet, in his Koran, mentions, this tyrant by the name of the Master of the *fiery pits*, without either condemning or praising the execution; only saying, 'the sufferers shall be witness against him at the last day.'

JUSTIN, the Greek Emperor, was then employed in an unsuccessful war with the Persians, so that he could not give any assistance to the afflicted Christians in Arabia, but in the year 522 he sent an embassy to Caleb, or Elesbaas, king of Abyssinia, intreating him to interfere in favour of the Christians of Najiran, as he too was of the Greek church. On the Emperor's first request, Caleb sent orders to Abreha, Governor of Yemen, to march to the assistance of Aretas, the son of him who was burnt, and who was then collecting troops. Strengthened by this reinforcement, the young soldier did not think proper to delay the revenging his father's death, till the arrival of the Emperor; but having come up with Phineas, who was ferrying his troops over an arm of the sea, he entirely routed them, and obliged their prince, for fear of being taken, to swim with his horse to the nearest

est shore. It was not long before the Emperor had crossed the Red Sea with his army ; nor had Phineas lost any time in collecting his scattered forces to oppose him. A battle was the consequence, in which the fortune of Caleb again prevailed.

It would appear that the part of Arabia, near Najiran, which was the scene of Caleb's victory, belonged to the Grecian Emperor Justin, because Aretas applied directly to him at Constantinople for succour ; and it was at Justin's request only, that Caleb marched to the assistance of Aretas, as a friend, but not as a sovereign ; and as such also, Abreha, Governor of Yemen, marched to assist Aretas, with the Abyssinian troops, from the south of Arabia, against the stranger Jews, who were invaders from Palestine, and who had no connection with the Abyssinian Jewish Homerites, natives of the south coast of Arabia, opposite to Saba.

BUT neither of the Jewish kingdoms were destroyed by the victories of Caleb, or Abreha, nor the subsequent conquest of the Persians. In the Nèged, or north part of Arabia, they continued not only after the appearance of Mahomet, but till after the Hegira. For it was in the 8th year of that era that Hybar, the Jew, was besieged in his own castle in Neged, and slain by Ali, Mahomet's son-in-law, from that time called Hydar Ali, or Ali the Lion.

Now the Arabian manuscripts says positively that this Abreha, who assisted Aretas, was Governor of Arabia Felix, or Yemen ; for, by this last name, I shall hereafter call the part of the peninsula of Arabia belonging to the Abyssinians ; so that he might very well have been the prince who conversed with Mahomet's father, and lost his army before

before Mecca, which will bring down the introduction of the small-pox to the year 522, just 100 years before the Hegira, and both Arabian and Abyssinian accounts might be then true.

THE two officers who governed Yemen, and the opposite coast Azab, which, as we have above mentioned, belonged to Abyssinia, were stiled *Najashi*, as was the king also, and both of them were crowned with gold. I am, therefore, persuaded, this is the reason of the confusion of names we meet in Arabian manuscripts, that treat of the sovereigns of Yemen. This, moreover, is the foundation of the story found in Arabic manuscripts, that Jaffar, Mahomet's brother, fled to the *Najashi*, who was governor of Yemen, and was kindly treated by him, and kept there till he joined his brother at the campaign of Hybarea. Soon after his great victory over the Beni Koreish, at the last battle of Beder Hunain, Mahomet is said to have written to the same *Najashi* a letter of thanks, for his kind entertainment of his brother, inviting him (as a reward) to embrace his religion, which the *Najashi* is supposed to have immediately complied with. Now, all this is in the Arabic books, and all this is true, as far as we can conjecture from the accounts of those times, very partially writ by a set of warm-headed bigotted zealots; such as all Arabic authors (historians of the time) undoubtedly are. The error only lies in the application of this story to the *Najashi*, or king of Abyssinia, situated far from the scene of these actions, on high cold mountains, very unfavourable to those rites, which, in low flat and warm countries, have been temptations to slothful and inactive men to embrace the Mahometan religion.



A most shameful prostitution of manners prevailed in the Greek church, as also innumerable heresies, which were first received as true tenets of their religion, but were soon after persecuted in a most uncharitable manner, as being erroneous. Their lies, their legends, their saints and miracles, and, above all, the abandoned behaviour of the priesthood, had brought their characters in Arabia almost as low as that of the detested Jew, and, had they been considered in their true light, they had been still lower.

THE dictates of nature in the heart of the honest Pagan, constantly employed in long, lonely, and dangerous voyages, awakened him often to reflect who that Providence was that invisibly governed him, supplied his wants, and often mercifully saved him from the destruction into which his own ignorance or rashness were leading him. Poisoned by no system, perverted by no prejudice, he wished to know and adore his Benefactor, with purity and simplicity of heart, free from these fopperies and follies with which ignorant priests and monks had disguised his worship. Possessed of charity, steady in his duty to his parents, full of veneration for his superiors, attentive and merciful even to his beasts; in a word, containing in his heart the principles of the first religion, which God had inculcated in the heart of Noah, the Arab was already prepared to embrace a much more perfect one than what Christianity, at that time, disfigured by folly and superstition, appeared to him to be.

MAHOMET, of the tribe of Beni Koreish (at whose instigation is uncertain) took upon himself to be the apostle of a new religion, pretending to have, for his only object, the worship of the true God. Ostensibly full of the morality of the

the Arab, of patience and self-denial, superior even to what is made necessary to salvation by the gospel, his religion, at the bottom, was but a system of blasphemy and falsehood, corruption and injustice. Mahomet and his tribe were most profoundly ignorant. There was not among them but one man that could write, and it was not doubted he was to be Mahomet's secretary, but unfortunately Mahomet could not read his writing. The story of the angel who brought him leaves of the Koran is well known, and so is all the rest of the fable. The wiser part of his own relations, indeed, laughed at the impudence of his pretending to have a communication with angels. Having, however, gained, as his apostles, some of the best soldiers of the tribe of Beni Koreish, and persisting with great uniformity in all his measures, he established a new religion upon the ruins of idolatry and Sabaism, in the very temple of Mecca.

Nothing severe was enjoined by Mahomet, and the frequent prayers and washings with water which he directed, were gratifications to a sedentary people in a very hot country. The lightness of this yoke, therefore, recommended it rapidly to those who were disgusted with long fasting, penances, and pilgrimages. The poison of this false, yet not severe religion, spread itself from that fountain to all the trading nations: India, Ethiopia, Africa, all Asia, suddenly embraced it; and every caravan carried into the bosom of its country people not more attached to trade, than zealous to preach and propagate their new faith. The Temple of Mecca (the old rendezvous of the Indian trade) perhaps was never more frequented than it is at this day, and the motives of the journey are equally trade and religion, as they were formerly.

I SHALL here mention, that the Arabs begun very soon to study letters, and came to be very partial to their own language; Mahomet himself so much so, that he held out his Koran, for its elegance alone, as a greater miracle than that of raising the dead. This was not universally allowed at that time; as there were even then compositions supposed to equal, if not to surpass it. In my time, I have seen in Britain a spirit of enthusiasm for this book in preference to all others, not inferior to that which possessed Mahomet's followers. Modern unbelievers (Sale and his disciples) have gone every length; but to say directly that it was dictated by the Spirit of God. Excepting the command in Genesis chap. i. ver. 3. "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light;" they defy us to shew in scripture a passage equal in sublimity to many in the Koran. Following, without inquiring, what has been handed down from one to the other, they would cram us with absurdities, which no man of sense can swallow. They say the Koran is composed in a style the most pure, and chaste, and that the tribe of Beni Koreish was the most polite, learned, and noble of all the Arabs.

BUT to this I answer—The Beni Koreish were from the earliest days, according to their own \* account, part established at Mecca, and part as robbers on the sea-coast, and they were all children of Ishmael. Whence then came their learning, or their superior nobility? Was it found in the desert, in the temple, or did the robbers bring it from the sea? Sojourney, one of those most famous then for



knowledge in the Arabic, has quoted from the Koran many hundred words, either Abyſſinian, Indian, Perſian, Ethiopic, Syrian, Hebrew, or Chaldaic, which he brings back to the root, and aſcribes them to the nation they came from. Indeed it could not be otherwiſe; theſe caravans, continually crowding with their trade to Mecca, muſt have vitiated the original tongue by an introduction of new terms and new idioms, into a language labouring under a penury of vocabu-les. But ſhall any one for this perſuade me, that a book is a model of pure, elegant, chaſte Engliſh, in which there ſhall be a thouſand words of Welch, Iriſh, Gaelic, French, Spaniſh, Malabar Mexican, and Laponian? What would be thought of ſuch a medley? or, at leaſt, could it be recom-mended as a pattern for writing pure Engliſh?

WHAT I ſay of the Koran may be applied to the lan-guage of Arabia in general: when it is called a copious language, and profeſſors wiſely tell you, that there are fix hundred words for a ſword, two hundred for honey, and three hundred that ſignify a lion, ſtill I muſt obſerve, that this is not a copious language, but a confuſion of languages: theſe, inſtead of diſtinct names, are only different epithets. For example, a lion in Engliſh may be called a young lion, a white lion, a ſmall lion, a big lion: I ſtyle him moreover the fierce, the cruel, the enemy to man, the beaſt of the deſert, the king of beaſts, the lover of blood. Thus it is in Ara-bic; and yet it is ſaid that all theſe are words for a lion. Take another example in a ſword; the cutter, the divider, the friend of man, the maſter of towns, the maker of widows, the ſharp, the ſtraight, the crooked; which may be ſaid in Engliſh as well as in Arabic.

THE Arabs were a people who lived in a country, for the most part, desert; their dwellings were tents, and their principal occupation feeding and breeding cattle, and they married with their own family. The language therefore of such a people should be very poor; there is no variety of images in their whole country. They were always bad poets, as their works will testify; and if, contrary to the general rule, the language of Arabia Deserta became a copious one, it must have been by the mixture of so many nations meeting and trading at Mecca. It must, at the same time, have been the most corrupt, where there was the greatest concourse of strangers, and this was certainly among the Beni Koreish at the Caba. When, therefore, I hear people praising the Koran for the purity of its style, it puts me in mind of the old man in the comedy, whose reason for loving his nephew was, that he could read Greek; and being asked if he understood the Greek so read, he answered, Not a word of it, but the rumbling of the sound pleased him.

THE war that had distracted all Arabia, first between the Greeks and Persians, then between Mahomet and the Arabs, in support of his divine mission, had very much hurt the trade carried on by universal consent at the Temple of Mecca. Caravans, when they dared venture out, were surprised upon every road, by the partizans of one side or the other. Both merchants and trade had taken their departure to the southward, and established themselves south of the Arabian Gulf, in places which (in ancient times) had been the markets for commerce, and the rendezvous of merchants. Azab, or Saba, was rebuilt; also Raheeta, Zeyla, Tajoura, Soomaal, in the Arabian Gulf, and a number of other towns on the Indian Ocean. The conquest of the Abyssinian territories in

Arabia forced all those that yet remained to take refuge on the African side, in the little districts which now grew into consideration. Adel, Mara, Hadea, Auffa, Wypo, Tarshish, and a number of other states, now assumed the name of kingdoms, and soon obtained power and wealth superior to many older ones.

THE Governor of Yemen (or Najashi) converted now to the faith of Mahomet, retired to the African side of the Gulf. His government, long ago, having been shaken to the very foundation by the Arabian war, was at last totally destroyed. But the Indian trade at Adel wore a face of prosperity, that had the features of ancient times.

WITHOUT taking notice of every objection, and answering it, which has too polemical an appearance for a work of this kind, I hope I have removed the greatest part of the reader's difficulties, which have, for a long time, lain in the way, towards his understanding this part of the history. There is one, however, remains, which the Arabian historians have mentioned, viz. that this Najashi, who embraced the faith of Mahomet, was avowedly of the royal family of Abyssinia. To this I answer, he certainly was a person of that rank, and was undoubtedly a nobleman, as there is no nobility in that country but from relationship to the king, and no person can be related to the king by the male line. But the females, even the daughters of those princes who are banished to the mountain, marry whom they please; and all the descendents of that marriage become noble, because they must be allied to the king. So far then they may truly assert, that the Mahometan Governor of Yemen, and his posterity, were this way related to the king of Abyssinia.

But



But the supposition that any heirs male of this family became mullulmen, is, beyond any sort of doubt, without foundation or probability.

OMAR, after subduing Egypt, destroyed the valuable library at Alexandria, but his successors thought very differently from him in the article of profane learning. Greek books of all kinds (especially those of Geometry, Astronomy, and Medicine,) were searched for every where and translated. Sciences flourished and were encouraged. Trade at the same time kept pace, and increased with knowledge. Geography and astronomy were every where diligently studied and solidly applied to make the voyages of men from place to place safe and expeditious. The Jews (constant servants of the Arabs) imbibed a considerable share of their taste for learning.

THEY had, at this time, increased very much in number. By the violence of the Mahometan conquests in Arabia and Egypt, where their sect did principally prevail, they became very powerful in Abyssinia. Arianism, and all the various heresies that distracted the Greek church, were received there in their turn from Egypt; the bonds of Christianity were dissolved, and people in general were much more willing to favour a new religion, than to agree with, or countenance any particular one of their own, if it differed from that which they adopted in the merest trifle. This had destroyed their metropolis in Egypt, just now delivered up to the Saracens; and the disposition of the Abyssinians seemed so very much to resemble their brethren the Cophts, that a revolution in favour of Judaism was thought full as feasible in the country, as it had been in Egypt in favour of

of the newly-preached, but unequivocal religion of Mahomet.

AN independent sovereignty, in one family of Jews, had always been preserved on the mountain of Samen, and the royal residence was upon a high-pointed rock, called the Jews Rock: Several other inaccessible mountains served as natural fortresses for this people, now grown very considerable by frequent accessions of strength from Palestine and Arabia, whence the Jews had been expelled. Gideon and Judith were then king and queen of the Jews, and their daughter Judith (whom in Amhara they call *Esther*, and sometimes *Saat*, i. e. *fire* \*,) was a woman of great beauty, and talents for intrigue; had been married to the governor of a small district called Bugna, in the neighbourhood of Lasta, both which countries were likewise much infected with Judaism.

JUDITH had made so strong a party, that she resolved to attempt the subversion of the Christian religion, and, with it, the succession in the line of Solomon. The children of the royal family were at this time, in virtue of the old law, confined on the almost inaccessible mountain of Damo in Tigre. The short reign, sudden and unexpected death of the late king Aizor, and the desolation and contagion which an epidemical disease had spread both in court and capital, the weak state of Del Naad who was to succeed Aizor and was an infant; all these circumstances together, impressed Judith with an idea that now was the time to place her family upon the throne, and establish her religion by the extirpation

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extirpation of the race of Solomon. Accordingly she surprised the rock Damo, and slew the whole princes there, to the number, it is said, of about 400.

SOME nobles of Amhara, upon the first news of the catastrophe at Damo, conveyed the infant king Del Naad, now the only remaining prince of his race, into the powerful and loyal province of Shoa, and by this means the royal family was preserved to be again restored. Judith took possession of the throne in defiance of the law of the queen of Saba, by this the first interruption of the succession in the line of Solomon, and, contrary to what might have been expected from the violent means she had used to acquire the crown, she not only enjoyed it herself during a long reign of 40 years, but transmitted it also to five of her posterity, all of them barbarous names, originating probably in Lasta: These are said to be,

Totadem,  
Jan Shum,  
Garima Shum,  
Harbai,  
Marari.

AUTHORS, as well Abyssinian as European, have differed widely about the duration of these reigns. All that the Abyssinians are agreed upon is, that this whole period was one scene of murder, violence, and oppression.

JUDITH and her descendants were succeeded by relations of their own, a noble family of Lasta. The history of this revolution, or cause of it, are lost and unknown in the country, and therefore vainly sought after elsewhere. What we know



know is, that with them the court returned to the Christian religion, and that they were still as different from their predecessors in manners as in religion. Though usurpers, as were the others, their names are preserved with every mark of respect and veneration. They are,

Tecla Haimanout,

Kedus Harbé,

Itibarek,

Lalibala,

Imeranha Christos,

Naacueto Laab.

Nor being kings of the line of Solomon, no part of their history is recorded in the annals, unless that of Lalibala, who lived in the end of the twelfth, or beginning of the thirteenth century, and was a saint. The whole period of the usurpation, comprehending the long reign of Judith, will by this account be a little more than 300 years, in which time eleven princes are said to have sat upon the throne of Solomon, so that, supposing her death to have been in the year 1000, each of these princes, at an average, will have been a little more than twenty-four years, and this is too much. But all this period is involved in darkness. We might guess, but since we are not able to do more, it answers no good purpose to do so much. I have followed the histories and traditions which are thought the most authentic in the country, the subject of which they treat, and where I found them; and though they may differ from other accounts given by European authors, this does not influence me, as I know that none of these authors could have any other authorities than those I have seen, and the difference only must

must be the fruit of idle imagination, and ill-founded conjectures of their own.

IN the reign of Lalibala, near about the 1200, there was a great persecution in Egypt against the Christians, after the Saracen conquest, and especially against the masons, builders, and hewers of stone, who were looked upon by the Arabs as the greatest of abominations; this prince opened an asylum in his dominions to all fugitives of that kind, of whom he collected a prodigious number. Having before him as specimens the ancient works of the Troglodytes, he directed a number of churches to be hewn out of the solid rock in his native country of Lasta, where they remain untouched to this day, and where they will probably continue till the latest posterity. Large columns within are formed out of the solid rock, and every species of ornament preserved, that would have been executed in buildings of separate and detached stones, above ground.

THIS prince undertook to realize the favourite pretensions of the Abyssinians, to the power of turning the Nile out of its course, so that it should no longer be the cause of the fertility of Egypt, now in possession of the enemies of his religion. We may imagine, if it was in the power of man to accomplish this undertaking, it could have fallen into no better hands than those to whom Lalibala gave the execution of it; people driven from their native country by those Saracens who now were reaping the benefits of the river, in the places of those they had forced to seek habitations far from the benefit and pleasure afforded by its stream.

THIS prince did not adopt the wild idea of turning the course of the Nile out of its present channel; upon the possibility or impossibility of which, the argument (so warmly and so long agitated) always most improperly turns. His idea was to famish Egypt: and, as the fertility of that country depends not upon the ordinary stream, but the extraordinary increase of it by the tropical rains, he is said to have found, by an exact survey and calculation, that there ran on the summit, or highest part of the country, several rivers which could be intercepted by mines, and their stream directed into the low country southward, instead of joining the Nile, augmenting it and running northward. By this he found he should be able so to disappoint its increase, that it never would rise to a height proper to fit Egypt for cultivation. And thus far he was warranted in his ideas of succeeding (as I have been informed by the people of that country), that he did intersect and carry into the Indian Ocean, two very large rivers, which have ever since flowed that way, and he was carrying a level to the lake Zawaia, where many rivers empty themselves in the beginning of the rains, which would have effectually diverted the course of them all, and could not but in some degree diminish the current below.

DEATH, the ordinary enemy of all these stupendous Herculean undertakings, interposed too here, and put a stop to this enterprize of Lalibala. But Amha Yafous, prince of Shoa (in whose country part of these immense works were) a young man of great understanding, and with whom I lived several months in the most intimate friendship at Gondar, assured me that they were visible to this day; and that they were of a kind whose use could not be mistaken; that



he himself had often visited them, and was convinced the undertaking was very possible with such hands, and in the circumstances things then were. He told me likewise, that, in a written account, which he had seen in Shoa, it was said that this prince was not interrupted by death in his undertaking, but persuaded by the monks, that if a greater quantity of water was let down into the dry kingdoms of Hadea, Mara, and Adel, increasing in population every day, and, even now, almost equal in power to Abyssinia itself, these barren kingdoms would become the garden of the world; and such a number of Saracens, dislodged from Egypt by the first appearance of the Nile's failing, would fly thither: that they would not only withdraw those countries from their obedience, but be strong enough to over-run the whole kingdom of Abyssinia. Upon this, as Amha Yafous informed me, Lalibala gave over his first scheme, which was the famishing of Egypt; and, that his next was employing the men in subterraneous churches; a useless expence, but more level to the understanding of common men than the former.

DON RODERIGO DE LIMA, ambassador from the king of Portugal, in 1522 saw the remains of these vast works, and travelled in them several days, as we learn from Alvarez the chaplain and historian of that embassy\*, which we shall take notice of in its proper place.

LALIBALA was distinguished both as a poet and an orator. The old fable, of a swarm of bees hanging to his lips

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\* See Alvarez, his relation of this Embassy.

in the cradle, is revived and applied to him as foretelling the sweetness of his elocution.

To Lalibala succeeded Imeranha Christos, remarkable for nothing but being son of such a father as Lalibala, and father to such a son as Naacueto Laab; both of them distinguished for works very extraordinary, though very different in their kind. The first, that is those of the father we have already hinted at, consisting in great mechanical undertakings. The other was an operation of the mind, of still more difficult nature, a victory over ambition, the voluntary abdication of a crown to which he succeeded without imputation of any crime.

TECLA HAIMANOUT, a monk and native of Abyssinia, had been ordained Abuna, and had founded the famous monastery of Debra Libanos in Shoa. He was a man at once celebrated for the sanctity of his life, the goodness of his understanding, and love to his country; and, by an extraordinary influence, obtained over the reigning king Naacueto Laab, he persuaded him, for conscience sake, to resign a crown, which (however it might be said with truth, that he received it from his father) could never be purged from the stain and crime of usurpation.

In all this time, the line of Solomon had been continued from Del Naad, who, we have seen, had escaped from the massacre of Damo, under Judith. Content with possessing the loyal province of Shoa, they continued their royal residence there, without having made one attempt, as far as history tells us, towards recovering their ancient kingdom.

## RACE OF SOLOMON BANISHED, BUT REIGNING IN SHOA.

Del Naad,  
 Mahaber Wedem,  
 Igba Sion,  
 Tzenaf Araad,  
 Nagash Zaré,  
 Asfeha,  
 Jacob,  
 Bahar Segued,  
 Adamas Segued,  
 Icon Amlac:

NAACUETO LAAB, of the house of Zaguè, was; it seems, a just and peaceable prince.

UNDER the mediation of Abuna Tecla Haimanout, a treaty was made between him and Icon Amlac consisting of four articles, all very extraordinary in their kind.

THE first was, that Naacueto Laab, prince of the house of Zaguè, should forthwith resign the kingdom of Abyssinia to Icon Amlac, reigning prince of the line of Solomon then in Shoa.

THE second, that a portion of lands in Lassa should be given to Naacueto Laab and his heirs in absolute property, irrevocably and irredeemably; that he should preserve, as marks of sovereignty, two silver kettle-drums, or nagareets; that the points of the spears of his guard, the globes that surmounted his sendeck, (that is the pole upon which the colours



colours are carried), should be silver, and that he should sit upon a gold stool, or chair, in form of that used by the kings of Abyssinia; and that both he and his descendents should be absolutely free from all homage, services, taxes, or public burdens for ever, and stiled Kings of Zaguè, or the Laf-ta king.

THE third article was, That one third of the kingdom should be appropriated and ceded absolutely to the Abuna himself, for the maintenance of his own state, and support of the clergy, convents, and churches in the kingdom; and this became afterwards an æra, or epoch, in Abyssinian history, called the æra of partition.

THE fourth, and last article, provided, that no native Abyssinian could thereafter be chosen Abuna, and this even though he was ordained at, and sent from Cairo. In virtue of this treaty, concluded and solemnly sworn to, Icon-Amlac took possession of his throne, and the other contracting parties of the provisions respectively allotted them.

THE part of the treaty that should appear most liable to be broken was that which erected a kingdom within a kingdom. However, it is one of the remarkable facts in the annals of this country, that the article between Icon Amlac and the house of Zaguè was observed for near 500 years; for it was made before the year 1300, and never was broken, but by the treacherous murder of the Zaguean prince by Allo Fasil in the unfortunate war of Begemder, in the reign of Joas 1765, the year before I arrived in Abyssinia; neither has any Abuna native of Abyssinia ever been known since that period. As for the exorbitant grant of one third

third of the kingdom to the Abuna, it has been in great measure resumed, as we may naturally suppose, upon different pretences of misbehaviour, true or alledged, by the king or his ministers, the first great invasion of it being in the subsequent reign of king Theodorus, who, far from losing popularity by this infraction, has been ever reckoned a model for sovereigns.



END OF VOLUME FIRST.