

“Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and “they shall be thine\*.” Here the several nations are distinctly and separately mentioned in their places, but the whole meaning of the passage would have been lost, had not the situation of these nations been perfectly known; or, had not the Sabeans been mentioned separately, for both the Sabeans and the Cushite were certainly Ethiopians. Now, the meaning of the verse is, that the fruit of the agriculture of Egypt, which is wheat, the commodities of the negro, gold, silver, ivory, and perfumes, would be brought by the Sabean shepherds, their carriers, a nation of great power, which should join themselves with you.

AGAIN, Ezekiel says,† “And they shall know that I am “the Lord, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all “her helpers shall be destroyed.”—“In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships, to make the careless “Ethiopians afraid.” Now, Nebuchadnezzar was to destroy Egypt‡, from the frontiers of Palestine, to the mountains above Atbara, where the Cushite dwelt. Between this and Egypt is a great desert; the country beyond it, and on both sides, was possessed by half a million of men. The Cushite, or negro merchant, was secure under these circumstances from any insult by land, but they were open to the sea, and had no defender, and messengers, therefore, in ships or a fleet had easy access to them, to alarm and keep them at home, that they did not fall into danger by marching into Egypt against Nebuchadnezzar, or interrupting the service upon which God had sent him. But this does not appear from translating

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\* Isa. chap. xlv. ver. 14. † Ezek. chap. xxx. ver. 8. and 9. ‡ Ezek. chap. xxix. ver. 10.



ting Cush, *Ethiopian*; the nearest Ethiopian to Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful and capable of opposing him, were the Ethiopian shepherds of the Thebaid, and these were not accessible to ships; and the shepherds, so posted near to the scene of destruction to be committed by Nebuchadnezzar, were enemies to the Cushites living in towns, and they had repeatedly themselves destroyed them, and therefore had no temptation to be other than spectators.

IN several other places, the same prophet speaks of Cush as the commercial nation, sympathising with their countrymen dwelling in the towns in Egypt, independent of the shepherds, who were really their enemies, both in civil and religious matters. "And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt\*." Now Ethiopia, as I have before said, that is, the low country of the shepherds, nearest Egypt, had no common cause with the Cushites that lived in towns there; it was their countrymen, the Cushites in Ethiopia, who mourned for those that fell in Egypt, who were merchants, traders, and dwelt in cities like themselves.

I SHALL mention but one instance more: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?†" Here Cush is rendered Ethiopian, and many Ethiopians being white, it does not appear why they should be fixed upon, or chosen for the question more than other people. But had Cush been translated Negro, or Black-moor, the question

\* Ezek. chap. xxx. ver. 4.

† Jerem. chap. xiii. ver. 23.



would have been very easily understood, Can the negro change his skin, or the leopard his spots?

JEREMIAH \* speaks of the chiefs of the mingled people that dwell in the deserts. And Ezekiel† also mentions them independent of all the others, whether Shepherds, or Cushites, or Libyans their neighbours, by the name of the Mingled People. Ifaiah ‡ calls them "a nation scattered and peeled; a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled:" which is a sufficient description of them, as having been expelled their own country, and settled in one that had suffered greatly by a deluge a short time before.

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\* Jerem. chap. xxv. ver. 24.

† Ezek. chap. xxx. ver. 5.

‡ Ifa. chap. xviii. ver. 28.



# THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

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## CHAP. III.

*Origin of Characters or Letters—Ethiopic the first Language—How and why the Hebrew Letter was formed.*

THE reader will observe what I have already said concerning the language of Habesh, or the Mingled Nations, that they have not characters of their own; but when written, which is very seldom, it must be by using the Geez alphabet. Kircher, however, says, there are two characters to be found in Abyssinia; one he calls the Sacred Old Syrian, the other the Vulgar, or Common Geez character, of which we are now speaking. But this is certainly a mistake; there never was, that I know, but two original characters which obtained in Egypt. The first was the Geez, the second the Saitic, and both these were the oldest characters in the world, and both derived from hieroglyphics.

ALTHOUGH it is impossible to avoid saying something here of the origin of languages, the reader must not expect that I should go very deep into the fashionable opinions concerning them, or believe that all the old deities of the



Pagan nations were the patriarchs of the Old Testament. With all respect to Sanchoniatho and his followers, I can no more believe that Osiris, the first king of Egypt, was a real personage, and that Tot was his secretary, than I can believe Saturn to be the patriarch Abraham, and Rachel and Leah, Venus and Minerva. I will not fatigue the reader with a detail of useless reasons; if Osiris is a real personage, if he was king of Egypt, and Tot his secretary, they surely travelled to very good purpose, as all the people of Europe and Asia seem to be agreed, that in person they first communicated letters and the art of writing to them, but at very different, and very distant periods.

THEBES was built by a colony of Ethiopians from Sirè, the city of Seir, or the Dog Star. Diodorus Siculus says, that the Greeks, by putting O before Siris, had made the word unintelligible to the Egyptians: Siris, then, was Osiris; but he was not the Sun, no more than he was Abraham, nor was he a real personage. He was Sirius, or the dog-star, designed under the figure of a dog, because of the warning he gave to Atbara, where the first observations were made at his heliacal rising, or his disengaging himself from the rays of the sun, so as to be visible to the naked eye. He was the Latrator Anubis, and his first appearance was figuratively compared to the barking of a dog, by the warning it gave to prepare for the approaching inundation. I believe, therefore, this was the first hieroglyphic; and that Isis, Osiris, and Tot, were all after inventions relating to it; and, in saying this, I am so far warranted, because there is not in Axum (once a large city) any other hieroglyphic but of the dog-star, as far as I can judge from the huge fragments of figures of this animal, remains of which, in different



rent postures, are still distinctly to be seen upon the pedestals everywhere among the ruins.

It is not to be doubted, that hieroglyphics then, but not astronomy, were invented at Thebes, where the theory of the dog-star was particularly investigated, because connected with their rural year. Ptolemy\* has preserved us an observation of an heliacal rising of Sirius on the 4th day after the summer solstice, which answers to the 2250 year before Christ; and there are great reasons to believe the Thebans were good practical astronomers long before that period†; early, as it may be thought, this gives to Thebes a much greater antiquity than does the chronicle of Axum just cited.

As such observations were to be of service for ever, they became more valuable and useful in proportion to their priority. The most ancient of them would be of use to the astronomers of this day, for Sir Isaac Newton appeals to these of Chiron the Centaur. Equations may indeed be discovered in a number of centuries, which, by reason of the smallness of their quantities, may very probably have escaped the most attentive and scrupulous care of two or three generations; and many alterations in the starry firmament, old stars being nearly extinguished, and new emerging, would appear from a comparative state of the  
v. i. 3 f heavens

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\* Uranologion. P. Petau.

† Banbridge, Ann. canicul.



heavens made for a series of ages. And a Theban *Herschel*\* would have given us the history of planets he then observed, which, after appearing for ages, are now visible no more, or have taken a different form.

THE dial, or gold circle of Olimandyas, shews what an immense progress they had made in astronomy in so little time. This, too, is a proof of an early fall and revival of the arts in Egypt, for the knowledge and use of Armilla had been lost with the destruction of Thebes, and were not again discovered, that is, revived, till the reign of Ptolemy Soter, 300 years before the Christian era. I consider that immense quantity of hieroglyphics, with which the walls of the temples, and faces of the obelisks, are covered, as containing so many astronomical observations.

I LOOK upon these as the ephemerides of some thousand years, and that sufficiently accounts for their number. Their date and accuracy were indisputable; they were exhibited in the most public places, to be consulted as occasion required; and, by the deepness of the engraving, and hardness of the materials, and the thickness and solidity of the block itself upon which they were carved, they bade defiance at once to violence and time.

I KNOW that most of the learned writers are of sentiments very different from mine in these respects. They look for  
4 mysteries

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\* An astronomer greatly above my praise.



mysteries and hidden meanings, moral and philosophical treatises, as the subjects of these hieroglyphics. A sceptre, they say, is the hieroglyphic of a king. But where do we meet a sceptre upon an antique Egyptian monument? or who told us this was an emblem of royalty among the Egyptians at the time of the first invention of ~~this~~ figurative writing? Again, the serpent with the tail in its mouth denotes the eternity of God, that he is without beginning and without end. This is a Christian truth, and a Christian belief, but no where to be found in the polytheism of the inventors of hieroglyphics. Was Cronos or Ouranus without beginning and without end? Was this the case with Osiris and Tot, whose fathers and mothers births and marriages are known? If this was a truth, independent of revelation, and imprinted from the beginning in the minds of men; if it was destined to be an eternal truth, which must have appeared by every man finding it in his own breast, from the beginning, how unnecessary must the trouble have been to write a common known truth like this, at the expence of six weeks labour, upon a table of porphyry or granite.

It is not with philosophy as with astronomy; the older the observations, the more use they are of to posterity. A lecture of an Egyptian priest upon divinity, morality, or natural history, would not pay the trouble, at this day, of engraving it upon stone; and one of the reasons that I think no such subjects were ever treated in hieroglyphics is, that in all those I ever had an opportunity of seeing, and very few people have seen more, I have constantly found the same figures repeated, which obviously, and without dispute, allude to the history of the Nile, and its different periods of increase, the mode of measuring it, the E. Asian winds; in short, such  
observations



observations as we every day see in an almanack, in which we cannot suppose, that forsaking the obvious import, where the good they did was evident, they should ascribe different meanings to the hieroglyphic, to which no key has been left, and therefore their future inutility must have been foreseen.

I SHALL content myself in this wide field, to fix upon one famous hieroglyphical personage, which is *Tot*, the secretary of Osiris, whose function I shall endeavour to explain; if I fail, I am in good company; I give it only as my opinion, and submit it cheerfully to the correction of others. The word *Tot* is Ethiopic, and there can be little doubt it means the dog-star. It was the name given to the first month of the Egyptian year. The meaning of the name, in the language of the province of Siré, is an *idol*, composed of different heterogeneous pieces; it is found having this signification in many of their books. Thus a naked man is not a *Tot*, but the body of a naked man, with a dog's head, an ass's head, or a serpent instead of a head, is a *Tot*. According to the import of that word, it is, I suppose, an almanack, or section of the phenomena in the heavens which are to happen in the limited time it is made to comprehend, when exposed for the information of the public; and the more extensive its use is intended to be, the greater number of emblems, or signs of observation, it is charged with.

BESIDES many other emblems or figures, the common *Tot*, I think, has in his hand a cross with a handle, as it is called *Crux Ansata*, which has occasioned great speculation among the decyphers. This cross, fixed to a circle, is supposed to denote the *four elements*, and to be the symbol of the influence





N<sup>o</sup>1

A TABLE OF *HIEROGLYPHICS*, FOUND AT AXUM 1771.

*London Published December 1<sup>st</sup> 1789 by G. Robinson & Co*



influence the sun has over them. Jamblichus\* records, that this cross, in the hand of Tot, is the name of the *divine Being* that travels through the world. Sozomen† thinks it means the *life* to come, the same with the ineffable image of eternity. Others, strange difference! say it is the *phallus*, or human genitals, while a later‡ writer maintains it to be the mariner's compass. My opinion, on the contrary is, that, as this figure was exposed to the public for the reason I have mentioned, the Crux Ansata in his hand was nothing else but a monogram of his own name TO, and TT signifying TOT, or as we write Almanack upon a collection published for the same purpose.

THE changing of these emblems, and the multitude of them, produced the necessity of contracting their size, and this again a consequential alteration in the original forms; and a stile, or small portable instrument, became all that was necessary for finishing these small *Tots*, instead of a large graver or carving tool, employed in making the large ones. But men, at last, were so much used to the alteration, as to know it better than under its primitive form, and the engraving became what we may call the first elements, or root, in preference to the original.

THE reader will see, that, in my history of the civil wars in Abyssinia, the king, forced by rebellion to retire to the province of Tigré, and being at Axum, found a stone covered with hieroglyphics, which, by the many inquiries I made

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after

\* Jamblich. de Myst. sect. 8. cap. 5.

† Sozomen, Eccles. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 15.

‡ Herw. theolog. Ethnica, p. 11.



after inscriptions, and some conversations I had had with him, he guessed was of the kind which I wanted. Full of that princely goodness and condescension that he ever honoured me with, throughout my whole stay, he brought it with him when he returned from Tigré, and was restored to his throne at Gondar.

It seems to me to be one of those private Tots, or portable almanacks, of the most curious kind. The length of the whole stone is fourteen inches, and six inches broad, upon a base three inches high, projecting from the block itself, and covered with hieroglyphics. A naked figure of a man, near six inches, stands upon two crocodiles, their heads turned different ways. In each of his hands he holds two serpents, and a scorpion, all by the tail, and in the right hand hangs a noose, in which is suspended a ram or goat. On the left hand he holds a lion by the tail. The figure is in great relief; and the head of it with that kind of cap or ornament which is generally painted upon the head of the figure called Isis, but this figure is that of a man. On each side of the whole-length figure, and above it, upon the face of the stone where it projects, are marked a number of hieroglyphics of all kinds. Over this is a very remarkable representation; it is an old head, with very strong features, and a large bushy beard, and upon it a high cap ribbed or striped. This I take to be the *Cnuph*, or *Animus Mundi*, though *Apuleus*, with very little probability, says this was made in the likeness of no creature whatever. The back of the stone is divided into eight compartments\*, from the top

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\* I apprehend this is owing to the circumstances of the climate, in the four months, the time of the inundation, the heavens were so covered as to afford no observations to be recorded.





N<sup>o</sup> 2

A TABLE OF *HIEROGLYPHICS*, FOUND AT AXUM 1771.



top to the bottom, and these are filled with hieroglyphics in the last stage, before they took the entire resemblance of letters. Many are perfectly formed; the Crux Ansata appears in one of the compartments, and Tot in another. Upon the edge, just above where it is broken, is 1119, so fair and perfect in form, that it might serve as an example of calligraphy, even in the present times; 45 and 19; and some other arithmetical figures, are found up and down among the hieroglyphics.

THIS I suppose was what formerly the Egyptians called a book, or almanack; a collection of these was probably hung up in some conspicuous place, to inform the public of the state of the heavens, and seasons, and diseases, to be expected in the course of them, as is the case in the English almanacks at this day. Hermes is said to have composed 36,535 books, probably of this sort, or they might contain the correspondent astronomical observations made in a certain time at Meroë, Ophir, Axum, or Thebes, communicated to be hung up for the use of the neighbouring cities. Porphyry \* gives a particular account of the Egyptian almanacks. "What is comprised in the Egyptian almanacks, says he, contains but a small part of the Hermaic institutions; all that relates to the rising, and setting of the moon and planets, and of the stars and their influence, and also some advice upon diseases."

It is very remarkable, that, besides my Tot here described, there are five or six, precisely the same in all respects, al-

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\* Porphyry Epist. ad Anebonem.



ready in the British Museum; one of them, the largest of the whole, is made of sycamore, the others are of metal. There is another, I am told, in Lord Shelburn's collection; this I never had an opportunity of seeing; but a very principal attention seems to have been paid to make all of them light and portable, and it would seem that by these having been formed so exactly similar, they were the Tots intended to be exposed in different cities or places, and were neither more nor less than Egyptian almanacks.

WHETHER letters were known to Noah before the flood, is no where said from any authority, and the inquiry into it is therefore useless. It is difficult, in my opinion, to imagine, that any society, engaged in different occupations, could subsist long without them. There seems to be less doubt, that they were invented, soon after the dispersion, long before Moses, and in common use among the Gentiles of his time.

It seems also probable, that the first alphabet was Ethiopic, first founded on hieroglyphics, and afterwards modelled into more current, and less laborious figures, for the sake of applying them to the expedition of business. Mr Fourmont is so much of this opinion, that he says it is evident the three first letters of the Ethiopic alphabet are hieroglyphics yet, and that the Beta resembles the door of a house or temple. But, with great submission, the doors of houses and temples, when first built, were square at the top, for arches were not known. The Beta was taken from the doors of the first Troglodytes in the mountains, which were rounded, and gave the hint for turning the arch, when architecture advanced nearer to perfection.

OTHERS



OTHERS are for giving to letters a divine original: they say they were taught to Abraham by God himself; but this is nowhere vouched; though it cannot be denied, that it appears from scripture there were two sorts of characters known to Moses, when God spoke to him on Mount Sinai. The first two tables, we are told, were wrote by the finger of God, in what character is not said, but Moses received them to read to the people, so he surely understood them. But, when he had broken these two tables, and had another meeting with God on the mount on the subject of the law, God directs him specially not to write in the Egyptian character or hieroglyphics, but in the current hand used by the Ethiopian merchants, *like the letters upon a signet*; that is, he should not write in hieroglyphics by a *picture*, representing the *thing*, for that the law forbids; and the bad consequences of this were evident; but he should write the law in the current hand, by characters representing sounds, (though nothing else in heaven or on earth,) or by the letters that the Ishmaelites, Cushites, and India trading nations had long used in business for signing their invoices, engagements, &c. and this was the meaning of being *like the letters of a signet*.

HENCE, it is very clear, God did not invent letters, nor did Moses, who understood both characters before the promulgation of the law upon Mount Sinai, having learned them in Egypt, and during his long stay among the Cushites, and Shepherds in Arabia Petrea. Hence it should appear also, that the sacred character of the Egyptian was considered as profane, and forbid to the Hebrews, and that the common Ethiopic was the Hebrew sacred character, in which the copy of the law was first wrote. The text is very clear and explicit: "And the stones shall  
" be



“ be with the *names* of the children of Israel, twelve,  
 “ according to their *names*, like the engravings of a *signet*; every  
 “ one with his *name*, shall they be according to the twelve  
 “ tribes\*.” Which is plainly, You shall not write in the way  
 used till this day, for it leads the people into idolatry; you  
 shall not type Judah by a *lion*, Zebulun by a *ship*, Issachar by  
 an *ass* couching between two burdens; but, instead of writing  
 by pictures, you shall take the other known hand, the  
 merchants writing, which signifies *sounds*, not *things*; write  
 the names Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, in the letters, such as the  
 merchants use upon their signets. And, on Aaron’s breast-  
 plate of pure gold, was to be written, in the same alphabet,  
 like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD†.

THESE signets, of the remotest antiquity in the East, are worn  
 still upon every man’s hand to this day, having the name of  
 the person that wears them, or some sentence upon it always  
 religious. The Greeks, after the Egyptians, continued the  
 other method, and described figures upon their signet; the  
 use of both has been always common in Britain.

WE find afterwards, that, in place of stone or gold, for  
 greater convenience Moses wrote in a book, “ And it came  
 “ to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the  
 “ words of this law in a book, until they were finished;†”---

ALTHOUGH, then, Moses certainly did not invent either,  
 or any character, it is probable that he made two, perhaps  
 more, alterations in the Ethiopic alphabet as it then stood,

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\* Exod. chap. xxviii. ver. 21. † Exod. chap. xxviii. ver. 36. ‡ Deut. chap. xxxi. ver. 24.



with a view to increase the difference still more between the writing then in use among the nations, and what he intended to be peculiar to the Jews. The first was altering the direction, and writing from right to left, whereas, the Ethiopian was, and is to this day, written from left to right, as was the hieroglyphical alphabet\*. The second was taking away the points, which, from all times, must have existed and been, as it were, a part of the Ethiopic letters invented with them, and I do not see how it is possible it ever could have been read without them; so that, which way soever the dispute may turn concerning the antiquity of the application of the Masoretic points, the invention was no new one, but did exist as early as language was written. And I apprehend, that these alterations were very rapidly adopted after the writing of the law, and applied to the new character as it then stood; because, not long after, Moses was ordered to submit the law itself to the people, which would have been perfectly useless, had not reading and the character been familiar to them at that time.

It appears to me also, that the Ethiopic words were always separated, and could not run together, or be joined as the Hebrew, and that the running the words together into one must have been matter of choice in the Hebrew, to increase the difference in writing the two languages, as the contrary had been practised in the Ethiopian language. Though there is really little resemblance between the Ethiopic and the Hebrew letters, and not much more between that

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\* Vide the hieroglyphics on the drawing of the stone.



that and the Samaritan, yet I have a very great suspicion the languages were once much nearer a-kin than this disagreement of their alphabet promises, and, for this reason, that a very great number of words are found throughout the Old Testament that have really no root, nor can be derived from any Hebrew origin, and yet all have, in the Ethiopic, a plain, clear, unequivocal origin, to and from which they can be traced without force or difficulty.

I SHALL now finish what I have to say upon this subject, by observing, that the Ethiopic alphabet consists of twenty-six letters, each of these, by a virgula, or point annexed, varying in sound, so as to become, in effect, forty-two distinct letters. But I must further add, that at first they had but twenty-five of these original letters, the Latin P being wanting, so that they were obliged to substitute another letter in the place of it. Paulus, for example, they called Taulus, Oulus, or Caulus. Petros they pronounced Ketros. At last they substituted T, and added this to the end of their alphabet, giving it the force of P, though it was really a repetition of a character, rather than invention. Besides these there are twenty others of the nature of diphthongs, but I should suppose some of these are not of the same antiquity with the letters of the alphabet, but have been invented in later times by the scribes for convenience.

THE reader will understand, that, speaking of the Ethiopic at present, I mean only the Geez language, the language of the Shepherds, and of the books. None of the other many languages spoken in Abyssinia have characters for writing. But when the Amharic became substituted, in common use and conversation, to the Geez, after the resto-



ration of the Royal family, from their long banishment in Shoa, seven new characters were necessarily added to answer the pronunciation of this new language, but no book was ever yet written in any other language except Geez. On the contrary, there is an old law in this country, handed down by tradition only, that whoever should attempt to translate the holy scripture into Amharic, or any other language, his throat should be cut after the manner in which they kill sheep, his family sold to slavery, and his house razed to the ground; and, whether the fear of this law was true or feigned, it was a great obstacle to me in getting those translations of the Song of Solomon made which I intend for specimens of the different languages of those distinct nations.

THE Geez is exceedingly harsh and unharmonious. It is full of these two letters, D and T, on which an accent is put that nearly resembles stammering. Considering the small extent of sea that divides this country from Arabia, we are not to wonder that it has great affinity to the Arabic. It is not difficult to be acquired by those who understand any other of the oriental languages; and, for a reason I have given some time ago, that the roots of many Hebrew words are only to be found here, I think it absolutely necessary to all those that would obtain a critical skill in that language.

WEMMERS, a Carmelite, has wrote a small Ethiopic dictionary in thin quarto, which, as far as it goes, has considerable merit; and I am told there are others of the same kind extant, written chiefly by Catholic priests. But by far the most copious, distinct, and best-digested work, is that of Job Ludolf,



dolf, a German of great learning in the Eastern languages, and who has published a grammar and dictionary of the Geez in folio. This read with attention is more than sufficient to make any person of very moderate genius a great proficient in the Ethiopic language. He has likewise written a short essay towards a dictionary and grammar of the Amharic, which, considering the very small help he had, shews his surprising talents and capacity. Much, however, remains still to do; and it is indeed scarcely possible to bring this to any tolerable degree of forwardness for want of books, unless a man of genius, while in the country itself, were to give his time and application to it: It is not much more difficult than the former, and less connected with the Hebrew or Arabic, but has a more harmonious pronunciation.



CHAP.



## CHAP. IV.

*Some Account of the Trade Winds and Monsoons—Application of this to the Voyage to Ophir and Tarshish.*

**I**T is a matter of real affliction, which shews the vanity of all human attainments, that the preceding pages have been employed in describing, and, as it were, drawing from oblivion, the history of those very nations that first conveyed to the world, not the elements of literature only, but all sorts of learning, arts, and sciences in their full detail and perfection. We see that these had taken deep root, and were not easily extirpated. The first great and fatal blow they received was from the destruction of Thebes, and its monarchy, by the first invasion of the Shepherds under Salatis, which shook them to the very foundation. The next was in the conquest of the Thebaid under Sabaco and his Shepherds. The third was when the empire of Lower Egypt (I do not think of the Thebaid) was transferred to Memphis, and that city taken, as writers say, by the Shepherds of Abaris only, or of the Delta, though it is scarcely probable, that, in so favourite a cause as the destruction of cities, the whole Shepherds did not lend their assistance.



THESE were the calamities, we may suppose, under which the arts in Egypt fell; for, as to the foreign conquests of Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonians, they affected cities and the persons of individuals only. They were temporary, never intended to have lasting consequences; their beginning and end were prophesied at the same time. That of the Assyrians was a plundering expedition only, as we are told by scripture itself, intended to last but forty years\*, half the life of man, given, for a particular purpose, for the indemnification of the king Nebuchadnezzar, for the hardships he sustained at the siege of Tyre, where the obstinacy of the inhabitants, in destroying their wealth, deprived the conqueror of his expected booty. The Babylonians were a people the most polished after the Egyptians. Egypt under them suffered by rapacity, but not by ignorance, as it did in all the conquests of the Shepherds.

AFTER Thebes was destroyed by the first Shepherds, commerce, and it is probable the arts with it, fled for a time from Egypt, and centered in Edom, a city and territory, tho' we know little of its history, at that period the richest in the world. David, in the very neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon, calls Edom the strong city; "Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom†?" David, from an old quarrel, and probably from the recent instigations of the Tyrians his friends, invaded Edom‡, destroyed the city, and dispersed the people. He was the great military power then upon the continent; Tyre and Edom were rivals; and his conquest of that last great

\* Ezek. chap. xxix. ver. 11.

† Psalm. chap. lx. ver. 9. and Psal. cviii. ver. 10.

‡ 2 Sam. chap. viii. ver. 14. 1 Kings chap. xi. ver. 15, 16.



great and trading state, which he united to his empire, would yet have lost him the trade he fought to cultivate, by the very means he used to obtain it, had not Tyre been in a capacity to succeed to Edom, and to collect its mariners and artificers, scattered abroad by the conquest.

DAVID took possession of two ports, Eloth and Ezion-gaber\*, from which he carried on the trade to Ophir and Tarshish, to a very great extent, to the day of his death. We are struck with astonishment when we reflect upon the sum that Prince received in so short a time from these mines of Ophir. For what is said to be given by King David† and his Princes for the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, exceeds in value eight hundred millions of our money, if the talent there spoken of is a Hebrew talent‡, and not a weight of the same denomination, the value of which was less, and peculiarly reserved for and used in the traffic of these precious metals, gold and silver. It was, probably, an African or Indian weight, proper to the same mines, whence was gotten the gold appropriated to fine commodities only, as is the case with our ounce Troy different from the Averdupoise.

SOLOMON, who succeeded David in his kingdom, was his successor likewise in the friendship of Hiram king of Tyre.

Solomon.

\* 1 Kings, chap. ix. ver. 26. 2 Chron. chap. viii. ver. 17. † 1 Chron. chap. xxii. ver. 14, 15, 16. Chap. xxix. ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.—Three thousand Hebrew talents of gold, reduced to our money, amount to twenty-one millions and six hundred thousand pounds Sterling.

‡ The value of a Hebrew talent appears from Exodus, chap. xxxviii. ver. 25, 26. For 663,550 persons being taxed at half a shekel each, they must have paid in the whole 301,775; now that sum is said to amount to 100 talents, 1775 shekels only; deduct the two latter sums, and there will remain 300,000, which, divided by 108, will leave 3000 shekels for each of these talents.



Solomon visited Eloth and Ezion-gaber\* in person, and fortified them. He collected a number of pilots, shipwrights, and mariners, dispersed by his father's conquest of Edom, most of whom had taken refuge in Tyre and Sidon, the commercial states in the Mediterranean. Hiram supplied him with sailors in abundance; but the sailors so furnished from Tyre were not capable of performing the service which Solomon required, without the direction of pilots and mariners used to the navigation of the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Such were those mariners who formerly lived in Edom, whom Solomon had now collected in Eloth and Ezion-gaber.

This last-mentioned navigation was very different in all respects from that of the Mediterranean, which, in respect to the former, might be compared to a pond, every side being confined with shores little distant the one from the other; even that small extent of sea was so full of islands, that there was much greater art required in the pilot to avoid land than to reach it. It was, besides, subject to variable winds, being to the northward of 30° of latitude, the limits to which Providence hath confined those winds all over the globe; whereas the navigation of the Indian Ocean was governed by laws more convenient and regular, though altogether different from those that obtained in the Mediterranean. Before I proceed, it will be necessary to explain this phenomenon.

It is known to all those who are ever so little versant in the history of Egypt, that the wind from the north prevails  
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\* 2 Chron. chap. viii. ver 17.



in that valley all the summer months, and is called the *Etesian winds*; it sweeps the valley from north to south, that being the direction of Egypt, and of the Nile, which runs through the midst of it. The two chains of mountains, which confine Egypt on the east and on the west, constrain the wind to take this precise direction.

It is natural to suppose the same would be the case in the Arabian Gulf, had that narrow sea been in a direction parallel to the land of Egypt, or due north and south. The Arabian Gulf, however, or what we call the Red Sea, lies from nearly north-west to south-east, from Suez to Mocha. It then turns nearly east and west till it joins the Indian Ocean at the Straits of Babelmandeb, as we have already said, and may be further seen by consulting the map. Now, the Etesian winds, which are due north in Egypt, here take the direction of the Gulf, and blow in that direction steadily all the season, while it continues north in the valley of Egypt; that is, from April to October the wind blows north-west up the Arabian Gulf towards the Straits; and, from November till March, directly contrary, down the Arabian Gulf, from the Straits of Babelmandeb to Suez and the Isthmus.

These winds are by some corruptly called *the trade-winds*; but this name given to them is a very erroneous one, and apt to confound narratives, and make them unintelligible. A trade-wind is a wind which, all the year through, blows, and has ever blown, from the same point of the horizon; such is the south-west, south of the Line, in the Indian and Pacific Ocean. On the contrary, these winds, of which we have now spoken, are called *monsoons*; each year they blow



fix months from the northward, and the other fix months from the southward, in the Arabian Gulf: While in the Indian Ocean, without the Straits of Babelmandeb, they blow just the contrary at the same seasons; that is, in summer from the southward, and in winter from the northward, subject to a small inflexion to the east and to the west.

THE reader will observe, then, that, a vessel sailing from Suez or the Elanitic Gulf, in any of the summer months, will find a steady wind at north-west, which will carry it in the direction of the Gulf to Mocha. At Mocha, the coast is east and west to the Straits of Babelmandeb, so that the vessel from Mocha will have variable winds for a short space, but mostly westerly, and these will carry her on to the Straits. She is then done with the monsoon in the Gulf, which was from the north, and, being in the Indian Ocean, is taken up by the monsoon which blows in the summer months there, and is directly contrary to what obtains in the Gulf. This is a south-wester, which carries the vessel with a flowing sail to any part in India, without delay or impediment.

THE same happens upon her return home. She sails in the winter months by the monsoon proper to that sea, that is, with a north-east, which carries her through the Straits of Babelmandeb. She finds, within the Gulf, a wind at south-east, directly contrary to what was in the ocean; but then her course is contrary likewise, so that a south-easter, answering to the direction of the Gulf, carries her directly to Suez, or the Elanitic Gulf, to whichever way she proposes going. Hitherto all is plain, simple, and easy to be understood;



understood; and this was the reason why, in the earliest ages, the India trade was carried on without difficulty.

MANY doubts, however, have arisen about a port called *Ophir*, whence the immense quantities of gold and silver came, which were necessary at this time, when provision was making for building the Temple of Jerusalem. In what part of the world this Ophir was has not been yet agreed. Connected with this voyage, too, was one to Tarshish, which suffers the same difficulties; one and the same fleet performed them both in the same season.

IN order to come to a certainty where this Ophir was, it will be necessary to examine what scripture says of it, and to keep precisely to every thing like description which we can find there, without indulging our fancy farther. *First*, then, the trade to Ophir was carried on from the Elanitic Gulf through the Indian Ocean. *Secondly*, The returns were gold, silver, and ivory, but especially silver\*. *Thirdly*, The time of the going and coming of the fleet was precisely three years †, at no period more nor less.

Now, if Solomon's fleet sailed from the Elanitic Gulf to the Indian Ocean, this voyage of necessity must have been made by monsoons, for no other winds reign in that ocean. And, what certainly shews this was the case, is the precise term of three years, in which the fleet went and came between Ophir and Ezion-gaber. For it is plain, so as to supersede the necessity of proof or argument, that, had this

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voyage

\* 1 Kings, chap. x, ver. 22.

† 1 Kings, chap. x, ver. 22. 2 Chron. chap. ix, ver. 21.



voyage been made with variable winds, no limited term of years ever could have been observed in its going and returning. The fleet might have returned from Ophir in two years, in three, four, or five years; but, with variable winds, the return precisely in three years was not possible, whatever part of the globe Ophir might be situated in.

NEITHER Spain nor Peru could be Ophir; part of these voyages must have been made by variable winds, and the return consequently uncertain. The island of Ceylon, in the East Indies, could not be Ophir; the voyage thither is indeed made by monsoons, but we have shewed that a year is all that can be spent in a voyage to the East Indies; besides, Ceylon has neither gold nor silver, though it has ivory. St. Domingo has neither gold, nor silver, nor ivory. When the Tyrians discovered Spain, they found a profusion of silver in huge masses, but this they brought to Tyre by the Mediterranean, and then sent it to the Red Sea over land to answer the returns from India. Tarshish, too, is not found to be a port in any of these voyages, so that part of the description fails, nor were there ever elephants bred in Spain.

THESE mines of Ophir were probably what furnished the East with gold in the earliest times; great traces of excavation must, therefore, have appeared; yet in none of the places just mentioned are there great remains of any mines that have been wrought. The ancient traces of silver-mines in Spain are not to be found, and there never were any of gold. John Dos Santos\*, a Dominican friar, says, that on the

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\* Vid. Voyage of Dos Santos, published by Le Grande.



the coast of Africa, in the kingdom of Sofala, the mainland opposite to Madagascar, there are mines of gold and silver, than which none can be more abundant, especially in silver. They bear the traces of having been wrought from the earliest ages. They were actually open and working when the Portuguese conquered that part of the peninsula, and were probably given up since the discovery of the new world, rather from political than any other reasons.

JOHN DOS SANTOS says, that he landed at Sofala in the year 1586; that he sailed up the great river Cuama as far as Tetè, where, always desirous to be in the neighbourhood of gold, his Order had placed their convent. Thence he penetrated for above two hundred leagues into the country, and saw the gold mines then working, at a mountain called Afura\*. At a considerable distance from these are the silver mines of Chicoua; at both places there is great appearance of ancient excavations; and at both places the houses of the kings are built with mud and straw, whilst there are large remains of massy buildings of stone and lime.

It is a tradition which generally obtains in that country, that these works belonged to the Queen of Saba, and were built at the time, and for the purpose of the trade on the Red Sea: this tradition is common to all the Cafres in that country. Eupolemus, an ancient author quoted by Eusebius†, speaking of David, says, that he built ships at Eloth, a city in Arabia, and thence sent miners, or, as he

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calls

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\* See the map of this voyage.

† Apud Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* lib. 9.



calls them, *metal-men*, to Orphi, or Ophir, an island in the Red Sea. Now, by the Red Sea, he understands the Indian Ocean\*; and by Orphi, he probably meant the island of Madagascar; or Orphi (or Ophir) might have been the name of the Continent, instead of Sofala, that is, Sofala where the mines are might have been the main-land of Orphi.

THE kings of the isles are often mentioned in this voyage; Socotra, Madagascar, the Commorras, and many other small islands thereabout, are probably those the scripture calls the *Iffes*. All, then, at last reduces itself to the finding a place, either Sofala, or any other place adjoining to it, which avowedly can furnish gold, silver, and ivory in quantity, has large tokens of ancient excavations, and is at the same time under such restrictions from monsoons, that three years are absolutely necessary to perform the voyage, that it needs no more, and cannot be done in less, and this is Ophir.

LET US now try these mines of Dos Santos by the laws of the monsoons, which we have already laid down in describing the voyage to India. The fleet, or ship, for Sofala, parting in June from Ezion-gaber, would run down before the northern monsoon to Mocha. Here, not the monsoon, but the direction of the Gulf changes, and the violence of the south-westers, which then reign in the Indian Ocean, make themselves at times felt even in Mocha Roads. The vessel therefore comes to an anchor in the harbour of Mocha, and here she waits for moderate weather and a fair wind, which

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\* Dionysii Periegesis, ver. 38. and Comment. Eustathii in eundem. Strabo, lib. 16. p. 765. Agathemeris Geographia, lib. 2. cap. 11.



which carries her out of the Straits of Babelmandeb, through the few leagues where the wind is variable. If her course was now to the East Indies, that is east-north-east, or north-east and by north, she would find a strong south-west wind that would carry her to any part of India, as soon as she cleared Cape Gardafan, to which she was bound.

BUT matters are widely different if she is bound for Sofala; her course is nearly south-west, and she meets at Cape Gardafan a strong south-wester that blows directly in her teeth. Being obliged to return into the gulf, she mistakes this for a trade-wind, because she is not able to make her voyage to Mocha but by the summer monsoon, which carries her no farther than the Straits of Babelmandeb, and then leaves her in the face of a contrary wind, a strong current to the northward, and violent swell.

THE attempting this voyage with sails, in these circumstances, was absolutely impossible, as their vessels went only before the wind: if it was performed at all, it must have been by oars\*, and great havock and loss of men must have been the consequence of the several trials. This is not conjecture only; the prophet Ezekiel describes the very fact. Speaking of the Tyrian voyages probably of this very one he says, "Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters" (the ocean): the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas†. In short, the east, that is the north-east wind, was the very monsoon that was to carry them to Sofala, yet having no sails, being upon a lee-shore, a very bold coast,

\* Ezek. chap. xxvii. ver. 6.

† Ezek. chap. xxvii. ver. 26.



coast, and great swell, it was absolutely impossible with oars to save themselves from destruction.

At last philosophy and observation, together with the unwearied perseverance of man bent upon his own views and interest, removed these difficulties, and shewed the mariners of the Arabian Gulf, that these periodical winds, which, in the beginning, they looked upon as invincible barriers to the trading to Sofala, when once understood, were the very means of performing this voyage safely and expeditiously.

THE vessel trading to Sofala failed, as I have said, from the bottom of the Arabian Gulf in summer, with the monsoon at north, which carried her to Mocha. There the monsoon failed her by the change of the direction of the Gulf. The south-west winds, which blow without Cape Gardafan in the Indian Ocean, forced themselves round the Cape so as to be felt in the road of Mocha, and make it uneasy riding there. But these soon changed, the weather became moderate, and the vessel, I suppose in the month of August, was safe at anchor under Cape Gardafan, where was the port which, many years afterwards, was called Promontorium Aromaticum. Here the ship was obliged to stay all November, because all these summer months the wind south of the Cape was a strong south-wester, as hath been before said, directly in the teeth of the voyage to Sofala. But this time was not lost; part of the goods bought to be ready for the return was ivory, frankincense, and myrrh; and the ship was then at the principal mart for these.

I SUPPOSE in November the vessel failed with the wind at north-east, with which she would soon have made her voyage.



age: But off the coast of Melinda, in the beginning of December, she there met an anomalous monsoon at south-west, in our days first observed by Dr Halley, which cut off her voyage to Sofala, and obliged her to put in to the small harbour of *Mocha*, near Melinda, but nearer still to Tarshish, which we find here by accident, and which we think a strong corroboration that we are right as to the rest of the voyage. In the Annals of Abyssinia, we see that Amda Sion, making war upon that coast in the 14th century, in a list of the rebellious Moorish vassals, mentions the Chief of Tarshish as one of them, in the very situation where we have now placed him.

SOLOMON's vessel, then, was obliged to stay at Tarshish till the month of April of the second year. In May, the wind set in at north-east, and probably carried her that same month to Sofala. All the time she spent at Tarshish was not lost, for part of her cargo was to be brought from that place, and she probably bought, bespoke, or left it there. From May of the second year, to the end of that monsoon in October, the vessel could not stir; the wind was north-east. But this time, far from being lost, was necessary to the traders for getting in their cargo, which we shall suppose was ready for them.

THE ship sails, on her return, in the month of November of the second year, with the monsoon south-west, which in a very few weeks would have carried her into the Arabian Gulf. But off Mocha, near Melinda and Tarshish, she met the north-east monsoon, and was obliged to go into that port and stay there till the end of that monsoon; after which a south-wester came to her relief in May of the third year.

With



With the May monsoon she ran to Mocha within the Straits, and was there confined by the summer monsoon blowing up the Arabian Gulf from Suez, and meeting her. Here she lay till that monsoon, which in summer blows northerly from Suez, changed to a south-east one in October or November, and that very easily brought her up into the Elnitic Gulf, the middle or end of December of the third year. She had no need of more time to complete her voyage, and it was not possible she could do it in less. In short, she changed the monsoon six times, which is thirty-six months, or three years exactly; and there is not another combination of monsoons over the globe, as far as I know, capable to effect the same. The reader will please to consult the map, and keep it before him, which will remove any difficulties he may have. It is for his instruction this map has been made, not for that of the learned prelate\* to whom it is inscribed, much more capable of giving additional lights, than in need of receiving any information I can give, even on this subject.

THE celebrated Montesquieu conjectures, that Ophir was really on the coast of Africa; and the conjecture of that great man merits more attention than the assertions of ordinary people. He is too sagacious, and too enlightened, either to doubt of the reality of the voyage itself, or to seek for Ophir and Tarshish in China. Uninformed, however, of the particular direction of the monsoons upon the coast, first very slightly spoken of by Eudoxus, and lately observed and delineated

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\* Dr Douglas, Bishop of Carlisle.



lineated by Dr Halley, he was staggered upon considering that the whole distance, which employed a vessel in Solomon's time for three years, was a thousand leagues, scarcely more than the work of a month. He, therefore, supposes, that the reason of delay was owing to the imperfection of the vessels, and goes into very ingenious calculations, reasonings, and conclusions thereupon. He conjectures, therefore, that the ships employed by Solomon were what he calls *junks*\* of the Red Sea, made of papyrus, and covered with hides or leather:

PLINY † had said, that one of these junks of the Red Sea was twenty days on a voyage, which a Greek or Roman vessel would have performed in seven; and Strabo ‡ had said the same thing before him.

THIS relative slowness, or swiftness, will not solve the difficulty. For, if these junks || were the vessels employed to Ophir, the long voyage, much more they would have been employed on the short one, to and from India; now they performed this within a year, which was all a Roman or Greek vessel could do, therefore this was not the cause. Those employed by Solomon were Tyrian and Idumean vessels, the best ships and sailers of their age. Whoever has seen the prodigious swell, the violent currents, and strong south-westers beyond the Straits of Babelmandeb, will not need any argument to persuade him, that no vessel made of papyrus, or leather, could live an hour upon that sea. The

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junks,

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\* Vide L'Esprit des Loix, liv. xxi. cap. 6. p. 476. † Plin. lib. vi. cap. 22. ‡ Strabo, lib. xv.  
|| I know there are contrary opinions, and the junks might have been various. Vide Salm.



junks, indeed, were light and convenient boats, made to cross the narrow gulf between the Sabeans and Homerites, or Cushites, at Azab upon the Red Sea, and carry provisions from Arabia Felix to the more desert coast of Azab. I have hinted, that the names of places sufficiently demonstrate the great loss of men that happened to the traders to Sofala before the knowledge of the monsoons, and the introduction of the use of sails.

I SHALL NOW consider how far the thing is confirmed by the names of places in the language of the country, such as they have retained among them to the present day.

THERE are three Mochas mentioned in this voyage, situated in countries very dissimilar to, and distant from, each other. The first is in Arabia Deserta, in lat.  $30^{\circ}$  nearly, not far from the bottom of the Gulf of Suez. The second is in lat.  $13^{\circ}$ , a small distance from the Straits of Babelmandeb. The third Mocha is in lat.  $3^{\circ}$  south, near Tarshish, on the coast of Melinda. Now, the meaning of Mocha, in the Ethiopic, is *prison*; and is particularly given to these three places, because, in any of them, a ship is forced to stay or be detained for months, till the changing of the monsoon sets her at liberty to pursue her voyage. At Mocha, near the bottom of the Gulf of Suez, a vessel, wanting to proceed southward to Babelmandeb, is kept here in prison all winter, till the summer monsoon sets her at liberty. At Mocha, in Arabia Felix, the same happens to any vessel wanting to proceed to Suez in the summer months; she may come up from the Straits of Babelmandeb to Mocha Road by the accidental direction of the head of the Gulf; but, in the month of May, the north-west wind obliges her to put into Mocha,



and there to stay till the south-easter relieves her in November. After you double Gardefan, the summer monsoon, at north-east, is carrying your vessel full sail to Sofala, when the anomalous monsoon takes her off the coast of Melinda, and forces her into Tarshish, where she is imprisoned for six months in the Mocha there. So that this word is very emphatically applied to those places where ships are necessarily detained by the change of monsoons, and proves the truth of what I have said.

THE last Cape on the Abyssinian shore, before you run into the Straits, is Cape Defan, called by the Portuguese, *Cape Dafui*. This has no meaning in any language; the Abyssinians, on whose side it is, call it *Cape Defan*, the Cape of Burial. It was probably there where the east wind drove ashore the bodies of such as had been shipwrecked in the voyage. The point of the same coast, which stretches out into the Gulf, before you arrive at Babelmandeb, was, by the Romans, called *Promontorium Aromaticum*, and since, by the Portuguese, *Cape Gardefui*. But the name given it by the Abyssinians and sailors on the Gulf is, *Cape Gardefan*, the Straits of Burial.

STILL nearer the Straits is a small port in the kingdom of Adel, called *Mete*, *i. e.* Death, or, he or they are dead. And more to the westward, in the same kingdom, is Mount Felix, corruptly so called by the Portuguese. The Latins call it *Elephas Mons*, the Mountain of the Elephant; and the natives, *Jibbel Feel*, which has the same signification. The Portuguese, who did not know that *Jibbel Feel* was *Elephas Mons*, being misled by the sound, have called it *Jibbel Felix*, the Happy Mountain, a name to which it has no sort of title.



THE Straits by which we enter the Arabian Gulf are by the Portuguese called Babelmandeb, which is nonsense. The name by which it goes among the natives is Babelmandeb, the Gate or Port of Affliction. And near it Ptolemy \* places a town he calls, in the Greek, Mandaeth, which appears to me to be only a corruption of Mandeb. The Promontory that makes the south side of the Straits, and the city thereupon, is *Diræ*, which means the Hades, or Hell, by Ptolemy † called  $\Delta\eta\rho\eta$ . This, too, is a translation of the ancient name, because  $\Delta\eta\rho\eta$  (or *Diræ*) has no signification in the Greek. A cluster of islands you meet in the canal, after passing Mocha, is called Jibbel Zekir, or, the Islands of Prayer for the remembrance of the dead. And still, in the same course up the Gulf, others are called Sebaat Gzier, Praise or Glory be to God, as we may suppose, for the return from this dangerous navigation.

ALL the coast to the eastward, to where Gardefan stretches out into the ocean, is the territory of Saba, which immemorially has been the mart of frankincense, myrrh, and balsam. Behind Saba, upon the Indian Ocean, is the *Regio Cinnamomifera*, where a considerable quantity of that wild cinnamon grows, which the Italian druggists call *canella*.

INLAND near to Azab, as I have before observed, are large ruins, some of them of small stones and lime adhering strongly together. There is especially an aqueduct, which brought formerly a large quantity of water from a fountain in the mountains, which must have greatly contributed to the beauty,

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\* Ptol. Geog. lib. 4. cap. 7.

† id. ibid.



beauty, health, and pleasure of Saba. This is built with large massy blocks of marble, brought from the neighbouring mountains, placed upon one another without lime or cement, but joined with thick cramps, or bars of brass. There are likewise a number of wells, not six feet wide, composed of pieces of marble hewn to parts of a circle, and joined with the same bars of brass also. This is exceedingly surprising, for Agatharcides \* tells us, that the Alileans and Cassandrins, in the southern parts of Arabia, (just opposite to Azab), had among them gold in such plenty, that they would give double the weight of gold for iron, triple its weight for brass, and ten times its weight for silver; that, in digging the earth, they found pieces of gold as big as olive-stones, but others much larger.

THIS seems to me extraordinary, if brass was at such a price in Arabia, that it could be here employed in the meanest and most common uses. However this be, the inhabitants of the Continent, and of the peninsula of Arabia opposite to it, of all denominations agree, that this was the royal seat of the Queen of Saba, famous in ecclesiastical history for her journey to Jerusalem; that these works belonged to her, and were erected at the place of her residence; that all the gold, silver, and perfumes came from her kingdom of Sofala, which was Ophir, and which reached from thence to Azab, upon the borders of the Red Sea, along the coast of the Indian Ocean.

It will very possibly be thought, that this is the place in which I should mention the journey that the Queen of Saba made into Palestine; but as the dignity of the expedition itself,



self, and the place it holds in Jewish antiquities, merits that it should be treated in a place by itself, so the connection that it is supposed to have with the foundation of the monarchy of Abyssinia, the country whose history I am going to write, makes this particularly proper for the sake of connection ; and I shall, therefore, continue the history of the trade of the Arabian Gulf to a period in which I can resume the narrative of this expedition without occasioning any interruption to either.





## CHAP. V.

*Fluctuating State of the India Trade—Hurt by Military Expeditions of the Persians—Revives under the Ptolemies—Falls to Decay under the Romans.*

THE prosperous days of the commerce with the Elanitic Gulf seemed to be at this time nearly past; yet, after the revolt of the ten tribes, Edom remaining to the house of David, they still carried on a sort of trade from the Elanitic Gulf, though attended with many difficulties. This continued till the reign of Jehosaphat\*; but, on Jehoram's succeeding that prince, the Edomites† revolted and chose a king of their own, and were never after subject to the kings of Judah till the reign of Uzziah‡, who conquered Eloth, fortified it, and having peopled it with a colony of his own, revived the old traffic. This subsisted till the reign of Ahaz, when Rezin king of Damascus took Eloth§, and expelled the Jews, planting in their stead a colony of Syrians.

\* 1 Kings, chap. xxii. ver. 48. 2 Chron. chap. xx. ver. 36. † 2 Kings, chap. viii. ver. 22.

2 Chron. chap. xxi. ver. 10. ‡ 2 Kings, chap. xiv. ver. 22. 2 Chron. chap. 26. ver. ii.

§ 2 Kings, chap. xvi. ver. 6.



ans. But he did not long enjoy this good fortune, for the year after, Rezin \* was conquered by Tilgath-pilefer; and one of the fruits of this victory was the taking of Eloth, which never after returned to the Jews, or was of any profit to Jerufalem.

THE repeated wars and conquest to which the cities on the Elanitic Gulf had been subject, the extirpation of the Edomites, all the great events that immediately followed one another, of course disturbed the usual channel of trade by the Red Sea, whose ports were now consequently become unsafe by being in possession of strangers, robbers, and soldiers; it changed, therefore, to a place nearer the center of police and good government, than fortified and frontier towns could be supposed to be. The Indian and African merchants, by convention, met in Assyria, as they had done in Semiramis's time; the one by the Persian Gulf and Euphrates, the other through Arabia. Assyria, therefore, became the mart of the India trade in the East.

THE conquests of Nabopollaser, and his son Nebuchadnezzar, had brought a prodigious quantity of bullion, both silver and gold, to Babylon his capital. For he had plundered Tyre †, and robbed Solomon's Temple ‡ of all the gold that had been brought from Ophir; and he had, besides, conquered Egypt and laid it waste, and cut off the communication of trade in all these places, by almost extirpating the people.

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\* 2 Kings, chap. xvi. ver. 6.

† Ezek. chap. xxvi. ver. 7.

‡ 2 Kings, chap. xxiv ver. 13. and 2 Chron. chap. xxxvi. ver. 7.



people. Immense riches flowed to him, therefore, on all sides, and it was a circumstance particularly favourable to merchants in that country, that it was governed by written laws that screened their properties from any remarkable violence or injustice.

I SUPPOSE the phrase in scripture, "The law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not\*," must mean only written laws, by which those countries were governed, without being left to the discretion of the judge, as all the East was, and as it actually now is.

IN this situation the country was at the birth of Cyrus, who, having taken Babylon † and slain Belshazzar†, became master of the whole trade and riches of the East. Whatever character writers give of this great Prince, his conduct, with regard to the commerce of the country, shews him to have been a weak one: For, not content with the prodigious prosperity to which his dominions had arrived, by the misfortune of other nations, and perhaps by the good faith kept by his subjects to merchants, enforced by those written laws, he undertook the most absurd and disastrous project of molesting the traders themselves, and invading India, that all at once he might render himself master of their riches. He executed this scheme just as absurdly as he formed it; for, knowing that large caravans of merchants came into Persia and Assyria from India, through the Ariana, (the desert coast that runs all along the Indian Ocean to

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\* Dan. chap. vi. ver. 8. and Esther, chap. i. ver. 19. † Ezra, chap. v. ver. 14.  
and chap. vi. ver. 5. † Dan. chap. v. ver. 30.



the Persian Gulf, almost entirely destitute of water, and very nearly as much so of provisions, both which caravans always carry with them), he attempted to enter India by the very same road with a large army, the very same way his predecessor Semiramis had projected 1300 years before; and as her army had perished, so did his to a man, without having ever had it in his power to take one pepper-corn by force from any part of India.

THE same fortune attended his son and successor Cambyfes, who, observing the quantity of gold brought from Ethiopia into Egypt, resolved to march to the source, and at once make himself master of those treasures by rapine, which he thought came too slowly through the medium of commerce.

CAMBYSES's expedition into Africa is too well known for me to dwell upon it in this place. It hath obtained a celebrity by the absurdity of the project, by the enormous cruelty and havock that attended the course of it, and by the great and very just punishment that closed it in the end. It was one of those many monstrous extravagancies which made up the life of the greatest madman that ever disgraced the annals of antiquity. The basest mind is perhaps the most capable of avarice; and when this passion has taken possession of the human heart, it is strong enough to excite us to undertakings as great as any of those dictated by the noblest of our virtues.

CAMBYSES, amidst the commission of the most horrid excesses during the conquest of Egypt, was informed that, from the south of that country, there was constantly brought  
a quantity



a quantity of pure gold, independent of what came from the top of the Arabic Gulf, which was now carried into Affyria, and circulated in the trade of his country. This supply of gold belonged properly and exclusively to Egypt; and a very lucrative, though not very extensive commerce, was, by its means, carried on with India. He found out that the people, possessing these treasures, were called *Macrobi*, which signifies *long livers*; and that they possessed a country divided from him by lakes, mountains, and deserts. But what still affected him most was, that in his way were a multitude of warlike Shepherds, with whom the reader is already sufficiently acquainted.

CAMBYSES, to flatter, and make peace with them, fell furiously upon all the gods and temples in Egypt; he murdered the sacred ox, the apis, destroyed Memphis, and all the public buildings wherever he went. This was a gratification to the Shepherds, being equally enemies to those that worshipped beasts, or lived in cities. After this introduction, he concluded peace with them in the most solemn manner, each nation vowing eternal amity with the other. Notwithstanding which, no sooner was he arrived at Thebes (in Egypt) than he detached a large army to plunder the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, the greatest object of the worship of these *shepherds*; which army utterly perished without a man remaining, covered, as I suppose, by the moving sands. He then began his march against the *Macrobi*, keeping close to the Nile. The country there being too high to receive any benefit from the inundation of the river, produced no corn, so that part of his army died for want of provision.



ANOTHER detachment of his army proceeded to the country of the Shepherds, who, indeed, furnished him with food ; but, exasperated at the sacrilege he had committed against their god, they conducted his troops through places where they could procure no water. After suffering all this loss, he was not yet arrived beyond 24°, the parallel of Syené. From hence he dispatched ambassadors, or spies, to discover the country before him, finding he could no longer rely upon the Shepherds. These found it full of black warlike people, of great size, and prodigious strength of body; active, and continually exercised in hunting the lion, the elephant, and other monstrous beasts which live in these forests.

THE inhabitants so abounded with gold, that the most common utensils and instruments were made of that metal, whilst, at the same time, they were utter strangers to bread of any kind whatever ; and, not only so, but their country was, by its nature, incapable of producing any sort of grain from which bread could be made. They subsisted upon raw flesh alone, dried in the sun, especially that of the rhinoceros, the elephant, and giraffa, which they had slain in hunting. On such food they have ever since lived, and live to this day, and on such food I myself have lived with them ; yet still it appears strange, that people confined to this diet, without variety or change, should have it for their characteristic that they were long livers.

THEY were not at all alarmed at the arrival of Cambyfes's ambassadors. On the contrary, they treated them as an inferior species of men. Upon asking them about their diet, and



and hearing it was upon bread, they called it *dung*, I suppose as having the appearance of that bread which I have seen the miserable Agows, their neighbours, make from feeds of bastard rye, which they collect in their fields under the burning rays of the sun. They laughed at Cambyfes's requisition of submitting to him, and did not conceal their contempt of his idea of bringing an army thither.

THEY treated ironically his hopes of conquest, even supposing all difficulties of the desert overcome, and his army ready to enter their country, and counseled him to return while he was well, at least for a time, till he should produce a man of his army that could bend the bow that they then sent him; in which case, he might continue to advance, and have hope of conquest.—The reason of their reference to the bow will be seen afterwards. I mention these circumstances of the quantity of gold, the hunting of elephants, their living upon the raw flesh, and, above all, the circumstances of the bow, as things which I myself can testify to have met with among this very people. It is, indeed, highly satisfactory in travelling, to be able to explain truths which, from a want of knowledge of the country alone, have been treated as falsehoods, and placed to the discredit of historians.

THE Persians were all famous archers. The mortification, therefore, they experienced, by receiving the bow they could not bend, was a very sensible one, though the narrative of the quantity of gold the messengers had seen made a much greater impression upon Cambyfes. To procure  
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this treasure was, however, impracticable, as he had no provision, nor was there any in the way of his march. His army, therefore, wasted daily by death and dispersion; and he had the mortification to be obliged to retreat into Egypt, after part of his troops had been reduced to the necessity of eating each other\*.

DARIUS, king of Persia, attempted to open this trade in a much more worthy and liberal manner, as he sent ships down the river Indus into the ocean, whence they entered the Red Sea. It is probable, in this voyage, he acquired all the knowledge necessary for establishing this trade in Persia; for he must have passed through the Persian Gulf, and along the whole eastern coast of Arabia; he must have seen the marts of perfumes and spices that were at the mouth of the Red Sea, and the manner of bartering for gold and silver, as he was necessarily in those trading places which were upon the very same coast from which the bullion was brought. I do not know, then, why M. de Montesquieu† has treated this expedition of Darius so contemptuously, as it appears to have been executed without great trouble or expence, and terminated without loss or hardship; the strongest proof that it was at first wisely planned. The prince himself was famous for his love of learning, which we find by his anxiety to be admitted among the Magi, and the sense he had of that honour, in causing it to be engraved upon his tomb.

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\* Lucan lib. x. ver. 280.

† Vide Montesq. liv. 21. chap 8.



THE expedition of Alexander into India was, of all events, that which most threatened the destruction of the commerce of the Continent, or the dispersing it into different channels throughout the East: First, by the destruction of Tyre, which must have, for a time, annihilated the trade by the Arabian Gulf; then by his march through Egypt into the country of the Shepherds, and his intended further progress into Ethiopia to the head of the Nile. If we may judge of what we hear of him in that part of his expedition, we should be apt not to believe, as others are fond of doing, that he had schemes of commerce mingled with those of conquests. His anxiety about his own birth at the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, this first question that he asked of the priest, "Where the Nile had its source," seemed to denote a mind busied about other objects; for else he was then in the very place for information, being in the temple of that horned god \*, the deity of the Shepherds, the African carriers of the Indian produce; a temple which, though in the midst of sand, and destitute of gold or silver, possessed more and better information concerning the trade of India and Africa, than could be found in any other place on the Continent. Yet we do not hear of one question being made, or one arrangement taken, relative to opening the India trade with Thebes, or with Alexandria, which he built afterwards.

AFTER having viewed the main ocean to the south, he ordered Nearchus with his fleet to coast along the Persian Gulf, accompanied by part of the army on land for their mutual assistance, as there were a great many hardships  
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\* Lucan, lib. 9. ver. 515.



which followed the march of the army by land, and much difficulty and danger attended the shipping as they were sailing in unknown seas against the monsoons. Nearchus himself informed the king at Babylon of his successful voyage, who gave him orders to continue it into the Red Sea, which he happily accomplished to the bottom of the Arabian Gulf.

WE are told it was his intention to carry on the India trade by the Gulf of Persia, for which reason he broke down all the cataracts and dams which the Persians had built over the rivers communicating with the Euphrates. No use, however, seems to have been made of his knowledge of Arabia and Ethiopia, which makes me imagine this expedition of Alexander's fleet was not an idea of his own. It is, indeed, said, that when Alexander came into India, the southern or Indian Ocean was perfectly unknown; but I am rather inclined to believe from this circumstance, that this voyage was made from some memorials remaining concerning the voyage of Darius. The fact and circumstances of Darius's voyage are come down to us, and, by these very same means, it must be probable they reached Alexander, who I do not believe ever intended to carry on the India trade at Babylon.

To render it impossible, indeed, he could not have done three things more effectual than he did; when he destroyed Tyre, and dispersed its inhabitants, persecuted the Orites, or land-carriers, in the Ariana, and built Alexandria upon the Mediterranean; which last step fixed the Indian trade in that city, and would have kept it there eternally, had the Cape of Good Hope never been discovered.



THE Ptolemies, the wisest princes that ever sat upon the throne of Egypt, applied with the utmost care and attention to cultivate the trade of India, to keep up perfect and friendly understanding with every country that supplied any branch of it, and, instead of disturbing it either in Asia, Arabia, or Ethiopia, as their predecessors had done, they used their utmost efforts to encourage it in all quarters.

PTOLEMY I. was then reigning in Alexandria, the foundation of whose greatness he not only laid, but lived to see it arrive at the greatest perfection. It was his constant saying, that the true glory of a king was not in being rich himself, but making his subjects so. He, therefore, opened his ports to all trading nations, encouraged strangers of every language, protected caravans, and a free navigation by sea, by which, in a few years, he made Alexandria the great store-house of merchandize, from India, Arabia, and Ethiopia. He did still further to insure the duration of his kingdom, at the same time that he shewed the utmost disinterestedness for the future happiness of his people. He educated his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, with the utmost care, and the happy genius of that prince had answered his father's utmost expectations; and, when he arrived at the age of governing, the father, worn out by the fatigue of long wars, surrendered the kingdom to his son.

PTOLEMY had been a soldier from his infancy, and consequently kept up a proper military force, that made him every where respected in these warlike and unsettled times. He had a fleet of two hundred ships of war constantly ready in the port of Alexandria, the only part for which he had apprehensions. All behind him was wisely governed, whilst



it enjoyed a most flourishing trade, to the prosperity of which peace is necessary. He died in peace and old age, after having merited the glorious name of *Soter*, or *Saviour of the kingdom*, which he himself had founded, the greatest part of which differed from him in language, colour, habit, and religion.

It is with astonishment we see how thoroughly he had established the trade of India, Ethiopia, and Arabia, and what progress he had already made towards uniting it with that of Europe, by a passage in Athenæus\*, who mentions a festival and entertainment given by his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, to the people of Alexandria at his accession, while his father was alive, but had just given up his crown.

THERE was in this procession a great number of Indian women, besides of other countries; and by Indians we may understand, not only the Asiatic Indians, but the Abyssinians, and the inhabitants of the higher part of Africa, as all these countries were comprehended under the common appellation of *India*. These were in the habit of slaves, and each led, or was followed by, a camel loaded with incense of Sheher, and cinnamon, besides other aromatics. After these came a number of Ethiopian blacks carrying the teeth of 600 elephants. Another troop had a prodigious quantity of ebony; and again others loaded with that finest gold, which is not dug from the mine, but washed from the mountains by the tropical rains in small pieces, or pellets, which

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\* Athen. lib. 5.



which the natives and traders at this day call *Tibbar*. Next came a pack of 24,000 Indian dogs, all Asiatics, from the peninsula of India, followed by a prodigious number of foreign animals, both beasts and birds, paroquets, and other birds of Ethiopia, carried in cages; 130 Ethiopian sheep, 300 Arabian, and 20 from the Isle Nubia\*; 26 Indian buffaloes, white as snow, and eight from Ethiopia; three brown bears, and a white one, which last must have been from the north of Europe; 14 leopards, 16 panthers, four lynxes, one giraffa, and a rhinoceros of Ethiopia.

WHEN we reflect upon this prodigious mixture of animals, all so easily procured at one time, without preparation, we may imagine, that the quantity of merchandises, for common demand, which accompanied them, must have been in the proper proportion.

THE current of trade ran towards Alexandria with the greatest impetuosity, all the articles of luxury of the East were to be found there. Gold and silver, which were sent formerly to Tyre, came now down to the Isthmus (for Tyre was no more) by a much shorter carriage, thence to Memphis, whence it was sent down the Nile to Alexandria. The gold from the west and south parts of the Continent reached the same port with much less time and risk, as there was now no Red Sea to pass; and here was found the merchandise of Arabia and India in the greatest profusion.

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\* This is probably from Atbara, or the old name of the island of Meroë, which had received that last name only as late as Cambyfes.



To facilitate the communication with Arabia, Ptolemy built a town on the coast of the Red Sea, in the country of the Shepherds, and called it *Berenice*\*, after his mother. This was intended as a place of necessary refreshment for all the traders up and down the Gulf, whether of India or Ethiopia; hence the cargoes of merchants, who were afraid of losing the monsoons, or had lost them, were carried by the inhabitants of the country, in three days, to the Nile, and there embarked for Alexandria. To make the communication between the Nile and the Red Sea still more commodious, this prince tried an attempt (which had twice before miscarried with very great loss) to bring a canal† from the Red Sea to the Nile, which he actually accomplished, joining it to the Pelusiac, or Eastern branch of the Nile. Locks and sluices moreover are mentioned as having been employed even in those early days by Ptolemy, but very trifling ones could be needed, for the difference of level is there but very small.

THIS noble canal, one hundred yards broad, was not of that use to trade which was expected; merchants were weary of the length of time consumed in going to the very bottom of the Gulf, and afterwards with this inland navigation of the canal, and that of the Nile, to Alexandria. It was therefore much more expeditious to unload at Berenice, and, after three days journey, send their merchandise directly down to Alexandria. Thus the canal was disused, the goods passed from Berenice to the Nile by land, and that road continues open for the same purpose to this day.

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\* Plin. lib. 6. cap. 23.

† Strabo, lib. 17. p. 932.



It should appear, that Ptolemy had employed the vessels of India and the Red Sea, to carry on his commerce with the peninsula, and that the manner of trading directly to India with his own ships, was either not known or forgotten. He therefore sent two ambassadors, or messengers, Megasthenes and Denis, to observe and report what was the state of India since the death of Alexander. These two performed their voyage safely and speedily. The account they gave of India, if it was strictly a true one, was, in all respects, perfectly calculated to animate people to the further prosecution of that trade. In the mean time, in order to procure more convenience for vessels trading on the Red Sea, he resolved to attempt the penetrating into that part of Ethiopia which lies on that sea, and, as historians imagine, with an intention to plunder the inhabitants of their riches.

It must not, however, be supposed, that Ptolemy was not enough acquainted with the productions of a country so near to Egypt, as to know this part of it had neither gold nor silver, whilst it was full of forests likewise; for it was that part of Ethiopia called Barbaria, at this day Barabra, inhabited by shepherds wandering with their cattle about the neighbouring mountains according as the rains fall. Another more probable conjecture was, that he wanted, by bringing about a change of manners in these people, to make them useful to him in a matter that was of the highest importance.

PTOLEMY, like his father, had a very powerful fleet and army, he but was inferior to many of the princes, his rivals, in elephants, of which great use was then made in war. These Ethiopians were hunters, and killed them for their subsistence. Ptolemy, however, wished to have them taken  
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alive,



alive, being numerous, and hoped both to furnish himself, and dispose of them as an article of trade, to his neighbours.

THERE is something indeed ridiculous in the manner in which he executed this expedition. Aware of the difficulty of subsisting in that country, he chose only a hundred Greek horsemen, whom he covered with coats of monstrous appearance and size, which left nothing visible but the eyes of the rider. Their horses too were disguised by huge trappings, which took from them all proportion and shape. In this manner they entered this part of Ethiopia, spreading terror every where by their appearance, to which their strength and courage bore a strict proportion whenever they came to action. But neither force nor intreaty could gain any thing upon these Shepherds, or ever make them change or forsake the food they had been so long accustomed to; and all the fruit Ptolemy reaped from this expedition, was to build a city, by the sea-side, in the south-east corner of this country, which he called Ptolemais Theron, or Ptolemais in the country of wild beasts.

I HAVE already observed, but shall again repeat it, that the reason why ships, in going up and down the Red Sea, kept always upon the Ethiopian shore, and why the greatest number of cities were always built upon that side is, that water is much more abundant on the Ethiopian side than the Arabian, and it was therefore of the greatest consequence to trade to have that coast fully discovered and civilized. Indeed it is more than probable, that nothing further was intended by the expedition of the hundred Greeks, just now mentioned, than to gain sufficient intelligence how this might be done most perfectly.



PTOLEMY EVERGETES, son and successor of Ptolemy Philadelphus, availed himself of this discovery. Having provided himself amply with necessaries for his army, and ordered a fleet to coast along beside him, up the Red Sea, he penetrated quite through the country of the Shepherds into that of the Ethiopian Troglodytes, who are black and woolly-headed, and inhabit the low country quite to the mountains of Abyssinia. Nay \*, he even ascended those mountains, forced the inhabitants to submission, built a large temple at Axum, the capital of Sirè, and raised a great many obelisks, several of which are standing to this day. Afterwards proceeding to the south-east, he descended into the cinnamon and myrrh country, behind Cape Gardafan, (the Cape that terminates the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean) from this, crossed over to Arabia, to the Homerites, being the same people with the Abyssinians, only on the Arabian shore. He then conquered several of the Arabian princes, who first resisted him, and had it in his power to have put an end to the trade of India there, had he not been as great a politician as he was a warrior. He used his victory, therefore, in no other manner, than to exhort and oblige these princes to protect trade, encourage strangers, and, by every means, provide for the surety of neutral intercourse, by making rigorous examples of robbers by sea and land.

THE reigns of the latter Ptolemies were calculated to bring this commerce to a decline, had it not been for two great events, the fall of Carthage, destroyed by Scipio, and that of Corinth, by the consul Mummius. The importance of these

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\* Mon. Aduli.



these events to Alexandria seems to have sustained the prosperity of Egypt, even against the ravages committed in the war between Ptolemy the VI. and VII. Alexandria was then besieged, and not only deprived of its riches, but reduced to the utmost want of necessaries, and the horrid behaviour of Ptolemy VII. (had it continued) would have soon rendered that city desolate. The consequence of such a conduct, however, made a strong impression on the prince himself, who, at once recalling his unjust edicts, by which he had banished all foreign merchants from Alexandria, became on a sudden wholly addicted to commerce, the encourager of arts and sciences, and the protector of strangers.

THE impolitic conduct in the beginning of his reign, however, had affected trade even in India. For the story preserved by Posidonius, and very improperly criticised by Strabo, seems to import little less. One day, the troops posted on the Arabian Gulf found a ship abandoned to the waves, on board of which was one Indian only, half dead with hunger and thirst, whom they brought to the king. This Indian declared he sailed from his own country, and, having lost his course and spent all his provisions, he was carried to the place where he was found, without knowing where he was, and after having survived the rest of his companions : he concluded an imperfect narrative, by offering to be a guide to any person his majesty would send to India. His proposals were accordingly accepted, and Eudoxus was named by the king to accompany him. Strabo\* indeed laughs at this

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\* Strabo, lib. ii. p. 98.



this story. However, we must say, he has not seized the most ridiculous parts of it.

WE are told that the king ordered the Indian to be taught Greek, and waited with patience till he had learned that language. Surely, before any person could thus instruct him, the master must have had some language in common with his scholar, or he had better have taught Eudoxus the Indian language, as it would have been as easy, and of much more use in the voyage he was to undertake. Besides, is it possible to believe, after the many years the Egyptians traded backwards and forwards to India, that there was not a man in Alexandria who could interpret for him to the king, when such a number of Egyptians went every year to India to trade, and stayed there for months each time? Could Ptolemy Philadelphus, at his father's festival, find 600 Indian female slaves, all at once, in Alexandria; and, after the trade had lasted so much longer, were the people from India decreased, or would their language be less understood? The king's wisdom, moreover, did not shew itself greatly, when he was going to trust a ship with his subjects to so skilful a pilot as this Indian, who, in the first voyage, had lost himself and all his companions.

INDIA, however, and the Indian seas, were as well known in Egypt as they are now; and the magnificence and shew which attended Eudoxus's embassy seems to prove, that whatever truth there is in the Indian being found, Eudoxus' errand must have been to remove the bad effects that the king's extortions and robberies, committed upon all strangers in the beginning of his reign, had made upon the trading nations. Eudoxus returned, but after the death of Ptole-



my. The necessity, however, of this voyage appeared still great enough to make Cleopatra his widow project a second to the same place, and greater preparations were made than for the former one.

BUT Eudoxus, trying experiments probably about the courses of the trade-winds, lost his passage, and was thrown upon the coast of Ethiopia; where, having landed, and made himself agreeable to the natives, he brought home to Egypt a particular description of that country and its produce, which furnished all the discovery necessary to instruct the Ptolemies in every thing that related to the ancient trade of Arabia. In the course of the voyage, Eudoxus discovered the part of the prow of a vessel which had been broken off by a storm. The figure of a horse made it an object of inquiry; and some of the sailors on board, who had been employed in European voyages, immediately knew this wreck to be part of one of those vessels used to trade on the western ocean. Eudoxus \* instantly perceived all the importance of the discovery, which amounted to nothing less, than that there was a passage round Africa from the Indian to the Atlantic Ocean. Full of this thought, he returned to Egypt, and, having shewn the prow of his vessel to European ship-masters, they all declared that this had been part of a vessel which had belonged to Cadiz, in Spain.

This discovery, great as it was, was to none of more importance than to Eudoxus; for, some time after, falling under the displeasure of Ptolemy Lathyrus, VIIIth. of that name,

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\* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 2. cap. 67.



name, and being in danger of his life, he fled and embarked on the Red Sea, sailed round the peninsula of Africa, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and came safely to Cadiz.

THE spirit of inquiry, and desire of travelling, spread itself instantly through Egypt, upon this voyage of Eudoxus; and different travellers pushed their discoveries into the heart of the country, where some of the nations are reported to have been so ignorant as not to know the use of fire: ignorance almost incredible, had we not an instance of it in our own times. It was in the reign of Ptolemy IX. that Agatharcides \* drew up his description of the Red Sea.

THE reigns of the other Ptolemies ending in the XIIIth of that name, though full of great events, have nothing material to our present subject. Their constant expence and profusion must have occasioned a great consumption of trading articles, and very little else was wanting; or, if there had, it must have arrived at its height in the reign of the celebrated Cleopatra; whose magnificence, beauty, and great talents, made her a wonder, greater than any in her capital. In her time, all nations flocked, as well for curiosity as trade, to Alexandria; Arabs, Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Jews, and Medes; and all were received and protected by this princess, who spoke to each of them in his own language†.

THE discovery of Spain, and the possession of the mines of Attica from which they drew their silver, and the revolution

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\* Dodwell's Dissertat. vol. 1. Scrip. Græc. Min. Id. Ox. 1698. 8vo.

† Plut. Vita. Ant. p. 913. tom. 1. part 2. Lubec. 1624. fol.



lution that happened in Egypt itself, seemed to have superseded the communication with the coast of Africa; for, in Strabo's time, few of the ports of the Indian Ocean, even those nearest the Red Sea, were known. I should, indeed, suppose, that the trade to India by Egypt decreased from the very time of the conquest by Cæsar. The mines the Romans had at the source of the river Betis\*, in Spain, did not produce them above L. 15,000 a-year; this was not a sufficient capital for carrying on the trade to India, and therefore the immense riches of the Romans seem to have been derived from the greatness of the prices, not from the extent of the trade. In fact†, we are told that 100 *per cent.* was a profit in common trade upon the Indian commodities. Egypt now, and all its neighbourhood, began to wear a face of war, to which it had been a stranger for so many ages. The north of Africa was in constant troubles, after the first ruin of Carthage; so that we may imagine the trade to India began again, on that side, to be carried on pretty much in the same manner it had been before the days of Alexander. But it had enlarged itself very much on the Persian side, and found an easy, short inlet, into the north of Europe, which then furnished them a market and consumption of spices.

I MUST confess, notwithstanding, if it is true what Strabo says he heard himself in Egypt, that the Romans employed one hundred and twenty vessels in the Indian trade‡, it must at that time have lost very little of its vigour. We must, however, imagine, that great part of this was for the  
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\* Strabo, lib. 3.

† Plin. lib. vi. cap. 23.

‡ Strabo, lib. 2. p. 81.



account, and with the funds of foreign merchants. The Jews in Alexandria, until the reign of Ptolemy Philopator, had carried on a very extensive part of the India trade. All Syria was mercantile; and lead, iron, and copper, supplied, in some manner, the deficiency of gold and silver, which never again was in such abundance till after the discovery of America.

BUT the ancient trade to India, by the Arabian Gulf and Africa, carried on by the medium of these two metals, remained at home undiminished with the Ethiopians, defended by large extensive deserts, and happy with the enjoyment of riches and security, till a fresh discovery again introduced to them both partners and masters in their trade.

ONE of the reasons that makes me imagine the Indian trade was not flourishing, or in great esteem; immediately upon the Roman conquest of Egypt, is, that Augustus, very soon after, attempted to conquer Arabia. He sent Elius Gallus, with an army from Egypt into Arabia, who found there a number of effeminate, timid people, scarcely to be driven to self-defence by violence, and ignorant of every thing that related to war. Elius, however, found that they overmatched him in cunning, and the perfect knowledge of the country, which their constant employment as carriers had taught them. His guides led him round from hardship to hardship, till his army almost perished with hunger and thirst, without seeing any of those riches his master had sent him to take possession of.



THUS was the Arabian expedition of Augustus conceived with the same views as those of Semiramis, Cyrus, and Cambyses, deservedly as unhappy in its issue as these first had been.

THAT the African trade, moreover, was lost, appears from Strabo\*, and his reasoning upon the voyage of Eudoxus, which he treats as a fable. But his reasoning proves just the contrary, and this voyage was one foundation for opening this trade again, and making this coast more perfectly known. This likewise appears clear from Ptolemy†, who, speaking of a promontory or cape opposite to Madagascar, on the coast of Africa, says it was inhabited by anthropophagi, or man-eaters, and that all beyond 8° south was unknown, and that this cape extended to and joined the continent of India‡.

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\* Strabo, lib. ii. p. 98.

† Ptol. lib. iv. cap. 9. p. 115.

‡ Ptol. lib. vii. cap. 3.