

the streets at this moment ; for even Giacomo Rossoni (the brother of the Consul), who was a great favorite with the Arabs, and who chanced to be out just before, very narrowly escaped with his life in making his way to take refuge in our house. We had every desire to act as conciliatory a part as possible, but finding our doors assailed in the manner described, we armed ourselves, with the intention of defending the house to the last, should the Arabs proceed to extremities. At this difficult moment Shekh Mahommed and his brothers, accompanied by some of our other Arab friends, made their way through the mob and arrived just in time to prevent an immediate attack upon our quarters ; and we afterwards learnt that one of the Shekh's brothers had been felled to the ground, for his remonstrances in our favour, before ~~He~~ he could reach our door. A parley was now begun with great vehemence on both sides ; but before any measures could be determined upon, an alarm was excited that the Greeks might be landing while this discussion was pending, and the whole party of rioters hurried down to the beach, leaving none but the women and children in the town. Muskets were now discharged in various directions, without any person knowing what they were firing at, and the whole strength of the place was drawn up on the beach in momentary expectation of being attacked by the invaders. At length, after a lapse of several hours, they conceived that sufficient time had been given for the approach of the vessels, if Bengazi had been really their object ; and after inquiring of one another what grounds there had been for all the disturbance they had been making, without any one being able to give a satisfactory answer, the

whole party retired very quietly to their houses, and nothing more was ever heard of the formidable invasion which had excited such alarm and confusion. In the mean time Signor Giacomo, who had been some time in our house, became anxious to relieve his family from the apprehensions which they could not but have entertained for his safety ; but his European dress being likely to attract attention, and expose him to danger or insult, we offered our services to accompany him ; and on reaching his house in safety, he learnt that the Consul had been obliged to shut himself up with his family, and that they had been in the greatest alarm for him. Thus ended a panic which arose from the most trifling circumstance, threw the whole town into serious confusion, and threatened the lives of all the Christians in the place, without having the slightest foundation.

It was singular to observe, during the whole of this affair, the total want of system and discipline which prevailed ; each person hurrying he hardly knew where, because he saw others in motion, and leaving his home, with his family and property, at the mercy of any one who might invade it. A handful of men might have taken the whole town, which was left for several hours without any defence, and carried off their plunder beyond the reach of pursuit before the inhabitants knew they had been there. This was the only molestation we ever met with from the people of Bengazi ; and, to do them justice, we must allow that it proceeded rather from their ignorance and their fears, than from any decided hostility or ill-will towards ourselves. On all other occasions we found them civil and obliging, and usually inclined to be of service to us when they could.

With regard to the manners and customs of the people of Bengazi, we saw nothing in which they differed materially from those of Arabs in general ; and it would merely be repeating what has been often observed by others, were we to give any detailed description of them. It is well known what reliance is placed by the Arab on the efficacy, we may say, the infallibility of charms and family nostrums, and how much they are averse to calling in medical aid till they have repeatedly tried their own remedies without success. We saw a lamentable instance of this adherence to popular prejudice and superstition, in the case of an interesting girl of Bengazi, the daughter of one of the Arabs of the town. As Mr. Campbell was standing at the door of our house, in company with some others of our party, an old woman hurried towards him, and eagerly seizing both his hands, conjured him to come and visit her daughter, who she said was very ill with a swelling in the throat. Mr. Campbell immediately complied with her request, and accompanied her, together with one or two of the other officers, to the house where the patient was lying. On entering they found the poor girl we have mentioned, extended upon the floor, in a state of delirium, while her sister, on her knees by her side, was endeavouring by means of a fan to keep away the myriads of flies from her face, with which the room as usual abounded. Her throat was soon found to be so much ulcerated and swelled, as almost to prevent respiration ; and it seemed but too evident that the hand of death was already lying heavily upon her. She had been ill for nine days with a typhus fever, and the usual charms and remedies had been employed by her parents, who only

came to Mr. Campbell for advice when all their own prescriptions had failed. The violence of the fever had now subsided, leaving the unhappy girl in a state of exhaustion, and a mortification appeared to have taken place. Every means were of course resorted to which our medicine-chest afforded, and every possible attention was paid to the comfort of the patient; but all our care was unavailing; the disease was too far advanced to be subdued by medical skill, and the poor girl shortly expired, a victim rather to ignorance and superstition, than to any fatal symptoms in the disease itself, had the proper remedies been applied in time.

Through a similar infatuation, the son of our worthy landlord, Shekh Mahommed, who was in other respects a very sensible man, had nearly fallen a victim to the prejudices of his father. He had, unknown to us, been for many days dangerously ill of a fever; during which time his father kept him shut up in a dark, close room, and almost smothered him with blankets. When we heard of the circumstance, Mr. Campbell immediately offered his advice and assistance; but both were civilly declined, the good Shekh observing, at the same time, that if it were the will of God that his favourite son should die, no exertions of any one could save him, and he himself had only to submit, without repining, to the visitation which heaven had been pleased to bring upon him. We, however, at last succeeded in prevailing upon him to accept of Mr. Campbell's mediation, and, in the course of a few weeks, we are happy to state, the boy completely recovered. Some other cures which Mr. Campbell was enabled to make at length gained him a great reputation, and some



of the operations to which he had recourse at once delighted and astonished the Arabs.

A man much emaciated, who had been long afflicted with the dropsy, was persuaded to submit to the operation of tapping; and when his numerous Arab friends, who had assembled to witness the ceremony, saw the water streaming out from the abdomen, they were unable to restrain the loud expression of their surprise at the sight; and lifting up their hands and eyes to Heaven, called Allah to witness that the *tibeeb*\* was a most extraordinary man †!

Dysentery and liver complaints were very common in Bengazi, but we did not observe so many cases of ophthalmia as we had found at Tripoly and Mesurata. Cutaneous diseases of the most virulent kind were very prevalent, as well among the people of the town, as among the Bedouin tribes in the neighbourhood; indeed, we found that these disorders prevailed more or less in every part of the northern coast of Africa which we visited. The inhabitants of the Cyrenaica suppose them to be chiefly occasioned by handling their cattle, but it is probable that unwholesome food and water, to which they may be occasionally subjected, and the little use which they make of the latter for external purposes, contribute more effectually to engender

\* *Tibeeb* is the common Arab term for a doctor.

† Several quarts of water were taken from this poor man, who, when he left our house, was scarcely distinguishable as the same person who had entered it, having diminished so much in size after the operation. He was, in fact, materially relieved, and continued to improve daily in health; till one day, after washing his shirt, he put it on, as the quickest way of drying it, a custom not uncommon among the Arabs, and caught so bad a cold in consequence, that all the doctor's exertions were afterwards unable to save him.

and encourage these diseases, than the circumstances to which they attribute them.

Among the numerous instances, which we observed during our stay at Bengazi, illustrative of Arab character and prejudices, we may notice one which occurred in the *skeefa* (or entrance-hall) of our house, where a *select party* of the inhabitants of the town usually assembled themselves when the weather permitted. On this occasion, the women of England formed the principal subject of conversation, and the reports of their beauty, which had reached some of our visitors, appeared to have made a great impression in their favour. One of our party then produced a miniature from his pocket, which chanced to be the resemblance of a very pretty girl; and he roundly asserted, as he handed it to the company, that every woman in England was as handsome. We have already observed, that the subject was a very pretty girl; and they who are unacquainted with the force of custom and prejudice, will hardly conceive that an object so pleasing could be the cause of a moment's alarm. But truth obliges us to add, that the first Arab of our party, who was favoured with a sight of the lady in question, started back in dismay and confusion; and all his worthy countrymen who cast their eyes upon the picture, withdrew them, on the instant, in the greatest alarm, exhibiting the strongest symptoms of astonishment and shame. The fact was, that the young lady who had caused so much confusion, was unluckily painted in a low evening dress; and her face was only shaded by the luxuriant auburn curls, which fell in ringlets over her forehead and temples.

There was nothing, it will be thought, so extremely alarming in this partial exhibition of female beauty; and the favoured inhabitants of less decorous, and more civilized countries, would scarcely dream of being shocked at a similar spectacle. But to men who inhabit those regions of delicacy, where even *one* eye of a female must never be seen stealing out from the sanctuary of her veil, the sudden apparition of a sparkling pair of those luminaries is not a vision of ordinary occurrence. At the same time, the alarm of the worthy Shekhs assembled, which the bright eyes and *naked* face (as they termed it) of our fair young countrywoman had so suddenly excited, was in no way diminished by the heinous exposure of a snowy neck and a well-turned pair of shoulders; and had they been placed in the situation of Yusuf, when the lovely Zuleika presented herself in all her charms as a suitor for the young Hebrew's love\*, or in the more embarrassing dilemma of the Phrygian shepherd-prince, when three immortal beauties stood revealed before his sight, they could scarcely have felt or expressed more confusion. Every Arab, who saw the picture, actually blushed and hid his face with his hands; exclaiming—w'Allah harám—(by Heaven 'tis a sin) to look upon such an exposure of female charms!

It is, no doubt, very gratifying, in these ages of assurance, to witness so unequivocal a display of genuine modesty; and we confess that we ought not to have laughed so heartily as we did at this

Yusuf and Zuleika are the Mahometan names of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

laudable expression of it in our guests : but it certainly did appear to us somewhat ridiculous to see men, with long beards, who had each of them two or three wives, so completely discomfited at the sight of a rosy-faced girl. At the same time, we must allow that we have also our prejudices ; and it is probable, that the appearance of a young Arab damsel, with her veiled face and naked legs and feet, in the midst of a party of Englishmen, might occasion no trifling confusion ; scarcely less, perhaps, than that which was occasioned by the display of the fair face and neck above mentioned. It was some time before our worthy Arab friends recovered from the serious shock which their modesty had sustained ; but as modesty (for what reason we will not pretend to determine) is by no means an unconquerable feeling, we prevailed upon the blushing Shekhs, when the first impression had subsided, to take a second look at the picture ; declaring, that there was nothing in so innocent a display at which the most correct of true believers need be shocked. We will not venture to say that they were quite of our opinion ; but it is certain that their curiosity (at least we suppose it to have been that) very soon got the better of their scruples ; and we even think, that some of them might actually have been persuaded to trust themselves in those sinful regions where a pretty face and figure may be looked at and admired without any very serious breach of decorum. As for Shekh Mahomed, he had so far recovered himself as to put the object of his former confusion into his pocket, though merely to show it (as he said) to his wives ; and was hardy enough to keep it three or four days, before he returned it to its owner.

With respect to the Arab women, we will venture to say (though we do not think that modesty is their predominant quality) that no consideration could induce them to dress themselves in the manner which caused such astonishment to our acquaintance: and they would certainly not believe that the ladies of Europe, to whom such costume is familiar, would object to appear in the presence of the other sex without their shoes and stockings. As for dancing with men, and taking them by the hand, it would be looked upon as the last stage of effrontery and indelicacy; yet their own familiar dance is at the same time of such a nature that no modest women of Europe could look at it. It would be a curious experiment in natural history to see which of the ladies would require most persuasion, the Arab to appear in public without any veil, or the Englishwoman without shoes and stockings. There can be no question which of the two is most civilized; yet, we own, we cannot see that it is at all more indecent to appear in public with the legs and feet uncovered, than it is to expose the face, arms, and neck; or that it is really more modest to cover the face than to leave it in its natural state. Of the two, we should certainly think it more modest to cover the face than the feet; yet we know that the practice of going without a veil is adopted by the most refined nations of the globe, and that the habit of wearing it is by no means inconsistent with levity and want of proper feeling.

To return to our description of the town; we have already stated, that Bengazi may be considered as occupying the site of the Berenice of the Ptolemies, and of the Hesperis of earlier times; but very

few remains now appear above ground to interest the sculptor, the architect, or the antiquary. Berenice has, in fact, disappeared from the beautiful plain on which it stood, and a miserable, dirty, Arab town has reared itself on its ruins, or rather on the soil which covers its ruins, for all its interest is now under ground.

The erection of Bengazi on the site of the ancient town, rather than the effects of time, or of hostile violence, appears to have been chiefly the cause of the total disappearance of the latter ; for the stones of which the buildings were originally composed being too large for the purposes of the Arabs, are broken up into small pieces before they are used in modern structures, and generally before they are removed from the places in which they are dug up. Many a noble frieze and cornice, and many a well-proportioned capital has been crushed under the hammer of these barbarians ; so that, even were there not a single house in Bengazi which has not been composed of ancient materials, yet there is nothing of architecture in any of them at present to fix, and scarcely to arrest, the attention. We were ourselves just too late to save from the hammer several portions of a large and well-executed Ionic entablature, which a worthy Arab Shekh had caused to be excavated and brought into his court-yard, to form part of a house which he was building without the town, and which was carefully beat to pieces by his servants and slaves before it was bedded in the mud which received it. Very extensive remains of building are still found about Bengazi, at the depth of a foot or two from the surface of the plain ; and whenever a house is intended to be erected, the projector of it has nothing more to do, in order to obtain



materials for building it, than to send a few men to excavate in the neighbourhood, and with them a camel, or two or three asses, to transport what is dug up to the spot which has been fixed upon for the house. If the fragments which are found should prove too large for removal (which is generally the case) they are broken into smaller pieces, without the least hesitation or concern, till they are reduced to a convenient size for loading, and are afterwards broken again into still smaller pieces, as occasion may require, on the place where the house is built. Many valuable remains of antiquity must have disappeared in this way, but it is probable, at the same time, that many still exist to reward the expense of excavation; and we have little doubt, that statues and inscriptions, numerous fragments of architecture, and good collections of coins and gems, might still be obtained within the distance of half a mile round Bengazi. On the beach to the northward and to the north-eastward of the town, where a bank of twenty and thirty feet (more or less) is formed of the rubbish of one of the ancient cities, coins and gems are continually washed down in rainy weather; and the inhabitants of Bengazi repair in crowds to the beach, after storms, and sift the earth which falls away from the cliff, disposing of whatever they may find to the few Europeans of the place\*.

When we reflect that Berenice flourished under Justinian, and that

\* An excellent collection of these remains of Grecian art has been recently sold for a considerable sum\*, by a relation of the Vice-Consul of Bengazi, who had not been many years resident there.

\* Six thousand dollars, as we were informed.

its walls underwent a thorough repair in the reign of that Emperor, it will be thought somewhat singular, that both the town and its walls should have disappeared so completely as they have done. We have already mentioned the disappearance of the city, and it may here be observed, that scarcely a vestige of its walls now remains above the surface of the plain, and that it would not be possible to decide its precise limits, without a great deal of previous excavation. It is probable, however, that Berenice did not extend beyond the actual limits of Bengazi; for the salt-water lake to the southward of the town would prevent its going farther in that direction, and the ground to the eastward is in most parts so low as to be frequently overflowed by the sea, which oozes through the sand heaped upon the beach in that direction.

From the circumstance of the water in Bengazi being brackish, it is probable that the ancient town was furnished with an aqueduct from some springs of sweet water, about half a mile distant from it to the eastward; and the existence of remains of ancient reservoirs, or cisterns, with troughs, constructed of stone, leading into them, still observable on the beach where the coins and gems are collected, would seem, in some degree, to favour this supposition\*.

On first discovering the quarries from which the city of Berenice, and probably that of Hesperis also, have been constructed, we flattered ourselves that we should have found them full of excavated tombs, which are usually formed in similar situations, when the

\* These would however serve equally for the reception of rain water, which falls in abundance at Bengazi during the winter.

quarries are not far from the town : but two or three chambers only appeared, which did not seem to us to have been intended for places of burial, and the tombs of both cities must be looked for in the plain, under the soil or the sand which now conceals them\*.

The trees and shrubs which are growing in the quarries we allude to, and have rooted themselves, at the same time, in the sides of the rocks which they are formed in, give these places a very wild and picturesque appearance, not unworthy of the pencil of Salvator ; and, had not our time been fully occupied in research, when the weather allowed us to ramble, we should have been glad to have made some sketches of them. The caper plant is found there in great abundance, and spreads itself, like ivy, over the steep sides of the rocks, hanging down in the most luxuriant and beautiful clusters.

In speaking of the steep rocks in which these quarries are formed, we must state, that they do not rise above the surface of the plain, but are sunk down, perpendicularly, to a considerable depth, so as not to be visible till they are closely approached. Besides the quarries here mentioned, some very singular pits or chasms, of natural formation, are found in the neighbourhood of Bengazi : they consist of a level surface of excellent soil, of several hundred feet in extent, inclosed within steep, and for the most part perpendicular, sides of solid rock, rising sometimes to a height of sixty or seventy feet, or more, before they reach the level of the plain in which they are situated.

\* In one of these quarries a large portion of the rock, shaped into a quadrangular form, has been insulated from the rest to serve the purpose of a tomb, after the manner of those at Ptolemeta.

The soil at the bottom of these chasms appears to have been washed down from the plain above by the heavy winter rains, and is frequently cultivated by the Arabs ; so that a person, in walking over the country where they exist, comes suddenly upon a beautiful orchard or garden, blooming in secret, and in the greatest luxuriance, at a considerable depth beneath his feet, and defended on all sides by walls of solid rocks, so as to be at first sight apparently inaccessible. The effect of these secluded little spots, protected, as it were, from the intrusion of mankind by the steepness and the depth of the barriers which inclose them, is singular and pleasing in the extreme : they reminded us of some of those secluded retreats which we read of in fairy legends and tales, and we could almost fancy ourselves, as we looked down upon them, in the situation of some of those favoured knights and princes, the heroes of our earlier days, who have been permitted to wander over the boundaries of reality into regions shut out from the rest of mankind.

It was impossible to walk round the edge of these precipices, looking everywhere for some part less abrupt than the rest, by which we might descend into the gardens beneath, without calling to mind the description given by Scylax of the far-famed garden of the Hesperides.

This celebrated retreat is stated by Scylax to have been an inclosed spot of about one-fifth of a British mile\* across, each way, filled with

\* Two stadia is the length and breadth given by Scylax, which, taken as the mean Grecian stades of Major Rennell, of about ten to a British mile, would give the measurement here stated.

thickly-planted fruit-trees of various kinds, and *inaccessible* on all sides. It was situated (on the authority of the same writer) at six hundred and twenty stadia (or fifty geographical miles) from the *Port of Barce*; and this distance agrees precisely with that of the places here alluded to from Ptolemy, the port intended by Scylax, as will be seen by a reference to the chart. The testimony of Pliny is also very decided in fixing the site of the Hesperides in the neighbourhood of Berenice. "Not far" (he says) "from the city" (Berenice is here meant) "is the river Lethon, and the sacred grove where the gardens of the Hesperides are said to be situated\*." Ptolemy also may be supposed to intend the same position, when he informs us, that the garden was to the westward of the people of Barca; or, what is the same thing, that the *Barcitæ* were to the eastward of the garden of Hesperides†.

The name, indeed, itself of Hesperides would induce us to place the Garden, so called, in the vicinity of Bengazi; for the Hesperides were the early inhabitants of that part of the Cyrenaica, and Hesperis, as we have already stated, was the ancient name of the city of Berenice, on the site of which Bengazi is built,‡ and which was probably so called by the Greeks, from the circumstance of its being the most western city of the district.

\* Nec procul ante oppidum fluvius Lethon, lucus sacer, ubi Hesperidum Horti memorantur.—(Nat. Hist., lib. v. c. 5.) Again, in the same book, Berenice—quondam vocata Hesperidum, &c.

† Βαρκίται ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν τοῦ κηπου τῶν Ἑσπερίδων.

‡ Βερεγική ἢ καὶ Ἑσπερίδες.—(Ptol. Geogr.): and as Stephanus describes it, in the singular, Ἑσπερίς, πόλις Λιβύης, ἢ νῦν Βερονίκη.

It has been supposed by Gosselin, and others, that those celebrated gardens of early times (for they are frequently mentioned in the plural) were nothing more than some of those Oases, or verdant islands, “which reared their heads amid the sandy desert;” and, in the absence of positive local information, the conjecture was sufficiently reasonable.

The accounts which have come down to us of the *desert of Barca*, from the pens of the Arab Historians, would lead us to suppose that the country so called (which included not only the territory in question, with the whole of the Pentapolis and Cyrenaica, but also the whole tract of coast between Tripoly and Alexandria) was little more than a barren tract of sand, scarcely capable of cultivation. Under such an impression, we can readily imagine that modern writers might be easily deceived; and when it was necessary to fix the site of groves and gardens in the country so erroneously described, we may certainly justify them in looking for such places in the only parts of a sandy desert where luxuriant vegetation is found, the Oases, or verdant islands alluded to. “Objects here presented themselves” (says the learned and ingenious Author of the *Discoveries and Travels in Africa*, in speaking of the western coast of that country, where the Hesperides have by some writers been placed) “which acted powerfully on the exalted and poetical imaginations of the ancients. They were particularly struck by those Oases, or verdant islands, which reared their heads amid the sandy desert. Hence,



doubtless, were drawn those brilliant pictures of the Hesperian gardens, the Fortunate Islands, the Islands of the Blest, which are painted in such glowing colours, and form the gayest part of ancient mythology. The precise position of these celebrated spots has been a subject of eager and doubtful inquiry. The chief difficulty is, that there are different points of the continent in which they seem to be fixed with almost equal precision. In fact, it seems clearly shewn, by some learned writers\*, that this variety of position is referrible, not to any precise geographical *data*, but to the operation of certain secret propensities that are deeply lodged in the human breast.

There arises involuntarily in the heart of man a longing after forms of being, fairer and happier than any presented by the world before him—bright scenes which he seeks and never finds, in the circuit of real existence. But imagination easily creates them in that dim boundary which separates the known from the unknown world. In the first discoverers of any such region, novelty usually produces an exalted state of the imagination and passions; under the influence of which every object is painted in higher colours than those of nature. Nor does the illusion cease, when a fuller examination proves that, in the place thus assigned, no such beings or objects exist. The human heart, while it remains possible, still clings to its fond chimeras: it quickly transfers them to the yet unknown region beyond; and, when driven from thence, discovers still another more remote in which they can take refuge.

Thus we find these fairy spots successively retreating before the progress of discovery ; yet finding still, in the farthest advance which ancient knowledge ever made, some remoter extremity to which they can fly.

“The first position of the Hesperian gardens (continues our author) “appears to have been at the western extremity of Libya, then the farthest boundary, upon that side, of ancient knowledge. The spectacle which it often presented, a circuit of blooming verdure amid the desert, was calculated to make a powerful impression on Grecian fancy, and to suggest the idea of quite a terrestrial paradise. It excited also the image of islands, which ever after adhered to these visionary creations. As the first spot became frequented, it was soon stripped of its fabled beauty. So pleasing an idea, however, was not to be easily relinquished. Another place was quickly found for it ; and every traveller, as he discovered a new portion of that fertile and beautiful coast, fondly imagined that he had at length arrived at the long-sought-for Islands of the Blest. At length, when the continent had been sought in vain, they were transferred to the ocean beyond, which the original idea of islands rendered an easy step. Those of the Canaries having never been passed, nor even fully explored, continued always to be the Fortunate Islands, not from any peculiar felicity of soil and climate, but merely because distance and imperfect knowledge left full scope to poetical fancy \*. Hence we find Horace painting their felicity in the most glowing colours, and

Strabo, l.—Plutarch in Sertorio—Horat. 4. od. 8. v. 27. Epod. 16. Pliny 6—6. C. 31-2.

viewing them as a refuge still left for mortals, from that troubled and imperfect enjoyment which they were doomed to experience in every other portion of the globe." (Murray's Account of Africa, vol. i. chap. 1.)

Nothing is more just than the picture of human nature here presented to us by the intelligent writer just quoted; and it must be confessed that the position of the Hesperian gardens has been fixed by different authors in so many parts of the coast of Africa, that we may scarcely hope to reconcile statements so opposite.

The legends connected with these celebrated places are at the same time so wild and extravagant, as well as so discordant with each other, that we might often be tempted to consider the gardens themselves as fabulous and imaginary spots, existing only in the creative brain of the poet and the mythologist, and nowhere to be found in reality.

We should not, however, say, from our view of the subject, that "the variety of position" assigned to the gardens of the Hesperides "is referrible to no precise geographical *data*:" the details which we have already quoted from Scylax are too minute to be wholly rejected; and the position of the gardens, as laid down by Ptolemy and Pliny, coincides with that assigned to them by Scylax.

We have shewn, at the same time, that the nature of the ground in the neighbourhood of Berenice (or Bengazi) is consistent with the account of Scylax; and that places like those which he has so minutely described are actually to be found in the territory where he has laid down the gardens. This singular formation, so far as

we have seen, is also peculiar to the country in question; and we know of no other part of the coast of northern Africa where the same peculiarities of soil are observable. We do not mean to point out any *one* of these subterranean gardens as that which is described in the passage above quoted from Scylax; for we know of no one which will correspond in point of extent to the garden which this author has mentioned: all those which we saw were considerably less than the fifth of a mile in diameter (the measurement given by Scylax); and the places of this nature which would best agree with the dimensions in question, are now filled with water sufficiently fresh to be drinkable, and take the form of romantic little lakes.

Scarcely any two of the gardens we met with were, however, of the same depth or extent; and we have no reason to conclude that because we saw none which were large enough to be fixed upon for the garden of the Hesperides, as it is described in the statement of Scylax, there is therefore no place of the dimensions required among those which escaped our notice—particularly as the singular formation we allude to continues to the foot of the Cyrenaic chain, which is fourteen miles distant, in the nearest part, from Bengazi. When we consider that the places in question are all of them sunk below the surface of the soil, and that the face of the country in which they are found is overspread with brushwood, and nowhere perfectly level, it will not be thought extraordinary if some of them should have escaped us in a diligent and frequently-repeated search. At any rate, under the circumstances which

are already before the reader, it will not be thought a visionary or hastily formed assumption, if we say that the position of these celebrated spots, "long the subject of eager and doubtful inquiry," may be laid down with some probability in the neighbourhood of the town of Bengazi. The remarkable peculiarities of this part of northern Africa correspond (in our opinion) sufficiently well with the authorities already quoted, to authorize the conclusion we have drawn from an inspection of the place; and to induce us to place the gardens of the Hesperides in some one, or more, of the places described, rather than in any of the Oases of the desert, as suggested by Monsieur Gosselin and others\*. It seems probable that there were more than one garden of this name; but they could scarcely have been all of them so large as that mentioned by Scylax; and the greater number of those which we were able to discover were considerably smaller in all their dimensions, as we have already stated above.

It has been mentioned that some of the chasms above described have assumed the form of lakes; the sides of which are perpendicular, like those of the gardens, and the water in most of them appears to be very deep. In some of these lakes the water rises nearly to the edge of the precipice which incloses them, and in others is as much as twenty feet below it. They are no doubt much fuller after

\* Signor Della Cella has supposed that the passage of Scylax refers to the *elevated* parts of the Cyrenaica, and places his gardens of Hesperides in the mountains; but we think that a review of the passage in question, combined with the local information which we have been able to collect on the subject, will authorize us to doubt this position.

the rainy season than at other times of the year, and the water is then sweeter than ordinary. Besides these, there are also several subterranean caves in the neighbourhood of Bengazi. One of these, at the depth of about eighty feet from the surface of the plain, contains a large body of fresh water, which is said to run very far into the bowels of the earth, or rather of the rock which overshadows it. On descending into this cave, we found that it widened out into a spacious chamber, the sides of which had evidently been, in many places, shaped with the chisel, and rose perpendicularly to a considerable height. Our progress was soon stopped, as we were advancing into the cave, by the body of water we have mentioned; which, notwithstanding the lights we procured, was scarcely visible through the thick gloom which surrounded us. We found the water shallow at the edge, but it soon became gradually too deep to be practicable; we were also unable to discover any end to it, and a stone thrown as far as we could send it, fell into the water without striking. We had, however, seen enough to excite our curiosity very strongly, and we determined to return, at some early opportunity, with a boat and a good store of torches, intending to go as far along this subterranean stream as the height of the rock would allow us.

On mentioning our visit and our intentions to Bey Halil, he informed us that he had himself paid a visit to the place, in company with a chaous of his suite; and that he had carried with him a small boat in which he embarked with the chaous, and proceeded a considerable distance. They became, at length, afraid of not finding their way back, and put about to return as they came, having found (as he said) on sounding, that the depth of the water was in some



parts as much as thirty feet. This account naturally made us more anxious than ever to put our intentions in execution ; but no boat could then be found in the harbour sufficiently small for our purpose, and we were obliged to defer our subterranean voyage ; determining, however, that if we could not find a portable boat on our return from Cyrene, we would contrive to put together some pieces of timber, and prosecute our researches on a raft, after the example of Sindbad the sailor.

But, alas ! who can say that to-morrow is his own ?—and who is there who makes the most of to-day ? If we had constructed our raft before we moved farther eastward, instead of waiting for the chance of a boat when we came back, we should in all probability have been able to ascertain the extent of this mysterious river. As it was, we were obliged, by circumstances which we could neither control nor foresee, to leave the coast of Africa before we had completed our researches in the city and neighbourhood of Cyrene ; and the short time which we had at our command on returning to Bengazi was insufficient (under the pressure of other occupations) for accomplishing this object of our wishes.

The disappointment here alluded to was only one among many others which we experienced, in consequence of our hasty and unexpected return ; but it was one which we regretted more, perhaps, than it deserved ; for mystery will always add a charm to inquiry, which further investigation might probably remove, but which will continue to preserve its powers of fascination while the uncertainty remains which created it.

We are too well acquainted with the talent of amplification so

generally possessed by Turks and Arabs of all classes, to rely implicitly upon the truth of every part of the above-mentioned narrative related to us by the Bey of Bengazi: there is, however, no reason, of which we are aware, connected with the nature of the place, which militates against its probability; and we submit it accordingly, as we received it, to our readers, in the absence of more decided information.

We have already wandered into the regions of fable in speaking of the Gardens of the Hesperides; and before we retrace our steps, we must be permitted to linger for a while on the borders of the mysterious, hidden stream above-mentioned.

The Lethe, or Lathon, (for it is no less a stream to which we are going to call the attention of our readers,) is laid down by geographers in the neighbourhood of the gardens, and close to the city of the Hesperides.

Strabo makes the Lathon flow into the harbour of the Hesperides, and Ptolemy also lays down the same river between Berenice and Arsinoe; Pliny describes the Lathon as situated in the neighbourhood of Berenice, and Scylax places a river (which he calls Ecceus, *Εκκεϊος*) in a similar situation. The river Lethe is supposed to have lost itself underground, and to re-appear (like the Niger) in another place\*; and the point to which we would call the attention of the

Here Lethe's streams, from secret springs below,  
Rise to the light; here heavily, and slow,  
The silent, dull, forgetful waters flow.

(Rowe's Lucan, book ix. p. 209.)

Lucan places his Lethe and Hesperian Gardens in the neighbourhood of the Lake Tritonis, in the Lesser Syrtis; but the western part of the Cyrenaica is the most approved position for both. \*See also Solinus on this point.

reader is—whether the subterranean stream above-mentioned, which certainly may be said to lose itself underground, be the source of the Lethe, or Lathon, in question? and whether a small spring, which runs into the lake near the town of Bengazi, may be supposed to be the re-appearance of the same river, in the place so decidedly assigned to it by Strabo—the port of the Hesperides, or, which is the same, of Berenice.

The circumstance of finding a subterranean stream in this neighbourhood, between the mountains and the lake which joins the Harbour of Bengazi, would certainly appear to favour the conclusion, that the course of the stream was towards the lake, that is to say, from the higher ground to the lower. And although the mere discovery of a small stream of fresh water emptying itself into the lake here alluded to, does not by any means tend to confirm the existence of a communication between it and the subterranean stream in question; yet there is no proof (at least, not that we are aware of) that one of these is not connected with the other. At the same time we may add, that if it were really ascertained that no connexion existed between the two, such a circumstance would not be considered as proving that the ancients did not suppose that they communicated. It was believed by the Greeks (or, at any rate, it was asserted by them) that the Alpheus communicated with the fountain of Arethusa, and that anything thrown into the former at Elis would re-appear on the waters of the latter in Sicily.

Other instances might be mentioned of similar extravagancies, which are considered by the moderns as poetical inventions. and

never received as historical facts. The disappearance of the Lathon, and its subsequent rise, might have been equally a poetical fiction ; but when we find, in the country in which it was placed, a large body of water which actually loses itself, we are naturally led to believe one part of the assertion, and to seek to identify the actual subterranean stream with that which is said to have existed. On a reference to the authority of geographers and historians, we find a river called Lathon laid down very clearly in the place where this body of water is found, and we remark that the name which they apply to the river signifies *hidden* or *concealed*. So far there is a probability that the Lathon of the ancients and the subterranean stream in the neighbourhood of Bengazi may be one and the same river.

Again, we are told, on the authority of Strabo, that the Lathon discharged itself into the Harbour of the Hesperides ; and we find a small spring actually running into the lake which is connected with the harbour in question ; and which might, from the position of the subterranean spring between it and the mountains to the southward of it, have received at least a portion of the waters, which lose themselves in a place where the level is higher. When we find that the Lathon (or hidden stream) of Bengazi is *directly* between the mountains and the harbour, it becomes the more probable that such a communication may have existed ; and whether the little spring which runs into the lake be a continuation of the Lathon or not, there appears to be quite sufficient reason for believing that the ancients might have imagined it was. If we consider how trifling

are the existing remains of the Ilissus, the Simois, the Scamander, and other rivers, to which we have been in the habit of attaching importance, we must not be surprised to find a celebrated stream dwindled down into a very insignificant one. The changes which a lapse of nearly two thousand years may be supposed to have occasioned on the northern coast of Africa, are fully sufficient to have reduced the river Lathon to the spring which now flows into the Lake of Bengazi.

The lake itself is salt, and in the summer is nearly dry; while the small stream in question takes its rise within a few yards of the lake, and running along a channel of inconsiderable breadth, bordered with reeds and rushes, might be mistaken by a common observer for an inroad of the lake into the sandy soil which bounds it.

On tasting it, however, we found its waters to be fresh, and the current which is formed by its passage into the lake is very evident on the slightest examination.

If we may suppose this little stream to be all that now remains of the celebrated River of Oblivion, we shall be enabled to throw light upon a passage in Strabo which has hitherto been the subject of much discussion.

It has been questioned by commentators, whether Strabo intended to make the river Lathon discharge itself into the *lake*, or into the *port* of the Hesperides; and the near resemblance which the words λιμην (limen) and λιμνη (limne), the former of which means a port, and the latter a lake, do certainly bear to each other, will allow of their being confounded in transcribing, by the mere transposition of a

single letter      Without reference to the authority of the most approved manuscripts, we may observe, on that only of local inspection, that either of these words would be correct. It has already been stated that the Harbour of Bengazi communicates with a salt-water lake, and it is probable that in Strabo's time the vessels of the ancients might have passed from one into the other. The harbour and the lake might in that event be considered without any impropriety as the same. It is into this lake that the small stream discharges itself which we have alluded to above, and if we can suppose it to be the remains of the Lathon, the statement of Strabo may be considered as confirmed by the actual appearance of the place. If, however, we are disposed to be sceptical on this point, we must give up the river altogether, or, at least, we must give up the re-appearance of it in the lake and in the Harbour of Hesperis, or Berenice; for no other spring, that we are aware of, flows either into one or the other. It is probable that λιμνη was the word used by Strabo, and it seems also probable that he intended to imply, that the harbour and the lake he calls Tritonis, on which stood the temple of Venus, were the same; at least, in reading the whole of the passage together, we can scarcely divest ourselves of this idea †.

\* Εστι δὲ καὶ λιμνὴ Ἑσπερίδων, καὶ ποταμὸς ἐμβάλλει Λαθῶν. (Lib. 17. p. 836.)

Some of the Commentators read λιμνὴ Ἑσπερίδων, and Cellarius says on this subject—  
 “Est et de exitu fluminis dubitatio, in quod se infundat, in mare an in lacum. Straboni est λιμνὴ Ἑσπερίδων, in quem Lathon effluit. Vetus autem interpres iterum dissentit, et quasi λιμνὴ legerit, lacus vertit *Hesperidum*. Videant (he adds) quibus vel regionem cognoscendi, vel inspiciendi antiquos codices, facultas est. (Lib. iv. c. ii.)

† Εστι δὲ ἀκρὰ λεγόμενη Ψευδοπενίας, ἐφ' ἧς ἡ Βερενικὴ τὴν θῆσιν ἐχει, παρὰ λιμνὴν τινα Τριτωνίδα, ἐν ᾗ μαλιστὰ νησιον ἐστὶ, καὶ ἱερὸν Ἀφροδίτης ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ λιμνὴ Ἑσπερίδων, καὶ ποταμὸς ἐμβάλλει Λαθῶν.



It may be, however, that the nature of the place, rather than the construction of the passage in question, has in fact suggested this reading to us: for on the borders of the lake, which still communicates with the Harbour of Bengazi, is a spot of rising ground, nearly insulated in winter, on which are the remains of ancient building; and which, at the time when the harbour was deeper, and the lake itself practicable for vessels\*, must have been (occasionally, at least) completely surrounded with water. Here then might have stood the temple of Venus mentioned in the passage above, and the introduction of the word *μαλιστα* by Strabo (taken in the sense of *mostly*, or *generally*), in speaking of the island in question, would seem to confirm this position.

Berenice (he tells us) is placed on the Point of Pseudopenias, near a certain lake called Tritonis, in which there is *mostly* an island (*ἐν ἡ μαλιστα νησιον ἐστι*), with a temple upon it dedicated to Venus. We may remark, in support of this supposition, that it is probable, from the position of the rising ground alluded to, that it was not at all times surrounded by water; and that it was only in the winter season, or at times when the sea advanced farther than ordinary, that it was completely an island.

We may suppose, in receiving this island as the one mentioned by Strabo, that the circumstance just stated was alluded to by the geographer, when he informs us that there was *usually* an island in the lake; but we do not mean to insist upon this reading of the passage in question, and will confess, that it would probably never have

\* We have already assumed, upon reasonable grounds, that this was probably the case in earlier times.

suggested itself to us had we never visited Bengazi ; it must therefore be left to the discretion of our readers, to adopt it or not, as it may seem to deserve, on a reference to the local peculiarities we have mentioned.

With regard to the name of Tritonis, bestowed upon the lake in this passage, it is difficult to say whether the lake which Strabo mentions was actually called by that name ; or whether the geographer has confounded it with the Tritonis Palus (the Lake Lowdeah of Shaw), situated in the Lesser Syrtis, and which also contained an island, according to Herodotus.

But whatever may have been the proper name of the lake at Berenice which we seek to identify with the Tritonis of Strabo, it appears to us to answer remarkably well to the lake of that name which he mentions. We will therefore suggest, that the Tritonis in question and the lake which now communicates with the Harbour of Bengazi, are one and the same lake : that it was originally deep enough to admit the vessels of the ancients, and to have formed occasionally the island containing the temple of Venus, on the spot of rising ground already pointed out, where remains of ancient building are still observable : that a small spring of fresh water runs into the same lake which may possibly be the remains of the Lathon of Strabo, at its point of re-appearance and communication with the Harbour of the Hesperides ; and that the subterranean stream in the cavern between the lake and the mountains, which we have mentioned above, may also be the source of this river. When we add, that the gardens upon which we have remarked, are probably some of those called the Gar-

dens of the Hesperides, we have pointed out all that now occurs to us of any interest in the neighbourhood of the town of Bengazi; and we submit these suggestions to the judgment of others better qualified than ourselves to decide the points in question.

It appears to have been from Berenice, the daughter of Magas, who was married to Ptolemy Philadelphus, that the city of Hesperis changed its ancient name into that which afterwards distinguished it\*. But the name of Berenicidæ, which seems to have been conferred upon the inhabitants of this part of the Cyrenaica, was not by any means generally adopted; for we find that these people continued notwithstanding to be called by their former appellation of Hesperides. It is, however, somewhat singular that Pomponius Mela, who flourished towards the middle of the first century, and nearly a hundred years after the extinction of the dynasty of the Lagides, should have mentioned this city under its ancient name of Hesperis only; while he gives its Ptolemaic name, Arsinoe, to Teuchira, and distinguishes the port of Barca by its appellation of Ptolemais†. Yet the name of Berenice continued to be used by other writers long after the age of Mela; and Pliny, who flourished nearly at the same time with this geographer, mentions the city of the Hesperides by that title. It is probable that a name of such poetical celebrity as that which gave place to Berenice was not easily laid aside by the lovers of literature; and we find that Ptolemy thought

\* Βερενικίδαι απο Βερενικης της Μαγας θυγατρος, γυναικος δε και Πτολεμαίου, ωνομαθησαν Βερενικίδαι οι δημοται. (Steph. Byzant. v.)

† Urbes Hesperia, Apollonia, Ptolemais, Arsinoe, atque (unde terris nomen est) ipsa Cyrene. (De Situ Orbis, Lib. i. c. 8.)

it necessary, an hundred years after Mela, to add, when he speaks of the city of Berenice, that it was the same with that of Hesperis, or, as he writes it, Hesperides\*; from which we may infer that the ancient name of the place still continued to be better known than the modern one. But alas for the glories of Hesperis and Berenice! both names have passed away from the scene of their renown; and the present inhabitants of the miserable dirty village, (for we can scarcely call it a town,) which has reared itself on the ruins of these cities, have no idea that Bengazi did not always occupy the place which it has usurped on the soil of the Hesperides†.

The Arab who now gathers his corn, or his fruit, in some one, perhaps, of those gardens so celebrated in the annals of antiquity, dreams of nothing whatever connected with it beyond the profits which he hopes from its produce. He knows nothing of the stream or the properties of the Lethe; and the powerful influence of the River of Oblivion seems to have been so often, and so successfully exerted, as to have drowned at length even the recollection of itself‡.

\* Βερενικη, ἡ καὶ Ἑσπεριδες.

† The name of Berenice is mentioned by Edrisi as remaining in his time in this part of Africa; but we never could find any traces of the name, though we often inquired for it of the Arabs of the country, as well as of the inhabitants of Bengazi.

‡ The changes which time may be supposed to effect in the character and appearance of a country, are well expressed in the following little fable of Kazwini, translated from the Arabic by Silvestre de Sacy.

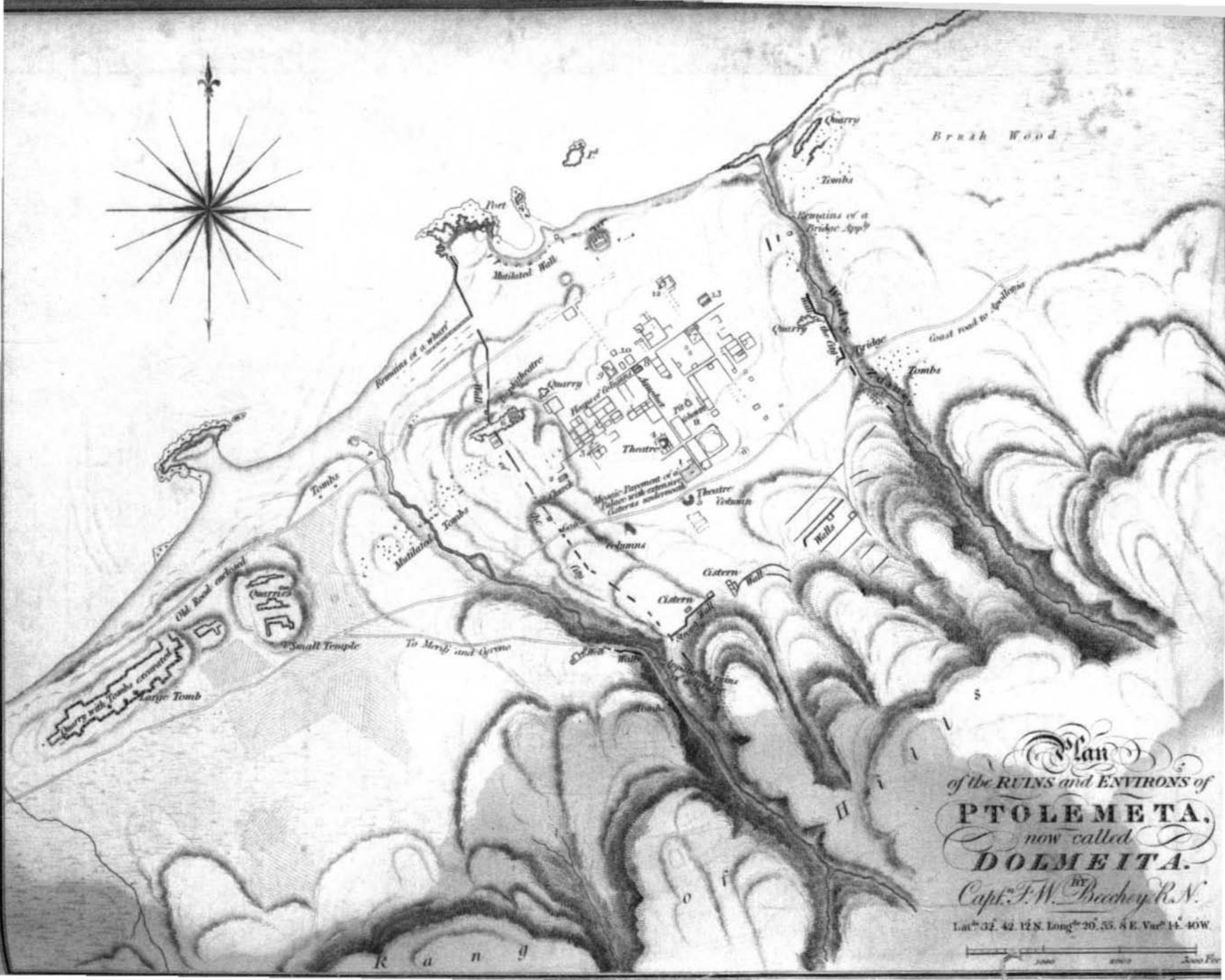
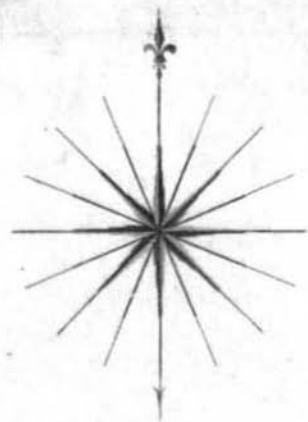
“I passed by a very large and populous city, and inquired of one of its inhabitants by whom it was founded. Oh, replied the man, this is a very ancient city! we have no idea how long it may have been in existence; and our ancestors were on this point

as ignorant as ourselves. In visiting the same place five hundred years afterwards, I could not perceive a single trace of the city; and asked of a countryman, whom I saw cutting clover, where it stood, and how long it had been destroyed. What nonsense are you asking me? said the person whom I addressed: these lands have never been any otherwise than you see them. Why, returned I, was there not formerly here a magnificent and populous city?—We have never seen one, replied the man, and our fathers have never mentioned to us anything of the kind.

“Five hundred years afterwards, as I passed by the spot, I found that the sea had covered it; and, perceiving on the beach a party of fishermen, I asked them how long it had been overflowed.

“It is strange, answered they, that a person of your appearance should ask us such a question as this; for the place has been at all times exactly as it is now. What, said I, was there not at one time dry land in the spot where the sea is at present?—Certainly not, that we know of, answered the fishermen, and we never heard our fathers speak of any such circumstance.

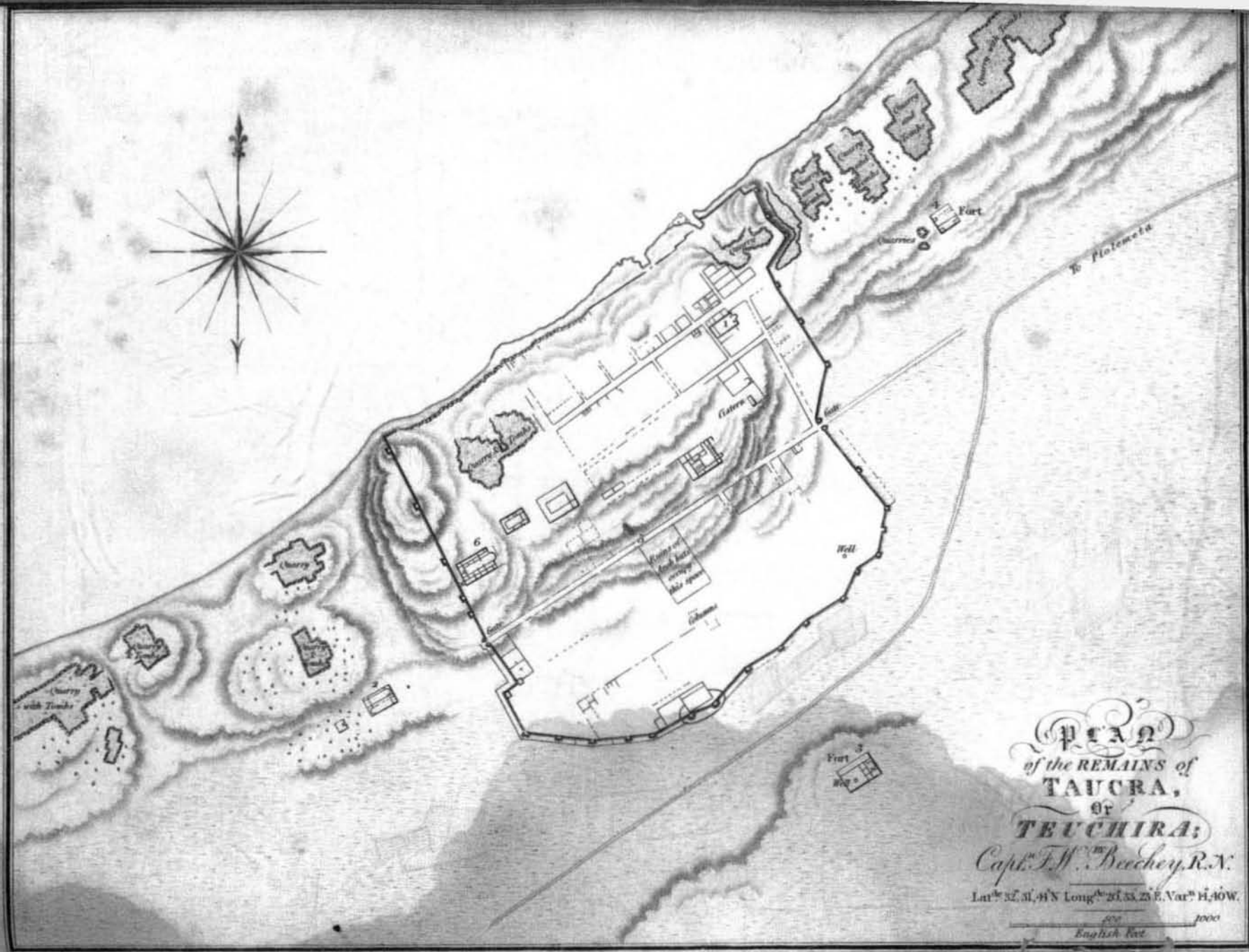
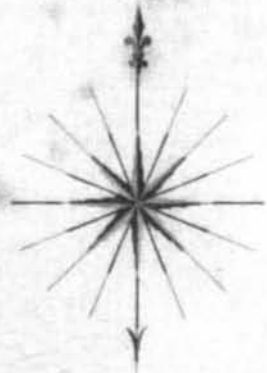
“Again, I passed by the place, after a similar lapse of time,—the sea had disappeared—and I inquired of a man whom I met at what period this change had taken place. He made me the same answer as the others had done before—and, at length, on returning once more to the place, after the lapse of another five hundred years, I found that it was occupied by a flourishing city, more populous, and more rich in magnificent buildings, than that which I had formerly seen! When I inquired of its inhabitants concerning its origin, I was told that it lost itself in the darkness of antiquity! We have not the least idea, they said, when it was founded, and our forefathers knew no more of its origin than ourselves!”  
—(Chrétomathie Arabe, vol.iii. p. 419.)



Plan  
 of the RUINS and ENVIRONS of  
**PTOLEMETA,**  
 now called  
**DOLMEITA.**  
 Capt. F. W. <sup>by</sup> Beechey R.N.  
 Lat. 32° 42' 12" N. Long. 20° 55' 8" E. Var. 14' 40" W.

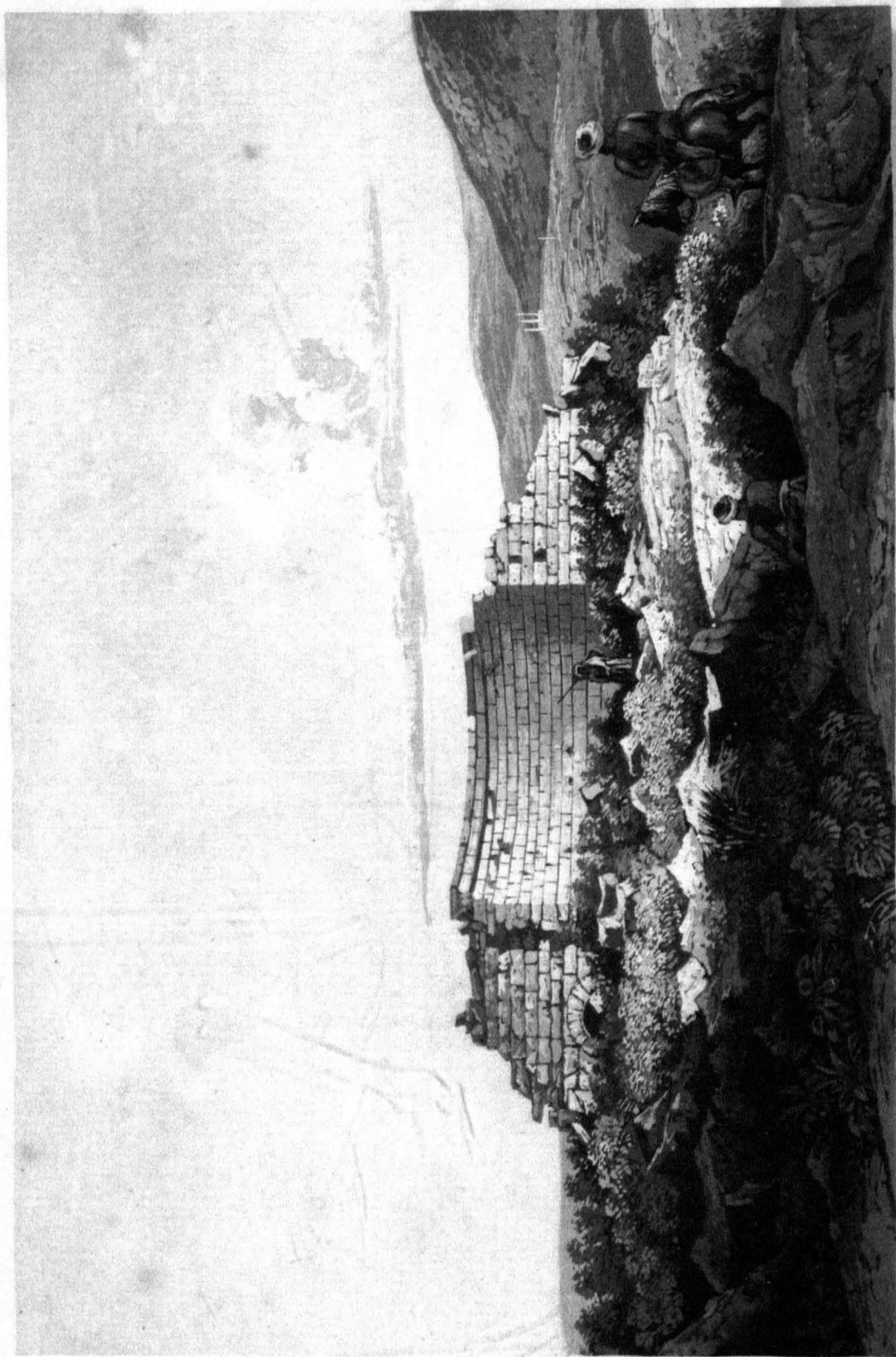






PLAN  
of the REMAINS of  
TAUCHRA,  
or  
TEUCHIRA;  
Capt. F. M. Beechey, R.N.  
Lat. 32. 31. N. Long. 23. 33. 23 E. Var. 11. 40 W.  
English Feet





Engraved from a Drawing taken on the spot by H. Dechery.

REMAINS OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT TZOZUC.

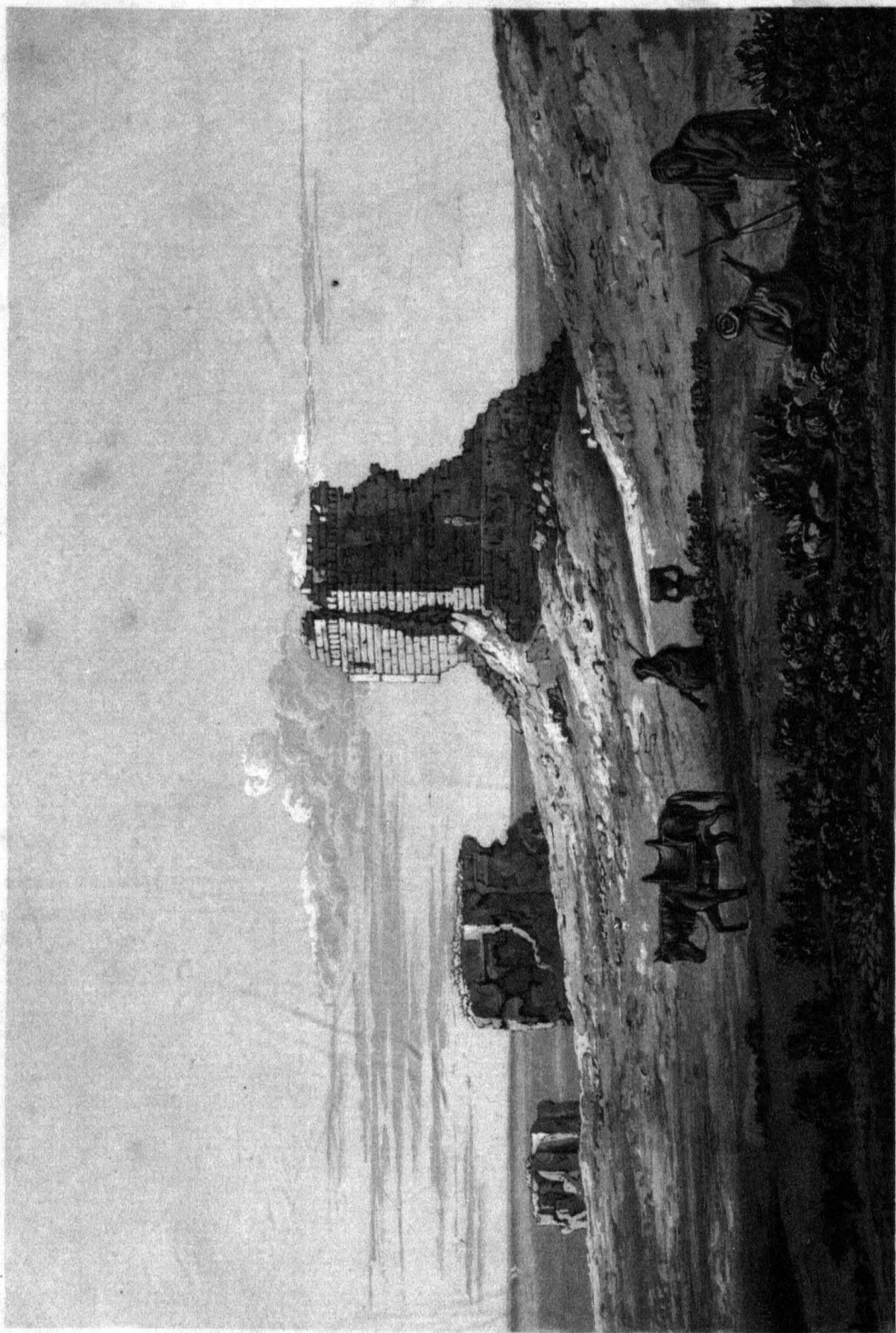


Drawn by H. Beechey.

Engraved by E. Finden.

REMAINS OF AN IONIC BUILDING AT PTOLEMAIS.

Published March 1822, by F. & M. Murray, London.



Engraved from a Drawing taken on the spot by H. Beechey.

REMAINS OF AN ANCIENT MAUSOLEUM AT HALICARNASSUS.





Engraved from a drawing taken on the spot by H. Beecher.

REMAINS OF AN ANCIENT BRIDGE AT PTOLIMERTA.  
SHOWN ACROSS THE BED OF A TORRENT.

## CHAPTER XII.

**Remarks on the Soil of Bengazi and the Country in its Neighbourhood—Distinction of Sex in the Palm-tree, &c., noticed by the Ancients and by Mahometan Writers—Persian Anecdote of a Love-sick Date-tree—Remarks of Shaw on the Propagation and Treatment of the Palm—Arab Mode of cultivating the Sandy Tracts in the Neighbourhood of Bengazi—Journey to Carcora—Completion of the Coast-line from that Place to Bengazi—Return to Bengazi, and Departure for Teuchira and Ptolemeta—Description of the Country between Bengazi and these Places—Remains observable in this Track—Correspondence of the Tower called Gusser el Towël with that of Cafez, mentioned by Edrisi—Probable Site of Adriane—Arrival at Birsis—Remains in its neighbourhood, at Mably (or Mabny), considered as those of Neapolis—Hospitality of the Arabs of Birsis—Remains of Teuchira—Position of the City—Quarries without the Walls covered with Greek Inscriptions—Teuchira a Town of Barca—Walls of the City repaired by Justinian—No Port observable at Teuchira—Mistake of Bruce in confounding Teuchira with Ptolemeta—Good Supply of fresh Water at Teuchira—The excavated Tombs of the ancient City used as Dwelling-houses by the Arabs of the Neighbourhood—Indisposition of our Chaous (or Janissary)—Route from Teuchira to Ptolemeta—Remains at Ptolemeta—Port and Cothon of the ancient City—Other Remains observable there—Ptolemaic Inscriptions—Picturesque Ravines in the Neighbourhood of Ptolemeta—Position of the City—Remains of Bridges observed there—Advantages of its Site—Extreme Drought at Ptolemeta, recorded by Procopius—Reparation of the Aqueducts and Cisterns by the Emperor Justinian—Existing Remains of an extensive Cistern at Ptolemeta, probably among those alluded to by Procopius—State of the Town, its Solitude and Desolation—Luxuriant Vegetation which encumbered its Streets when the Place was first visited by our Party—Change of Scene on returning to it in Summer-time.**

THE soil of the Hesperides does not now produce that variety of fruit which we find that it did in the days of its prosperity\*; but the palm and the fig-tree still flourish there in great abundance, and it is merely from the want of attention, and not from any actual

Vide Scylax, Theophrastus, and others.

change in the soil itself, that it does not afford the same variety as formerly

The fruit of the palm-tree forms too essential a part of Arab food to allow of the necessary precautions being neglected for insuring the growth and the ripening of dates; but the fig-trees are for the most part wild, and produce only, a diminutive fruit, which never comes to any perfection. It is a well-known fact in natural history, that "these trees are male and female, and that the fruit will be dry and insipid without a previous communication with the male." This peculiarity was discovered at a very early period, and has been noticed by writers of various ages with much perspicuity and detail. There appears to have been but little variation at any time in the mode of performing these operations, and the manner in which the palm-tree is described, by Pliny, to have been impregnated, is the same with that which prevails in the present day.

A part of the blossom from the male tree is either attached to the fruit of the female; or the powder from the blossoms of the male is shaken over those which the female produces. The first of these methods is practised in Barbary, (one male being sufficient, as Shaw has observed, to impregnate four or five hundred female); and the latter is common in Egypt, where the number of male trees is

\* Signor Della Cella has remarked (p. 185,) that there are *a few* palm-trees in the neighbourhood of Bengazi, and a tract or two of land sowed with barley ("alcune palme, e qualche tratto seminato col orzo"—) all the rest is (he tells us) neglected and uncultivated. But there are a *great many* palm-trees in the neighbourhood of Bengazi, on both sides of the harbour, and a great proportion of cultivated land.

greater\*. Both these methods are described by Pliny, (Hist. Nat. lib. xiii.) and the whole account which is there given of the palm-tree and its several varieties is extremely accurate and interesting. The attachment of this tree to a sandy and nitrous soil, and its partiality at the same time for water; its inability to thrive in any other than a dry and hot climate, its peculiar foliage and bark, and the decided distinction of sex which is observable in it, are all mentioned in detail by the Roman naturalist.

The remarks of Arab writers on the distinction of sex in the palm-tree are nearly the same with those of Pliny; and a most extraordinary confirmation of it will be found in a Persian anecdote quoted by Silvestre de Sacy; from which it will clearly appear that an unrequited and secret attachment to a neighbouring date-tree had nearly caused the death of a too-susceptible female palm!

\* The following is the process mentioned by Shaw.—“In the months of March or April, when the sheaths that respectively enclose the young clusters of the male flowers and the female fruit begin to open (at which time the latter are formed and the first are mealy), they take a sprig or two of the male cluster, and insert it into the sheath of the female; or else they take a whole cluster of the male tree, and sprinkle the meal, or farina of it over several clusters of the female.” (Travels in Barbary, vol. i., p. 259-60).

The same author remarks that the palm-tree arrives at its greatest vigour about thirty years after transplantation, and continues so seventy years afterwards; bearing yearly fifteen or twenty clusters of dates, each of them weighing fifteen or twenty pounds\*.

“Si parmi les palmiers (says the author of a treatise on agriculture quoted by Kazwini, in the words of Silvestre de Sacy), “Si parmi les palmiers on rapproche les individus mâles des individus femelles, ces derniers portent des fruits en plus grande abondance,

\* Shaw has observed that “the method of raising the *Phœnix* (*Phoenix*) or palm, and, what may be further observed, that when the old trunk dies, there is never wanting one or other of those offsprings to succeed it, may have given occasion to the fable of the bird of that name dying and another arising from it.”

(So Pliny, lib. xiii. c. 4.) Mirumque de ea accepimus cum phœnice ave quæ putatur ex hujus palmæ argumento nomen accepisse, emori ac renasci ex seipsa.



Osmai relates (says the story in question) that an inhabitant of Yemama, a province in Arabia, once made him the following recital. "I was possessor of a garden in which was a palm-tree, which had every year produced me abundance of fruit ; but two seasons having passed away, without its affording any, I sent for a person well acquainted with the culture of palms, to discover for me the reason of this failure. "An unhappy attachment" (observed the man, after a moment's inspection) "is the sole cause why this palm-tree produces no fruit !" He then climbed up the trunk, and, looking round on all sides, discovered a male palm at no great distance, which he recognised as the object of my unlucky tree's affection ; and advised me to procure some of the powder from its blossoms, and to scatter it over her branches. This I did (said the Arab,) and the consequence was, that my date-tree, whom unrequited love had kept barren, now bore me a most abundant harvest !"

The value of the palm-tree is not generally appreciated in Europe, but it is highly prized in Asia and Africa. The followers of Mahomet (as appears from Kazwini) believe it to be peculiar to those favoured countries where the religion of the Prophet is professed. "Honour the palm-tree," (says this writer, in the words of Mahomet himself,) "for she is your father's aunt ;" and this distinction (he tells us) was given to it, because the tree was formed from the remainder

*parceque le voisinage favorise leurs amours ; et si, au contraire, on éloigne l'arbre femelle des mâles, cette distance empêche qu'il ne rapporte aucun fruit. Quand on plante un palmier mâle au milieu des femelles, et que, le vent venant à souffler, les femelles reçoivent l'odeur des fleurs du mâle, cette odeur suffit pour rendre féconds tous les palmiers femelles qui environnent le mâle.*

of the clay of which Adam was created ! It is propagated chiefly (as Shaw has informed us) from young shoots taken from the roots of full-grown trees, which, if well transplanted and taken care of, will yield their fruit in the sixth or seventh year ; whereas those that are raised immediately from the kernels will not bear till about their sixteenth. Nothing further is necessary to the culture of the palm-tree, than that it should be well watered once in four or five days, and that a few of the lower boughs should be lopped away whenever they begin to droop or wither. "These" (observes Shaw), "whose stumps, or pollices, in being thus gradually left upon the trunk, serve, like so many rounds of a ladder, to climb up the tree, either to fecundate it, to lop it, or to gather the fruit, are quickly supplied with others which hang down from the crown or top, contributing not only to the regular and uniform growth of this tall, knotless, beautiful tree, but likewise to its perpetual and most delightful verdure. *To be exalted* (Eccles. xxiv. 14.) or *to flourish like the palm-tree*, are as just and proper expressions, suitable to the nature of this plant, as to *spread abroad like the Cedar* \*."—(Psalm xcii. 11.)

\* The palm-tree, however, though a beautiful tree, is sometimes, it appears, a very obstinate one ; and the means which we are told, on Arab authority, should be used to render it more docile on these occasions would astonish the horticulturists of Europe.

When a palm-tree refuses to bear (says the Arab author of a treatise on agriculture), the owner of it, armed with a hatchet, comes to visit it in company with another person. He then begins by observing aloud to his friend (in order that the date-tree should hear him) "I am going to cut down this worthless tree, since it no longer bears me any fruit."—"Have a care what you do, brother, returns his companion ; I should advise you to do no such thing—for I will venture to predict that this very year your tree will be covered with fruit." "No, no, (replies the owner,) I am determined to cut it down, for I am

In the immediate neighbourhood of the palm-trees above mentioned (we mean those to the N.E. of Bengazi) are the sand-hills, which form (together with the date-trees) the most remarkable objects on this part of the coast. The occasional mixture of a little manure with the sand, and the decay of vegetable matter, have contributed to produce at the foot of these hills a very excellent soil; portions of which are inclosed within hedges of the prickly-pear and aloe, and near them may be seen a few miserable huts, the abodes of the several proprietors. The chief produce of these little gardens may be stated to be—melons and pumpkins of several kinds, melonzani, or egg-plants, cucumbers, tomatas, red and green peppers, and some few of the plants called bàmia.

The sand itself, with a little labour, is also made to produce very abundantly; so much so, that any one who had seen the place only in the summer time, would scarcely recognise it as the same in the winter season, when covered with luxuriant vegetation. The right of cultivation appears to be general; and a piece of ground may be said to belong to the first person who takes the trouble of inclosing and working it. This, in fact, is no more than just; since the culti-

certain it will produce me nothing;" and then approaching the tree, he proceeds to give it two or three strokes with his hatchet.—"Pray now! I entreat you, desist" (says the mediator, holding back the arm of the proprietor)—"Do but observe what a fine tree it is, and have patience for this one season more; should it fail after that to bear you any fruit, you may do with it just what you please." The owner of the tree then allows himself to be persuaded, and retires without proceeding to any further extremities. But the threat, and the few strokes inflicted with the hatchet, have always, it is said, the desired effect; and the terrified palm-tree produces the same year a most abundant supply of fine dates!!! (Extract from Kazwini, *Chrétomathie Arabe*, tom. iii. p. 319.)

vated tracts, in this part of the plain, are merely so many portions rescued from the sandy waste by the industry of the individuals who select them; and must therefore be considered as so many additions made by the original occupiers to the general stock\*.

The first care of the cultivator is to turn up the sand, and spread layers of faggots underneath: the sand is then replaced, and over it is sometimes spread a mixed stratum of sand and manure.

Upon this the seeds are sown, and care is taken to keep the land irrigated by means of numerous wells of a few feet only in depth. Some of these are built round with rough stones, but the water is always brackish, and occasionally stinking, owing to the quantity of decayed roots, and other vegetable matter, with which they are suffered to be clogged. By the adoption of this short and simple process, the sand is soon rendered so productive, that the Arabs prefer cultivating it, to the trouble of clearing the rich soil beyond it, to the southward, of the broken stones and fragments of building with which it is thickly interspersed.

When the rains had subsided, and the health of Lieutenant Beechey (which had latterly prevented him from travelling) allowed of it, we set out on our journey to Carcora; in order to complete that part of the coast which had been left unfinished between Car-

\* The sandy tract here alluded to is merely formed by deposits from the beach, and extends scarcely half a mile inland; the country beyond it, all the way to the mountains, is a mixture of rock and excellent soil, with no sand whatever, and is for the most part, as we have mentioned, well wooded and covered with vegetation.

cora and Bengazi: two of our party had before made a trip, along the coast, to Ptolemeta, and returned in high spirits with what they had met with in that delightful part of the Pentapolis. On our route to Carcora we had been very much annoyed with a violent and parching sirocco wind, the heat of which would have been sufficiently disagreeable and oppressive, without the extreme annoyance of thick clouds of sand, whirling everywhere in eddies about us, which were driven with such force into our eyes as almost to prevent our making use of them.

Having completed the unfinished part of the coast-line, we returned back to Bengazi, and found everything prepared for our journey to the eastward, through the diligence and activity of Lieutenant Coffin, who had been left at Bengazi for that purpose. During our absence at Carcora, Bey Halil had left the town, and pitched his tents in the fine plain of Merge, a large tract of table-land on the top of the mountains which bound Teuchira and Ptolemeta to the southward. The object of his journey was to collect the tribute from the neighbouring Bedouin tribes, and this is generally a work of much time and trouble, without which the contribution would not be paid at all. We had previously arranged with him that Hadood, Shekh of Barka, should have camels in readiness (on our return from Carcora) to carry our tents and baggage to the westward; but finding they had not arrived, we with difficulty procured others, and set out from Bengazi on the seventeenth of April for Teuchira, Ptolemeta, and Cyrene.

The road from Bengazi to Teuchira and Ptolemeta lies through a

very fertile and beautiful country, though a comparatively small portion of it only is cultivated. It may be described as a plain, thickly covered with wood and flowering shrubs, stretching itself from the sea to the foot of the mountains which form the northern limits of the Cyrenaica, and narrowing every mile as you advance towards Ptolemeta, where the mountains run down very close to the sea. We have already stated that the space between this range and Bengazi is about fourteen geographic miles; and the distance between it and the sea, at Ptolemeta, is no more than a mile, or a mile and a half; the whole length of the plain, from Bengazi to Ptolemeta, being fifty-seven geographic miles. The sides of the mountains are also thickly clothed with wood, chiefly pine, of various kinds, and the juniper is found in great quantities among the other shrubs which overspread them.

Ravines, whose sides are equally covered with wood and verdure, cross the road very frequently, in their course from the mountains to the sea; and most of these, as there is nothing like a bridge over any of them, must be nearly impassable in winter. The force with which the water rushes down the ravines in the rainy season is evident from the slightest inspection; the ground being furrowed and torn up in the parts which form the beds of the torrents, and encumbered with trees and stones of various sizes, washed down from the mountains and from the sides of the ravines. Open spaces are occasionally met with in the woods, some of which are of considerable extent; these were probably once cultivated, but are now thickly covered with grasses of various kinds, among which we

often observed a great proportion of oats produced spontaneously from the soil

Several towers of very solid construction are scattered over this plain in various directions; and one of them will be found to correspond very well with that called Cafez, by Edrisi. . It is situated at about the same distance (four miles) from the sea; and has likewise a wood to the eastward of it, as he mentions †. It may be reckoned at fifteen miles from Bengazi, and not far from it, also to the eastward, are the lakes described by Edrisi in the neighbourhood of Cafez, separated, exactly as he mentions, from the sea by ridges of sand, and running along parallel with the beach ‡. The water of these lakes is stated by Edrisi to be sweet, but it is certainly, in the present day, brackish. The Arab name of one of these (Zeiana, or Aziana) would seem to point out the neighbourhood of Adriana, laid down by Cellarius between Berenice and Arsinoe, or Teuchira; and many\* ground-plans of buildings, chiefly dwelling-houses, may be observed at the distance of about three-quarters of a mile from the lake, which probably occupy the site of that town.

\* A species of wild artichoke is also very commonly found here, which is eaten raw by the Arabs; chiefly however for amusement, as we see raw turnips eaten in other countries.

† See the plan of this tower. It is called by the Arabs Gusser-el-toweel—the high tower—and is seen from a considerable distance.

‡ Cafez autem est turris sita in media planitie Bernic, habetque ad latus suum orientale sylvam propinquam mari, et ipsa distat à mari IV. M.P. Non procul etiam à Cafez, ex parte orientali adest lacus cum longitudine maris porrectus, et collis arenæ ab eo divisus, cujus tamen aquæ dulces sunt: occupat hic sua longitudine XIV. Milliaria, latitudine medium fere milliare.—(Geog. Nubiensis, p. 93.)



At sunset, on the second day, we arrived at Birsis, where there are a number of wells, and mutilated fragments of building, of which it would be impossible to make any satisfactory plan, without a great deal of previous excavation. Birsis occupies a very fertile plain, where there is usually an Arab encampment, and is distant about thirty-one miles from Bengazi, and seven from the city of Teuchira. It is five or six miles from the Cyrenaic range, and about a mile and a half from the sea. A little to the S.W. of Birsis, are other remains of building, which assume a more decided character, and appear to have formed part of a town. Several arched door-ways are still remaining, and some of the walls of the houses are standing, to the height of about ten or twelve feet from the present level. The spot on which they stand is now much overgrown with high grass and shrubs of various kinds, and the buildings have been occasionally added-to by the Arabs; so that it requires a good deal of attention to make out their original plans. We were cautioned by the natives, who saw us making our way through the high grass and bushes which encumber the ruins, to beware of the serpents, which they said were very numerous in the place; we, however, saw no more than two, one of a dark colour, about five feet in length, and another of smaller dimensions.. The Arab name for this place is Mabny, and Mably (as we heard it pronounced by different persons residing on the spot); and appears to be a corruption of Napoli, or Neapolis, with no other change than might reasonably be expected from the peculiarities of Arab pronunciation\*.

\* The M is frequently pronounced by the Arabs instead of N; and the B always for the P, a sound which they have not in their language; the L and the N are also often

Neapolis is, however, laid down by Ptolemy between the cities of Teuchira and Ptolemeta; and Mably (or Mabny) is seven or eight miles to the S.W. of the former of these places; so that it will not correspond in position with the city which its name appears to indicate. We may at the same time observe, that in the position assigned by Ptolemy to Neapolis we could perceive no remains which were indicative of a town; that we know of no town, described under another name, as occupying the site of Mably; and that the resemblance of that appellation to Nably, which would be the Arab pronunciation of Neapolis, is too close to be wholly overlooked.

Between Birsis and the sea (from which we have already said it is distant about a mile and a half) are the remains of two towers, occupying the summit of a range of sand-hills on the beach, and which we were unable to visit, in consequence of the marsh which runs along the foot of the range, and separates it from the cultivated land. The country about Birsis and Mably is highly productive, wherever it is cultivated, and agreeably diversified with shrubs and brushwood, among which are a few fig-trees. The plain is here about six miles in breadth (from the sea to the foot of the mountains); and its general appearance, as the Arab tents were seen to rear themselves among the low wood and cultivated lands in which they were

confounded by them, as we find them to be frequently by the natives of other countries.

The Neapolis here mentioned must not be confounded with that which has been identified with Leptis Magna.

pitched, was highly indicative of what one might imagine of patriarchal comfort and tranquillity\*. We found the Arabs very hospitable and obliging, and one of our party, who had strayed from the rest, and taken shelter at night-fall in one of their tents, was received and entertained with great kindness and liberality; a sheep having been killed expressly for his supper, and the women of the family employed for two hours in preparing it, in the most savoury manner with which they were acquainted. While the mutton was occupying the united attention of the most accomplished cooks of the household, (the mother, one of the wives, and the two eldest daughters of the host) another wife had prepared a large dish of barley-cakes and fried onions, over which was poured some hot melted butter: a great portion of this very speedily disappeared before the repeated attacks of the hungry guest, whose appetite for the savoury meat which was afterwards served up to him was not quite so great as the dish deserved; the skill of the young wife who had cooked the first mess was in consequence highly commended by her spouse, who could no otherwise account for the great portion of meat which was left, than by supposing that the first dish was most

\* As we repassed the same plain in July, many heaps of corn and barley were collected in various parts of it, and the greater part of the verdure had disappeared. We found the oxen of the place very busily employed in treading out the grain, in the good old-fashioned way practised before the invention of flails; while the Arabs, availing themselves of a little breeze of wind, were occupied in tossing up the grain into the air which had been already trodden out, in order to separate it from the husks, after the manner often alluded to in Scripture. Among other instances of this allusion, we may mention the fragments of Nebuchadnezzar's image, which are compared in Daniel (ii. 25.) to "the chaff of the summer threshing-floor carried away by the wind."

to the stranger's taste; never dreaming that a pound of dough, besides butter and onions, could in any way tend to diminish a man's appetite.

Six miles beyond Birsis (in a north-easterly direction) are remains of a much more imposing nature than any which we had hitherto beheld. They are those of an ancient city, completely inclosed within walls of uncommon strength and thickness, which are connected at intervals by quadrangular towers, and entered by two strongly-built gateways, placed opposite to each other on the east and west sides of the city. The town of Teuchira (for it is that to which we allude) is situated close to the sea, which, in this part of the plain, is distant about four miles from the foot of the mountains. A part of the town, as well as of the walls, is built upon a rising ground, and the rest is on a level with the plain; one portion of it (to the westward) has been built round a quarry, and what appears to have been the citadel is also constructed on the edge of another quarry to the eastward, which considerably strengthens its position:

Without the walls on both sides of the town (we mean on the east and west sides) are also very extensive quarries, in which the tombs of the early inhabitants of the place have at various periods been constructed\*. In these, as well as on the inner part of the city walls, are a great many Greek inscriptions; such of which as our

\* The practice of excavating tombs in the neighbourhood of ancient cities, in the quarries from which the stone was procured for building them, is very general in this part of Africa, and was probably first adopted from its convenience; little more being necessary than to shape the excavated spaces to the size and form required after the stone had been extracted for architectural purposes.

time allowed us to copy, will be found at the end of the chapter, with further details of the buildings; and in the mean time we refer our readers to the plan of the city annexed.

Teuchira, or Tauchira, was a town of Barca, of considerable antiquity: its name was changed under the Ptolemies to Arsinoe, and subsequently (by Mark Antony) to Cleopatris; but its original appellation has survived the others, and it is to this day distinguished by the name of Tauchira, or Tocræ, under which it is known to the Arabs.

The walls of Teuchira (we are informed by Procopius\*) were repaired under the emperor Justinian, and they still remain in a state of perfection which sufficiently proves the solidity of the work. They are built of very massy blocks of stone, conformably with the statement of the historian, many of which have formed parts of much earlier buildings, as the inscriptions found upon them demonstrate.

Very little of the history of Teuchira has come down to us; and we scarcely know more of it, than that it formed one of the cities of the Pentapolis. Although it is situated close to the sea, which washes the northern face of it, Teuchira could never have been a port; as it affords no protection whatever for vessels derived from its natural position, and there are not the slightest traces now visible of anything like a cothon having been constructed there; which, indeed, it would have been folly to have attempted in the exposed situation of the place†.

\* De Aedificiis.

† The water is also too deep to admit of one, and becomes so on a sudden within a few feet of the beach.

Traces of Christianity are still visible in the remains of a handsome church in this city, which may perhaps be attributed to the piety or the munificence of Justinian, so conspicuously displayed in similar structures throughout his extensive dominions. The account which Bruce has given us of Ptolemeta proves evidently that he confounded it with Teuchira, since he tells us of its *walls*, "which he found *entire*, on which were a prodigious number of Greek inscriptions;" whereas there are no remains of walls at Ptolemeta, (with the exception of a noble gateway by which those which once existed were connected,) that are more than a foot above the ground; and we have already stated, that the walls of Teuchira correspond with Bruce's description. The same writer adds that he found nothing at Arsinoe, or at Barca, and we are somewhat at a loss to know what places he intends to point out as the spots which he considers to have been occupied by the two cities mentioned. We have given the details which we were enabled to collect of Teuchira at the end of the present chapter, and shall therefore abstain from further mention of it here, and proceed with the other parts of our narrative.

We may, however, remark that it abounds in wells of excellent water, which are reserved by the Arabs for their summer consumption, and only resorted to when the more inland supplies are exhausted; at other times Teuchira (we were informed) is uninhabited. Many of the excavated tombs, which we have mentioned above, are occupied as dwelling-houses by the Arabs during their summer visits to this part of the coast; and from the circum-

stance of their being much cooler at that season than the external atmosphere, are certainly very pleasant abodes.

Here also, as at Carcora, we were very much annoyed with the parching sirocco wind ; and our Chaous, from Bengazi, a very stout active fellow, was seized, in consequence, with a violent fever, and was unable to continue his journey. We left him, however, in very good hands, and he rejoined us, on his recovery, at Ptolemeta.

From Teuchira to Ptolemeta is about eighteen miles (geographic), and the road between these places leads along the sea-coast, which gradually approaches the mountains. The soil is excellent, and the country is for the most part well cultivated ; the wood being chiefly confined to the sides of the mountains and to those of the ravines which cross the road. In approaching Ptolemeta, the attention is first arrested by a large and very lofty quadrangular tomb, constructed on a basis of solid rock, which has been purposely insulated from the quarry in which it stands, and shaped also into a quadrangular form. This object assumes the appearance of a lofty tower, and forms a very striking feature in the scenery about Ptolemeta, being seen from a considerable distance.

Signor Della Cella has supposed that this noble monument, "veramente" (as he observes) "di regia grandezza," was erected by the seventh of the Ptolemies surnamed Physcon, or Euergetes the Second, purposely as a tomb for himself.

It is probable, however, that the restless and ambitious spirit of this prince looked forward at all times to the sovereignty of Egypt, even after the mediation of the Romans, by which the Cyrenaica



was assigned to him as a kingdom. However this may be, it will be seen, from the plan and section of the structure in question, (which we have given in the details of Ptolemeta,) that it was not intended for the tomb of a single person, but as that of a numerous family, in which no one appears to have been particularly distinguished from the rest. There was originally, perhaps, some inscription over the entrance of the tomb by which the name and the honours of the persons it inclosed were set forth; but as this part of the structure has been purposely injured, it is probable that the inscription, if ever there existed one, was at the same time effaced.

At any rate, though we looked very attentively for some appearance of letters, we were unable to distinguish any; and we will merely suggest, with regard to this mausoleum, that it was certainly appropriated to some family of distinction, (it may be to some part of that of the Ptolemies,) since there is none so conspicuous or so handsome in any part of the neighbourhood of Ptolemeta.

The next object which presents itself in approaching the town is the insulated gateway which we have mentioned above, standing now like a triumphal arch overlooking the town, but which was originally connected with the walls. On reaching the summit of the elevated spot upon which this gateway has been erected, the remains of Ptolemeta lie before you, stretched out in various parts of the beautiful plain in which it is built, sloping down from the mountains to the sea. It appears to have occupied about a square mile of ground, and a more agreeable position could not anywhere have been chosen,

on this part of the coast of the Cyrenaica, than that which has been fixed upon for the port of Barca.

The harbour has been chiefly formed by art (one side of it only being sheltered by nature); and the remains of the cothon are still very conspicuous, though much encumbered with sand\*.

An Amphitheatre and two Theatres are still visible at Ptolemeta: the latter are close to the remains of a palace, of which three columns only are now standing; and the former is constructed in a large quarry, in which the seats have been partly excavated, those parts only having been built which could not be formed in the quarry itself. The interior court of the palace above-mentioned is still covered with tessellated pavement, and beneath it are very spacious arched cisterns, or reservoirs, communicating with each other, and receiving air and light from the court-yard above them†. The remaining columns of this building, which we imagine to have been a palace, are those which Bruce has described as forming part of the portico belonging to an Ionic temple, and as having been executed "in the first manner" of that order. The details of them, (he adds,) with all the parts that could be preserved, are in the King's collection. The proportions and style of the columns in question do not (we must confess) appear, in our estimation, to partake much of the early character of the Ionic; but were the resemblance in reality much greater than it is, the existence of a Greek inscription which

\* A further description of the Harbour and Cothon will be found, with other details of Ptolemeta, at the end of the chapter.

† See the plan of these in the plate prefixed to page 367. The columns are given in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter.

is built into the basement of the columns, bearing the names of Cleopatra and Ptolemy Philometor \*, (together with another, turned upside down, mentioning that of Arsinoe conjointly with Ptolemy and Berenice,) would prevent our attributing an earlier date to them than the reigns of the sovereigns recorded.

The ravines which form the eastern and western boundaries of Ptolemeta (particularly that to the eastward) are wild and romantic in the extreme; and one might imagine one's-self transported, in winding along them, to the beautiful secluded valleys of Switzerland and Savoy. It is true that in the Cyrenaica nature is on a less extended scale than in the mountainous districts we have mentioned; but it appears in a form no less captivating on that account; and we will venture to say, that if a person who had travelled in those countries should be suddenly dropt into the eastern valley of Ptolemeta, without being told where he was, he would certainly suspect himself to be in one of them. He would never, for a moment, dream of being in Africa—that parched and barren region of desert monotony so horrid in European estimation. For our own parts we shall never forget the delight which we experienced, at every new turn of the valley, as fresh objects of interest presented themselves to our view on either side of this enchanting retreat.

We had already passed through a very interesting country, in our journey from Bengazi to Ptolemeta; and we had long forgotten the

\* The inscriptions will be found in the plate prefixed to Chapter 14.

dreary swamps and insipidity of the Syrtis, where only *one tree* had been seen to rear itself in a space of more than four hundred miles.

It could not, therefore, be contrast that made the vallies of Ptolemeta appear to us in such captivating forms and colours—it was the simple impression which Nature's favourite spots never fail to create on the imagination—heightened only, perhaps, by the solitude of the scene, and the wild, romantic elegance of its character. There are beauties which may be felt, but cannot be described; and the charm of romantic scenery is one of them.

We will not therefore attempt any other description of the eastern valley of Ptolemeta, than by remarking that it rises gradually from the sea, winding through forests of pine and flowering shrubs, (which thicken as the sides of the mountain on which they grow become higher and more abrupt,) till it loses itself in the precipitous part of the range which bounds it to the southward, and which presents a dark barrier of thickly-planted pines, shooting up into the blue sky above them. The windings of the valley greatly add to its beauty, and the scenery increases in interest at every turn, in tracing it up towards the mountains in which it loses itself. Sometimes the path is impeded by trees, which throw their branches across it, leaving only a narrow passage beneath them; and sometimes, on emerging from this dark and difficult approach, a broad sweep of verdant lawn will suddenly present itself, fenced in, apparently, on all sides, by high walls of various-coloured pines, rising one above the head of the other, in all the grandeur of uniformity. On reaching the opposite end of this verdant

amphitheatre, a new scene presents itself, 'before unsuspected ; and the rambler, bewildered with variety, finds himself utterly incapable of deciding which pleases him most, or when he shall feel himself equal to the task of tearing himself away from the spot. We confess that, when first we discovered this valley, the shades of night surprised us before we thought the sun had set, far in its deepest recesses ; and we never afterwards visited it without regretting that our occupations would not allow us more leisure to admire it.

Among the trees which clothe the sides of the mountains are many handsome stone sarcophagi of Greek and Roman workmanship, all of which, however, we found had been opened ; and among them seats of the same material were occasionally observed to have been placed, as if the spirits of the dead loved to linger about the spot which had so much delighted them when living. We should willingly have devoted a great portion of our time to the same pleasing occupation, and have passed whole days in wandering among the tombs, in making plans and drawings of them, and searching for inscriptions : but fate had not decreed us so agreeable a lounge, and after securing in our portfolios some of the principal objects of the place, we set out without further delay for Cyrene, which we had letermined (as our time was now limited) should form the chief object of inquiry. We had, however, arranged that, on our return from Cyrene, the plan of the town and neighbourhood of Ptolemeta (which will be found annexed) should be completed ; and that drawings should be made of such of the most conspicuous objects as had not been already secured, all of which was eventually accomplished.

It will be seen, by a reference to the plan of Ptolemeta, that the position of the town was remarkably well chosen. In its front was the sea; and on either side a ravine, along which are still seen traces of fortification, secured its flanks from any sudden attack; while the only passes by which it could be approached from the high ridge of mountains to the southward, were defended (as will appear in the plan) by strong barriers drawn completely across them: the whole town, at the same time, was originally inclosed within a wall which may still be traced to considerable extent, running parallel with the mountains at the back, and extending from these, along the banks of the ravines, to the sea. Two bridges appear (from the existing remains) to have been thrown across each of the ravines; one of which is to this day tolerably perfect, and is faithfully represented, in its actual condition, in the drawing which is given of it (page 362); several forts were also scattered about in various directions, both within and without the walls, contributing at once to the beauty and security of the place. The situation of the town in other respects was also remarkably good. It sloped down gradually from the high ground which forms the foot of the mountains at its back, (and which sheltered it from the southerly winds,) and must consequently have enjoyed the full benefit of the cool northern breezes, so grateful in all hot climates. In fact, there is no place on the coast of Northern Africa, between Ptolemeta and Tripoly, which can at all be compared with the former of these places, for beauty, convenience, and security of position, Lebda alone excepted. We are, however, informed, that the town of Ptolemeta suffered at one time so severely from want of



water, that the inhabitants were obliged to relinquish their houses, and disperse themselves about the country in different directions. The reparation of the aqueducts and cisterns of the town, which, it seems, had fallen into decay, restored Ptolemeta to its former flourishing state; and this act is recorded, among many others of a similar nature performed at the command of Justinian, in the eulogy of that emperor by Procopius. As Ptolemeta is unprovided with springs, the care of its reservoirs and aqueducts must have been at all times peculiarly essential; and we find that its buildings of this class are among the most perfect of its existing remains.

It is probable that the cisterns we have mentioned above, as being situated under the tessellated pavement of the edifice which Bruce calls a temple, were among those alluded to by Procopius. They consist of two divisions of arched chambers, running parallel with each other, which are connected by others of shorter dimensions, running in an opposite direction. They communicate mutually, by means of small door-ways, of the form which will be seen in the plan (page 367), and circular apertures were left at intervals in the roof, which received light and air from the court-yard above them, and might have served equally as entrances to the cisterns, or as places from which the water might be drawn up in buckets. They have all of them been coated with an excellent cement, which is still, for the most part, very perfect, and occupy a square of about an hundred feet. We may suppose that these reservoirs were occasionally available as supplies for the general use of the town, since the remains of an aqueduct leading from them through the centre of it are still visible, as

will appear in the plan of Ptolemeta. There are also remains of stone conductors leading into these cisterns from the mountains at the back of the town, and as rain usually falls in great quantities during the winter they must have been for the most part well supplied. We searched in vain for some inscription on the walls of these buildings which might throw light on the period of their construction or restoration, but were unable to discover one in any part of them: the arches which form the roofs are well turned and constructed in the usual manner, with a key-stone. We may add, that these cisterns still afford a very copious supply to the Arab tribes of the neighbourhood, although no care is taken to lead the rain into them; and we found the water which they contained on our arrival at Ptolemeta uncommonly cool and delightful.

The greater part of the town, on our first visits to it, was thickly overgrown with wild marigolds and camomile, to a height of four and five feet, and patches of corn were here and there observable growing equally within the city walls\*. The solitude of the place was at the same time unbroken by animals of any description; if we except a small number of jackals and hyænas, which strayed down after sunset in search of water, and a few owls and bats which started out from the ruins as we disturbed them by our near and unexpected approach. Appeals of this kind are always irresistible; and the contrast which presented itself between the silence and desolation

After sowing the corn, the Arabs leave it to enjoy the advantages of the winter rains, and never return to it till it comes to maturity and is ready to be cut and carried away.

which characterized the city of Ptolemeta when we visited it, and the busy scene which a spectator of its former wealth and magnificence would have witnessed under the Ptolemies and the Cæsars, afforded a striking and, we must say, a melancholy example of the uncertainty of all human greatness.

If the exuberant vegetation we have mentioned appeared to be rather out of its place, it was not less a source of inconvenience than regret, for we had the pleasure of being obliged to wade through it up to our arm-pits in making our way to the different buildings; and it may readily be imagined that this tiresome operation, after the heavy rains which fell occasionally at night, was no treat on a cool cloudy morning. The brushing through a turnip field, or one of mangel-wurzel, which many of our readers have no doubt often tried with a double-barrelled gun upon their shoulders, is nothing to the tramping we have mentioned; for not only our boots and trowsers were quickly wet through with the heavy drops which we brushed from their lodgments, but our shirt-sleeves and jackets, and sometimes even our turbans, were also well soaked on these occasions. A very different scene presented itself on our return from Cyrene, when the summer heat had begun to exert its influence. Not a leaf or a stalk remained of all the impediments we have alluded to, and the prevailing colour of the place, which we had left a bright green, had been succeeded by a dusky brown. The corn had been cut and carried, leaving scarcely any traces of its having been formerly growing; and the ruins were left exposed, in all their naked desolation, glaring on the eye of the spectator. We had now to encounter inconveniences of a