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L E T T E R S  
O N  
E G Y P T,  
W I T H A

Parallel between the Manners of its an-  
cient and modern Inhabitants, the pre-  
sent State, the Commerce, the Agricul-  
ture, and Government of that Country ;

A N D A N  
Account of the Descent of St. LEWIS at  
DAMIETTA :

EXTRACTED FROM  
JOINVILLE, AND ARABIAN AUTHORS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS.

By MR. SAVARY,  
Author of the *LIFE of MAHOMET*, and *Translator*  
*of the Coran.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. II.

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L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,  
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MDCCLXXXVI.



LETTERS

OF THE  
T. O. Y. T.

Published between the Minutes of the  
General and Special Inquiries, and  
the Minutes of the Committee on the  
Education of the Deaf and Dumb.

Account of the Deaf and Dumb, as  
given by the Deaf and Dumb.

By the Deaf and Dumb, as  
given by the Deaf and Dumb.

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given by the Deaf and Dumb.



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*scripture*



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*The moon anciently worshipped by the Egyptians under its proper name Joh; the adoration of which, when introduced into Greece, gave birth to the fable of Joh's being changed into a cow. Its influence on the atmosphere being observed, they afterwards named it Iris, which signifies the cause of abundance. The inundation of the Nile ascribed to the tears of this deity; that is, to the dew, of which she excites a fermentation in the waters. To this day the Coptis pretend that the dew which falls at the Solstice, makes the waters ferment, and by that means produces the inundation.*

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*only*

*only sacred to that goddess. The Egyptians marked the rising of Sothis by two stated periods. The veneration of the people for this star arose from a particular circumstance; namely, that at its heliacal rising, they could judge of the degree of inundation. On this account, it was named the star which makes the waters increase,* 430

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REPRESENTS THE SUN.

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THE NILE ADORED AS A GOD BY THE  
ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

*The Nile raised to the rank of gods. A city built in honour of him. His priests, festivals, and sacrifices. At first he bore the*  
*general*



*general name of Jaro, which signifies a river. When the phænomena of his inundation were observed, he received the epithet of Neilon, that is, one who grows in a stated time. At the winter solstice, they invited him to a feast, which was publicly prepared for the purpose; and the people believed, that without this ceremony he would never overflow their fields.*

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L E T T E R

## L E T T E R LXII.

OF MNEVIS AND ONUPHIS, SACRED BULLS  
OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

*Mnevis and Onuphis consecrated to the sun. The worship of the former rubrified in remote antiquity, and the epoch of its commencement is unknown. The latter, brought up in the temple of Apollo, at Hermunthis, had no degree of celebrity, if we may judge by the silence of historians. Apis, deified with the view of preserving the remembrance of ancient observations, became famous, and eclipsed the other two.* 476

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commence-

*commencement of the inundation. The Nilometer named by the priests Sari Api, the pillar of mensuration. Brought forth from his sanctuary at the beginning of the inundation, and led back when it was on the decline. Such was the origin of this emblematical deity, to which the Greeks gave the name of Serapis.* 481

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THE EGYPTIANS.

*Anubis had in Egypt temples and priests, and a city was built in honour of him. His statue bore the head of a dog; and this animal, from being his living image, was consecrated to him. This allegorical divinity, invented by the astronomers, represented the horizon. Hence he was regarded as the inseparable companion of Osiris and Iris. Called in the sacred language their illegitimate son, because he is not luminous of himself, and shines only by borrowed lustre.* 488



## L E T T E R LXV.

OF TYPHON, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Typhon regarded as an evil genius. The Crocodile and Hippopotamus consecrated to him. His statue insulted, when the calamities, of which they believed him to be the cause, did not cease. This allegorical deity represented, in the imagination of the priests, winter, and the fatal effects produced in Egypt by the blowing of the south and south-east winds. The sacred fable on the subject of Typhon is propagated into Phœnicia, Greece, and Italy. It is decorated with new allegories by the natural philosophers and poets of those countries, and accommodated to their religion. Notwithstanding the veils with which they have covered it, its origin is still perceptible.*

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## L E T T E R LXVI.

OF NEPHTHYS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Nephtys was, in the sacred language, the bar-*  
*ren*

*ren spouse of Typhon. Not prolific till Osiris had commerce with her. This word, in its natural signification, denoted the sandy plains which stand between the Nile and the Red Sea, and are greatly exposed to the south-east wind. When in years of an extraordinary inundation the river stretched to those parts, the phænomenon was imputed to the adultery of Osiris with Nephthys. By Thueri or Aso, Queen of Ethiopia, reputed the concubine of Typhon, was denoted the south wind, which, uniting with that of the east, formed the south-east, a wind extremely formidable to the Egyptians, on account of its scorching breath, and the torrents of sand which it rolls upon the country.*

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OF CANOBUS, A PRETENDED DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Canobus, named by the writers of the Lower Empire Canopus, was the pilot of Menelaus. He died on the coast of Egypt, and they erected to him a tomb. This place, called in*

*the*

*the Egyptian language Cahi noub, the golden land. A city and temples were built here. The Greeks, misled by this appellation, spread a report that they had been erected in honour of the stranger; but this was a mistake. Ruffin relates a long fable, by which he affects to prove, that the deity which they worshipped in the temple of Canobus was a pitcher: but this was only an offering made to the god of the Nile, the water of which it served to purify.* 518

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OF THOTH, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND REGARDED AS A CELEBRATED MAN BY THE GREATER PART OF WRITERS.

*Thoth was held to be an extraordinary man by a great number of writers. To him they ascribed the invention of all arts, sciences, and human institutions; and dignified him with the name of Trismegistus, or thrice great. This alone might be sufficient to prove that the personage was allegorical.*

*Thoth,*



*Thoth, in the Egyptian language, signifies a pillar; and as it was usual to engrave approved works upon pillars, they all received the general appellation of Thoth. The three Thothes or mercuries might denote the infancy, the progress, and the perfection of human knowledge.*

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## L E T T E R LXX.

## OF THE VOCAL STATUE OF MEMNON.

*The statue of Memnon greatly celebrated in ancient times for the sound which it emitted at sun-rise. Called by the priests the Son of the Day. The son of Aurora, the conqueror of Antilochus, celebrated by Homer. His interpreters, and the poets since his time, have applied those expressions to the Egyptian Memnon. This is a mistake; the Thebaic statue bore the name of Amnophis. The Memnon who came to the siege of Troy a little after, was sent from Susa by Teutam, king of Assyria. The vocal statue of Egypt was broken by Cambyses. The mutilated figure ceased to emit any sound for a long time, but resumed its*

*vocal*

*vocal power under the Ptolemies. After its disgrace, it pronounced seven notes. The priests, who gave the harmonic course of the seven planets the name of celestial music, and who consecrated to them the notes, called this statue the image of the sun, and the cousin of Osiris; because it pronounced the seven notes which composed the terrestrial music. It received the name of ame nou-phi, to tell good news, because it pronounced the notes at the vernal equinox, a season dear to the Egyptians.*

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## L E T T E R LXXI.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS WORSHIP OF THE EGYPTIANS.

*The Egyptians had only two dogmas in their religion, namely, that of a God the Creator, and that of the immortality of the soul; all the rest was allegorical. This religion was preserved pure and untainted within the temples; but the necessity they were under of using representative figures before the invention of letters, induced the people by degrees to adore them; which*  
*happened*

*happened when the art of writing having become easy, they forgot the sense of the hieroglyphics. The gods of Laban were nothing but hieroglyphics, of which he had lost the meaning. They were to him the objects of worship, because they had been transmitted by his fathers, and he did not comprehend them. The same thing happened in Egypt.*

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## L E T T E R LXXII.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE HIEROGLYPHICS.

*Hieroglyphics, the first-written language of man. Their antiquity more remote than the deluge. The meaning of them entirely lost under the princes of the lower empire. The recovery of it would render us acquainted with the language of the Coptis, or ancient vulgar Egyptian, by which we might attain to a knowledge of the sacerdotal dialect, used for explaining the hieroglyphics, and which is found on Egyptian monuments. A journey might likewise be attempted to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, inhabited by an Egyptian colony,*

*which*



*which may have preserved their ancient language, their books, and the knowledge of hieroglyphics.*

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## LETTER LXXIII.

*To Mr. LEMONNIER, Physician to the KING of FRANCE, First Physician to MONSIEUR, and MEMBER of the ACADEMY, of SCIENCES.*

PLAN OF AN INTERESTING VOYAGE,  
AND WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN PER-  
FORMED.

*To take a survey of the great lake of Menzalé in a boat. To examine the ruins in its isles. To visit Pelusium, Farama, the Oasis; to Siéne for the wells of the solstice, and to ascertain the ancient observation of the Egyptians. To pass through the interior parts of the Imen, with the view of procuring information and manuscripts. To go to Mecca; to stay there during the pilgrimage, and to bring thence and from Medina the works and information that*  
are

*are unknown in Europe. To travel over both Arabias, Petræa and Deserta; and after remaining some time at Damas to return to Europe.*

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# L E T T E R S O N E G Y P T.

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## L E T T E R XXXII.

ROUTE FROM ACHMIN TO DENDERA.

*Description of Souadi, on the west of which are two old monasteries surrounded with ruins, which fix the situation of the ancient Crocodilopolis. Observations on Menchié and the ancient Ptolemais, the ruins of which are at a small distance. Description of the fields in its environs. Observations on Girgé, the capital of Upper Egypt, and on Abydus towards the west. Here are vestiges of the celebrated temple of Osiris, where singers and musicians were strictly prohibited from access. Account of Farchout and its delightful orchards. Description of the antiquities at Tentyra, situated near Dendera. Hatred of the ancient inhabitants of Tentyra towards Crocodiles.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**L**ET us take our leave of *Achmin*, and the serpent *Horidi*. Passing to the other side of the Nile, we see the burgh of *Souadi* go-

verned by a Cachef, and proceeding to the westward, two Coptic monasteries, situated at the entrance of the desert. Their churches are ornamented with Corinthian pillars, with a cross in the middle of the capital, and are paved with red granite, covered with hieroglyphics; their architecture favours of the decline of taste amongst the Greeks. They are thought to have been built by the Empress Helena. In the space between them, the ground is strewed with antique marbles. These remains point out the scite of *Crocodilopolis* (*y*), which was far from the river, and which Ptolemy places after *Aphrodito-polis*, or the city of Venus.

Ascending towards the south-east, we cross a plain shaded by various trees, covered with harvests, and intersected by rivulets. It leads to the burgh of Menchié, decorated with a large mosque. A considerable market is held here. The bazards are stored with all sorts of articles. They sell a conserve of wheat here, in high estimation in

(*y*) Ptolemy, l. 4. This is the sacred city of that name. But the former situated in the *Faioum*, was better known by the Name of Arfinoé.

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the country. It is composed of corn steeped in water for two days, then dried in the sun, and boiled to the thickness of a jelly. This paste thus prepared is called *eluede* dew. It is melting, sugary, and very nourishing. If this sort of confection dried in the oven would keep at sea, it might be a very great resource in long voyages.

On an eminence to the south of *Menchié*, are to be remarked the remains of the entablatures of cornices, and trunks of columns. The river is lined by a quay in this place. A projecting mole serves to protect the boats from the winds and currents. These ruins, and oriental works recal to mind the great *Ptolemais*, which Strabo (z) compares to Memphis for its extent and population (a). Ptolemy calls it *Ptolemais* of *Hermes*, because the symbolical deity, Mercury, was worshipped there.

Whilst the wind is driving us towards the south, cast your eyes on the rocks which project on the eastern side, you will there perceive the little convent of *der Hadid*

(z) Strabo, l. 17. — (a) Ptolemy, l. 4.



placed in the middle of a desert beset with barren points, and grottoes which the fervour of the primitive ages of Christianity peopled with pious Anchorites. Can there be a more frightful solitude so near an enchanting country? On one side we discover nothing but barren sands, hills burnt up by the sun, from which the reverberation is suffocating. On the other we admire all the treasures of abundance. Already the dourra with all its reedy leaves shoots up its vigorous stalk, and is crowned with large ears. The corn, whose surface is kept waving by the wind, is near the period of its growth. Vast fields are covered with sugar canes. The flax flourishes close by. The date reddens on the summit of the date tree. The palm of the Thebais displays its leaves in the form of a fan, and the golden melon hangs over the edges of the river. Such is the aspect of these plains at the beginning of December.

We land at the port of Girgé, the capital of Upper Egypt. This town, which is a league in circumference, has several mosques, bazards, and public squares, but no remarkable buildings: it is surrounded by well

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cultivated gardens. It is governed by a Bey. His foldiers commit innumerable outrages. The Copts are not permitted to have churches here. To affist at divine fervice, they are obliged to go to a convent fituated on the other fide of the Nile. Girgé affords no vef-tige of ancient edifices. It appears to be a modern town, for Abulfeda does not fpeak of it. Proceeding for about an hour towards the weft, we fall in with the ruins of *Abydus*, where Ifmandès built a magnificent temple in honour of Ofiris: It was the only one in Egypt which the fingers and dancers were forbid to enter. This city, reduced to a village under the empire of Au-guftus, presents in our time nothing but a heap of ruins without inhabitants; but to the weft of thefe ruins we ftill find the celebrated monument of Ifmandès (*b*).

We firft enter under a portico raifed about fixty feet, and fupported by two rows of mafsy columns. The immoveable folidity of the edifice, the huge mafles which compofe it, the hieroglyphics it is loaded with, ftamp

(*b*) Strabo, l. 17, calls it Imandès and Memnon. He fays that this is the fame Pharoah who built the Labyrinth.

it as a work of the ancient Egyptians. Beyond, is a temple which is three hundred feet long by one hundred and forty-five feet wide. On entering we remark an immense hall, the roof of which is supported by twenty-eight columns sixty feet high, and nineteen in circumference at the base. They are twelve feet distant from each other. The enormous stones that form the ceiling perfectly joined, and incruited as it were one in the other, offer to the eye nothing but one whole platform of marble one hundred and twenty-six feet long, and sixty-six feet wide. The walls are covered with innumerable hieroglyphics. One sees there a multitude of animals, of birds, and human figures with pointed caps on their heads, and a piece of stuff hanging down behind (*c*), and dressed in open robes descending only to the waist. The clumsiness of the sculpture, announces its antiquity. It is art in its infancy. The forms of the body, the attitudes, the proportions of the members are badly observed. A-

(*c*) These caps still form the head-dress of the Egyptian Priests on their days of ceremony.

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Amongst these various representations, women are to be distinguished suckling their children, and men presenting offerings to them. In the midst of these designs, engraved on the marble, the traveller discovers the *divinities of India*. Monsieur Chevalier, formerly governor of Chandernagor, who passed twenty years in that country, where he rendered great service to his own, carefully visited this ancient monument on his return from Bengal. He remarked there the gods *Jaggrenat*, *Gonez*, and *Vicknou*, or *Vishnou*, such as they are represented in the temples of Indostan. Have the Egyptians received these divinities from the Indians or the Indians from the Egyptians? Were this question resolved, it would decide the antiquity of the two people.

At the bottom of the first hall opens a great gate which leads to an apartment forty-six feet long, by twenty two wide. Six square pillars support the roof of it. At the angles are the doors of four other chambers, but so choaked up by rubbish, that one cannot enter them. The last hall, sixty-four feet long, by twenty-

four wide, has stairs by which one descends into the subterraneous apartments of this grand edifice. The Arabs in searching after treasure have piled up heaps of earth and rubbish. One discovers in the part one is able to penetrate, sculpture and hieroglyphics as in the upper story. The natives of the country say, that they correspond exactly with those above, and that the columns are as deep in the earth as they are lofty above ground. It would be dangerous to go far into these vaults, because the air of them is much infected, and so loaded with mephytic vapour that one can scarcely keep a candle lighted.

Six lions heads placed on the two sides of the temple serve as spouts to carry off the water. You mount to the top by a staircase of a very singular form. It is built with stones incruited in the wall, and projecting six feet out, so that being supported only at one end they appear suspended in the air. The walls, the roof, the columns of this edifice have suffered nothing from the injuries of time. Did not the hieroglyphics, corroded in several places, mark

its antiquity, it would appear to have been newly built. The solidity is such, that it will last a great number of ages, unless men make a point of destroying it. Except the colossal figures, whose heads serve as the ornament to the capital of the columns, and which are sculptured in *relievo*, the rest of the hieroglyphics which cover the inside of the temple are carved in stone.

To the left of this great building, we see another much smaller at the bottom of which appears a sort of altar. This was probably the sanctuary of the temple of Osiris. I have already observed, that the singers and musicians were not allowed to enter it. The Egyptian priests invented seven vowels, and gave to each of them a sound approaching our notes of music(*d*). To preserve this beautiful discovery, they repeated at certain periods these vowels in the form of hymns, and their various tones successively modulated, formed an agreeable melody. This doubtless is the reason why they banished from this temple all musical

(*d*) Plutarch. Treatise on Isis and Osiris.



instruments. The Greeks drew from this source, in composing their musical language, so admirably accented, that a discourse well delivered had all the effect of a pleasing air. If the *Piccini*, the *Glucks*, the *Sacchini*, make us like even the harsh sounds of the French language, by the scientific combinations of their harmony, what would they not have made of these ancient tongues? Cease your astonishment therefore at the marvellous effects the ancient music of the Greeks is said to have produced; they had in their hands all the treasures of melody, all the riches of an imitative language, and spoke at once to the heart, to the understanding, and the ear. Let us take our leave, Sir, of the antique monument of *Ismandes*, around which *Strabo* describes a forest of *Acacia*, consecrated to *Apollo*, the remains of which are still visible on the side of *Farchout*.

The dominion of the *Turks*, from *Girgé* to *Sienna*, is in a very precarious state. A part of the lands is possessed by *Arabs*, in general independent. Such as inhabit the mountains to the east of *Girgé* pay no tribute, and afford an asylum to all

the malecontents of the government. They even frequently espouse their quarrel, and furnish them with arms to re-enter Grand Cairo.

The Isle of *Doum* (*e*) is not far from *Girgê*. Above is the port of *Bardis*, a small town dependent on the Great Scheik. This prince, whose government is very extensive, has his usual residence at *Farchout*, where a branch of the Nile runs. He possesses there a vast enclosure, where he cultivates the palm, and the date, the acacia, the nabe, the vine, and the orange tree; the Arabian jessamine, tufts of sweet basil, and clumps of roses are dispersed here and there amongst the trees. Though these plantations are made without taste and without a plan, they afford notwithstanding most delightful thickets. Did art but give the smallest aid to nature here, delicious gardens might be formed at small expence; for this happy climate unites a fruitful soil, abundant waters, the most odoriferous shrubs, and the purest sky.

(*e*) *Doum* is the name given by the Arabs to the Palm-tree with leaves spreading like a fan.

The

The village of *Beliené* depends also on the Grand Scheik; its situation between two canals renders it a very agreeable abode. Opposite to it are some hamlets, inhabited by Arabs, who infest the river with their piracies, especially during the night. Passing the arm of the Nile, which goes to *Farchout*, we arrive at *Badjoura*, from whence one discovers a handsome island, and at a distance the village of *Attariff*. The Burgh of *Hau*, placed on an eminence, commands the country to the west; it stands on the ruins of *Diospolis Parva* (*f*), the small city of Jupiter. The works of the Egyptians had placed it out of the reach of the inundation. *Hau* still possesses this advantage. Whilst the adjacent plains are under water, it rises up amidst them like an island. For this reason the inhabitants of *Badjoura*, and the neighbouring villages, bury their dead here.

In this place the rocks stretch off from

(*f*) Strabo, l. 17, and Ptolemy, l. 4, lay down *Diospolis* between *Abydus* and *Tentyra*, on an eminence, a situation which perfectly agrees with the Burgh of *Hau*.



the eastern bank. We remark there the villages of *Casr* and of *Fau*: the former was heretofore a town, of which Abulfeda gives us the following description: *Casr* “is a day’s journey to the southward of *Cous*. This town, situated on the eastern bank of the river, is surrounded with fields abounding in grain, and palm-trees. A great quantity of earthen jars are fabricated here, which are conveyed into the west of Egypt.” Since the time of Abulfeda, the town of *Casr* has lost the greatest part of its commerce, and of its inhabitants (*g*). At this day it is no more than a village of little importance.

The western border of the Nile, more pleasant, and better peopled, offers to the sight, woods of date-trees, and of *Doum* dispersed around the dwellings, rich plains of wheat, and pastures covered with flocks. The Burgh of Dendera has nothing remarkable; but about a league to the westward we find the ruins of ancient *Tentyra*. Heaps of rubbish, and ruins of a great extent, mark

(*g*) Abulfeda. Description of Egypt.

the grandeur of this city, where, according to Strabo (*b*), Isis and Venus were adored. After crossing these remains, one admires on a little eminence two ancient temples, the largest of which is only two hundred feet long, by one hundred and forty wide. Around it is a double frieze; the interior is divided into several very lofty apartments, supported by large columns, with a square stone by way of capital, on which is carved the head of Isis. The walls are covered with hieroglyphics, separated into different compartments. The angles of the temple are ornamented without, by colossal figures. Ten flights of stairs lead to the top.

The second, situated on the right-hand, is smaller; the cornice which goes round it, and the gate at the entrance, are decorated with falcons, with their wings spread. A double square stone forms the capital of the columns which support the roof. On the walls are sculptured several figures of men, of birds, and animals. These hieroglyphics comprised the history of the time,

(*b*) Strabo, l. 17.

By reading them we should learn probably, whether these monuments are the temples of Isis and of Venus. We remark the same solidity in them as in those of *Abydus*, but they have less grandeur and magnificence.

I shall not finish this letter, Sir, without laying before you what Strabo (*i*) says of the aversion the Tentyrites preserved for the Crocodile, worshipped in so many other cities. “The inhabitants of *Tentyra* abhor the Crocodile, and wage continual war against him, as the most dangerous of animals. Other men looking upon him as pernicious, avoid him; but the Tentyrites industriously seek after him, and kill him wherever they meet with him. It is known that the *Psylli* of *Cyrène* have a certain empire over serpents, and it is generally believed that the Tentyrites have the same power over crocodiles. In fact, they dive and swim boldly in the middle of the Nile, without any injury. In the spectacles given

(*i*) Strabo, l. 17.



“ at Rome, several crocodiles were put in-  
“ to a basin. There was an opening on  
“ one of the sides to allow them to escape.  
“ One saw the inhabitants of Tentyra  
“ throw themselves into the water amongst  
“ these monsters, take them in a net, and  
“ draw them out. After exposing them to  
“ the Roman people, they took hold of  
“ them intrepidly, and carried them back  
“ into the basin.”

This fact, attested by a judicious historian, an ocular witness of it, cannot be called in question. In our days, do not the Caribs, armed only with a knife, fight advantageously with the shark, one of the most dreadful monsters of the sea? Determined men are still to be found in Egypt, who dare to attack the crocodile. They swim towards that formidable animal; and when he opens his mouth to swallow them, thrust into it a plank of fir, to which a cord is fastened. The crocodile, by violently shutting his jaws, buries his sharp teeth in it so far that he cannot disengage them. The Egyptian, holding the cord  
with

with one hand, then regain the banks of the river, and several men draw the monster on shore, and kill him. This attack is not without danger; for if the swimmer is not skilful, he is immediately devoured. I never was myself a witness to this transaction, but many persons at Grand Cairo have assured me it was true.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XXXIII.

DESCRIPTION OF GIENE, COPHTOS, COUS,  
AND OF THE ROUTE FROM THESE  
TO COSSEIR ON THE RED SEA.

*Cophtos and Cous successively enjoyed the trade of the Red Sea. Giéné now in the possession of it. The efforts of the Ptolemies to protect it. True state of this commerce. Description of the route from Giéné to Cosseir. This place only a large village with a good port and a convenient road for ships. Precautions necessary in travelling through the Desert. Means of improving this road. The advantages which would result from such improvement.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**O**PPPOSITE to *Dendera*, Sir, we discover *Gienés*, built on an eminence. The ancients who called it *Cœnœ*, (*k*) mention

(*k*) Ptolemy, l. 4. calls it *Cœnœ*, or the New City.



no remarkable monument there. It is not now more flourishing, though it be the rendezvous of the caravans which set out for *Coffeir*. A canal runs near it which was formerly navigable. The negligence of the Turks has suffered it to be choaked up, and it has no water but in the time of the inundation. If *Giéné* contains no edifice worthy to attract the attention, its environs merit well to be remarked by travellers. They are occupied by gardens which produce excellent oranges, dates, lemons, and exquisite melons. The trees collected here form shades which are invaluable, under a burning sky.

Above *Giéné* are the ruins of *Cophptos*.<sup>(l)</sup> This town situated on an eminence surrounded by the waters of the Nile, was advantageously placed for the commerce of the Red Sea. Strabo thus describes it<sup>(m)</sup>:  
 “ A canal cut from the Nile passes by  
 “ *Cophptos* inhabited by Egyptians and Arabs.  
 “ Ptolemy Philadelphus was the first who

(l) The Arabs having no letter *p* in their language, substitute the *b*, and call this town *Qbt*.

(m) Strabo, l. 17.

“ opened a high road from this town to  
 “ Berenice, across a desert without water.  
 “ He made them construct public build-  
 “ ings where travellers on foot, and  
 “ horsemen found necessary refreshment.  
 “ The dangers of the navigation towards  
 “ the narrow extremity of the Red Sea,  
 “ determined him to execute this project,  
 “ the great advantages of which, evinced  
 “ its utility. The produce of Arabia, of  
 “ India, and Ethiopia, were speedily con-  
 “ veyed to Cophtos by the Arabic gulph.  
 “ This town is still the emporium of the  
 “ merchandize of the east. It is no longer  
 “ landed at Berenice, which affords nothing  
 “ but a road insecure for vessels, but at the  
 “ port of Rat(*n*), which is not far from it,  
 “ and

(*n*) The Greeks and Romans called it so, because it  
 is small. The Arabs in calling it *Coffeir*, little, have pre-  
 served its ancient denomination. This passage stands in  
 need of explanation. Strabo places *Berenice* at a small  
 distance from the port of Rat, now called *Coffeir*. Ptole-  
 my and Pliny lay it down almost under the tropic, that is  
 to say, more than twenty leagues further to the southward.  
 It was eleven or twelve days journey, therefore, at least  
 from Cophtos to Berenice, and Strabo calls it only seven.



“ and where a navy is maintained. At first  
 “ men travelled by night on camels, and  
 “ steered their course, like mariners, by  
 “ the stars. It was necessary, too, to  
 “ have a provision of water sufficient for  
 “ six or seven days journey. At present  
 “ they make use of what they find col-  
 “ lected in deep wells and cisterns, formed  
 “ for the purpose. In the isthmus one  
 “ crosses over, are found mines of emeralds  
 “ and precious metals, which the Arabs  
 “ search after.”

The riches *Cophos* derived from the trade  
 with India, rendered it very flourishing. It  
 became a celebrated town; its prosperity  
 lasted till the reign of Dioclesian. Its in-  
 habitants having embraced Christianity, were  
 exposed to the persecutions of that Empe-

It is evident that this historian, who never made the  
 journey, and who contented himself with taking infor-  
 mations on the spot, was deceived at a time that this  
 ancient road was no longer frequented. By consulting the  
 best geographers, there is no doubt that Berenice was  
 situated on the coast of the Red Sea, and in the parallel of  
 Sienna. Father Sicard and several other travellers are  
 of opinion that *Casseir* is the ancient Berenice; but this  
 is a mistake.



ror, and revolted. He marched his troops against them, and their town was rased to the ground. In the time of Abulfeda it had lost all its splendor, and was no more than a hamlet, elevated amongst ruins. At this day no inhabitants are to be seen; they have retired to a village a mile above, which they call *Cobt*. The marbles, and fine remains of monuments dispersed amongst the sands which cover the ancient city, attest the barbarism of Dioclesian. The great bason which served it as a port, is still subsisting, with two bridges thrown over the canals that encompass it.

*Cous*, formerly the city of Apollo, rose from the disaster of *Cophos*. The merchants established themselves there, and commerce flourished a long time, as we learn from Abulfeda. "*Cous* (*o*), says he, situated to the east of the Nile, is the greatest town in Egypt after *Fostat*. It is the emporium

(*o*) Abulfeda, description of Egypt. Aden was the most flourishing town of the Yemen, in the thirteenth century; it carried on the commerce of India and Egypt. Goss and other writers have placed the ruins of Thebes at *Cous*. This likewise is an error.

“ of

“ of the commerce of Aden. The mer-  
“ chandise is landed at *Coffeir*, from whence  
“ it arrives at Cous, in three days journey.  
“ across the desert.”

This town, which, like *Cophios*, was indebted for its consequence to the commerce with India, enjoyed great opulence during the dominion of the Arabs. Since the Turks have got possession of Egypt, and this beautiful country has been laid waste by a Pacha and four and twenty Beys, *Cous* has undergone the fate of her rival. The vexations of the Government have ruined her commerce; her glory is eclipsed. In our days we behold nothing but a collection of cottages, inhabited by a few Coptis and Arabs. *Giéné*, which has succeeded these two cities, has none of their magnificence, because the advantages of its situation, and the fertility of its territory, cannot counterbalance the obstacles which the despotism of the Egyptian government, and the pillage of the Bedouins, oppose to the progress of its commerce.

After making you acquainted with these ancient cities, it is proper to give you some



details of this part of Egypt, so interesting, and so little known to Europe. Examine the map of this country, you will see that the Nile, on precipitating itself from its last cataract, bends its course towards Libia, following the direction of the mountains. Repulsed soon after by these insurmountable barriers, it returns towards the east, and approaches the Red Sea. The interval which separates them being only three and thirty leagues, Strabo has given it the name of an Isthmus. *Giéné* and *Coffeir* are at the two extremities. A deep valley, where at every step we discover traces of the sea, leads from one to the other. It is barren, destitute of verdure, but far from impassable. We find water there, and some acacias called *Naboul*, which produce gum arabic. The Arabs eat it, doubtless, to quench their thirst. The mines of emeralds and precious metals that ancient writers speak of (*p*), and which constituted heretofore the principal sources of the riches of Egypt, still subsist in the mountains on the side of the

(*p*) Pliny, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus,

road.



road. The fear of being exposed to the vexations of the Beys, and the ignorance of the modern Egyptians, prevent them from being worked.

The port of *Coffeir* is very inconsiderable. Large boats enter it, but vessels are obliged to remain in the road, where they find good anchorage. This advantage made the Greeks and Romans choose it as a harbour for their navy. The present town, or rather hamlet, contains only about two hundred earthen huts. It is commanded by a castle, flanked by four towers, the fire of which would suffice for its defence, as well as the ships in the harbour; but it is suffered to go to ruin, and has at present for its whole garrison, a porter, whose business it is to open and shut an antique gate of iron. The inhabitants are a medley of Turks and Arabs, governed by a Cachef, who depends on the Governor of *Giéné*. The enormous duty of ten per cent. laid in kind on the merchandize that arrives at *Coffeir*, offers no great encouragement for the merchants. The tyranny of the Beys, the vexations of the Commandant, the fear of the Bedouins, are still  
more

more terrible shackles. The situation of this port, however, for the barter of the productions of Egypt, for those of Arabia and India, is so favourable, that its commerce, though greatly diminished, still subsists. It is certain, that a nation, powerful at sea, might make all these obstacles vanish for a very small expence, and secure prodigious benefits from this important trade. Every thing depends on the means to be employed.

Mr. Chevalier, Commandant General of the French establishments in Bengal, is just arrived at Grand Cairo by the way of Cossair. I hope, Sir, you will not be sorry to learn by what means a Frenchman has been able to escape from the hands of the Turks and Arabs, who had a great desire to pillage him. The journal he has communicated to me, will teach you how to travel in these deserts. The vessel he was on board of, being struck with lightning on the coast of Malabar, and afterwards dismasted off Gedda, he was obliged to take shelter in that port. These accidents had made him lose the proper season for reaching Suez. He must either wait  
for



for the next monsoon, or risk himself in a small vessel on this stormy sea. His zeal for the interest of his country made him adopt this dangerous alternative. After struggling for three months against contrary winds, and being twenty times on the point of perishing, he reached Cossair. From thence he set out a few days after, with six Europeans mounted on camels. He followed the long valley which traverses the isthmus, and whose bottom is even, and covered with sand and petrified shells. Sometimes it is spacious, and sometimes very narrow. Here its sides rise into mountains, from whence the winter torrents detach huge masses of rocks, and where the granite, the jasper, the alabaster, and the porphyry appear. There it changes into sandy hillocks, destitute of a single shrub. These sands and naked rocks, continually smitten by the rays of a burning sun, reflect a light which proves injurious to the eyes, and so great a heat, that neither men nor animals can withstand it. It was in the month of July that Mr. Chevalier and his companions crossed this dismal solitude. The night brought them no comfort, because the winds



winds ceasing to blow, the succeeding calm left them exposed to the suffocating exhalations of the burning sands, that served them for a bed; amidst these sufferings, a little paste, half-baked on the ashes, was their only food. They had nothing to quench their thirst but water, which, after remaining some hours in skins, rubbed with stinking oil, was corrupted, and contracted a taste and smell which were insupportable. Add to these evils the continual apprehension of being plundered by the Arabs, the necessity of keeping watch during the night, and you will have an idea of what the man of courage is capable of suffering. Mr. Chevalier had provided for every event. His camels were fastened to each other that they might not separate in case of an attack. One of them carried two small canon, and the troop, armed with double-barreled guns, sabres, and pistols, never quitted their arms. They encamped every evening at a distance from the camel-drivers, who had orders not to approach under pain of death. Each of the Europeans mounted guard in his turn, whilst the others took a few moments

repose.

repose. They owed their safety to these wise precautions; for the third day, about sixty Arabs came to attack them. Their guides, who maintained a private correspondence with the robbers, flew, on the first fire, to hide themselves in the caverns of the rocks. The French led on by their Chief, advanced in good order, and played off their small artillery with success. After a few well-pointed fires, the Bedouins fled behind their mountains. They returned several times to the charge during the route; but the vigilance, the firm countenance, and the musquetry of the Europeans, kept at a distance the enemy, whose business it was to plunder, not to fight. At length, after a march of four days and a half, they arrived at Giéné, scorched by the sun, dying with thirst, and exhausted with hunger and fatigue. After bathing in the waters of the Nile, satiating themselves with the excellent fruits which grow on its banks, and enjoying the various productions of the teeming soil it fertilizes, they experienced a comfort, a contentment, a joy, the inexpressible de-

lights

lights of which the traveller alone can taste who has crossed the deserts.

A recent disaster, proves the prudence of Mr. Chevalier. Nearly at the same time that he left Cossair, a rich caravan worth several millions of livres, loaded for the account of the English, had been attacked between Suez and Grand Cairo. Several Europeans were with it; but to avoid the fatiguing weight of their arms, they had fastened them on the camels. Besides they marched at a great distance one from the other, and without caution; this security, produced by their confidence in the promise of the Bey, caused their ruin. The Bedouins pouring upon them unexpectedly, did not allow them time to put themselves on their defence. They pillaged all their wealth, and several of the travellers perished. It is in this fatal affair that Mr. de St. Germain has had the misfortune to lose a brother whom he loved, and two thirds of his fortune. After wandering, himself, for two days and nights in this burning solitude, naked, without food, without water, and almost without hope, he arrived



arrived nearly dead at the tent of an Arab, who washed him with fresh water, fed him with milk, cloathed, and conducted him to Grand Cairo. I had these particulars from the mouth of this unfortunate gentleman, who is preparing to return to France, where his misfortunes probably will interest the beneficence of the government.

The route of Cossair, Sir, has not the same disadvantages in winter; the heat then is moderate; the fear of robbers alone can stop the traveller; but by collecting in a troop, they may put themselves out of danger of their pursuit. Even during the summer, when they take care to provide themselves with necessaries, and to carry the water in earthen jars or skins which are not hardened with rancid oil; men accustomed to the temperature of warm climates, take this journey without inconvenience. If the twenty-four tyrants who devour the riches of Egypt, could devote their thoughts for an instant to the happiness of mankind, they would construct three public buildings, where the caravans might find refreshment and repose; but all their  
ambition

ambition consists in reigning a few days, in giving themselves up immoderately to their passions, intoxicating themselves with every species of pleasure, and mutually destroying each other. I have seen eleven of them in the space of three years pass in this manner from the bosom of voluptuousness to death. They perish by the steel of their colleagues, reserved for the same fate. A greater number save themselves by flight. What has agriculture and commerce to expect from such a government? If Egypt fell into the hands of an enlightened people, the route from Cossair would be rendered safe and commodious. I am of opinion, that it would be possible even to turn a branch of the Nile through this deep valley where the sea formerly has flowed. This canal does not appear to be attended with more difficulties than that which *Amru* executed from Fostat to Colzoum. It would procure far greater advantages, since it would save vessels from India about one hundred leagues dangerous navigation across the narrow extremity of the Red Sea. We should soon see landed at Cossair, the stuffs of Bengal,

the



the perfumes of Iemen, and the Abyſſinian gold duſt. The grain, the linens, the various productions of Egypt would be given in exchange. This beautiful country in the hands of a nation friendly to the arts, would once more become the centre of the commerce of the world. It would be the point of union between Europe and Aſia. Whiſt one part of its ſhips failed from the Arabic gulph towards India, the reſt would cover the Mediterranean; Alexandria would revive from her aſhes. An obſervatory placed under this ſerene ſky would add ſtill farther to the progreſs of aſtronomy. This happy country would be a ſecond time the native country of the ſciences, and the moſt delicious habitation on the globe. A more advantageous ſituation than Egypt cannot be imagined. It communicates with the eaſtern and weſtern ſeas. Nature has done every thing for it, and to reſtore it to that high degree of glory and of power, which once rendered it ſo famous, nothing is wanting but a people worthy of becoming its inhabitants.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R    XXXIV.

JOURNEY FROM COUS TO THEBES.    DESCRIPTION OF THE EASTERN PART OF THIS CITY.

*Description of Thebes, extracted from Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. State of this city under the Pharaohs, the Romans, and the dominion of the Turks. Porticoes, avenues of the Sphinx, with the structure and ruins of the great temple, near Carnack, in the eastern quarter of Thebes. Its foundations and ruins occupy a circumference of half a league. The plain extending from Carnack to Luxor, and anciently covered with buildings, now under agriculture. Description of the remains of the Temple of Luxor, and the superb obelisks situated near it. The most beautiful structures in Egypt, and in the whole world.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

ON leaving Cous, to ascend toward Asfouan, we leave on the right the town of  
Nequadé,

*Nequadé*, the residence of a Coptic Bishop, and where the Mahometans have several mosques. The Isle of Matoré is very near, and two leagues beyond it, we discover the ruins of *Thebes*, whose magnificence has been celebrated with emulation by Poets and Historians. Passages from those ancients who saw it, will make you acquainted with its former splendour. An accurate description of the monuments subsisting in our days, will enable you to judge of the degree of confidence due to their narratives, and the punctuated line on the map, which passes by *Carnak-Luxor*, *Medinet-Abou*, and *Gournou*, will point out to you the extent of this famous city.

“ The Great Diospolis, by the Greeks  
 “ called Thebes, says Diodorus Siculus (*q*),  
 “ was six leagues in circumference. Bu-  
 “ firis its founder erected there superb edi-  
 “ fices, which he enriched with mag-  
 “ nificent presents. The fame of her  
 “ power, and of her riches, celebrated by  
 “ Homer, filled the universe. Her gates,  
 “ and the numerous vestibules of her tem-

(b) Diodorus Siculus, l. i.

“ ples, induced this poet to bestow on her  
 “ the name of *Ecatompyle*, or the city with  
 “ a hundred gates. Never did city receive  
 “ so many offerings in gold, in silver, in  
 “ ivory, in colossal statues, and in obelisks  
 “ of a single stone. Above all were to  
 “ be admired, her four principal temples.  
 “ The most ancient was surprisngly grand  
 “ and sumptuous. It was half a league  
 “ round, (r) and was encompassed by  
 “ walls four and twenty feet thick, and  
 “ seventy high. The richness and finish-  
 “ ing of the ornaments corresponded with its  
 “ grandeur. Several Kings contributed to  
 “ embellish it. It still subsists, but the  
 “ gold, the silver, the ivory, and precious  
 “ stones, were carried off, when Cam-  
 “ byses set fire to all the Egyptian tem-  
 “ ples.”

I have only given you the principal  
 traits of the picture this Historian delineates

(r) Diodorus Siculus comprehends in this circum-  
 ference, the avenues of Sphinxes, the porticoes, the  
 buildings, and courts which encompassed the temple,  
 properly so called. We shall see that this author is not  
 far from the truth.



of Thebes, in its flourishing state, because they are sufficient to give you an idea of its beauty. Strabo will display it in its fall, that is to say, such as it was eighteen centuries before us.

“ Thebes or Diospolis now presents only the wreck of its former grandeur, dispersed  
 “ over a space of twenty-five Stadia in length.  
 “ We still remark a great number of temples, partly destroyed by Cambyfes. The  
 “ inhabitants are retired into burghs, situated on the east of the Nile, where the  
 “ present city is, and on the western bank near to Memnonium (*s*). In this place,  
 “ we admire two Colossuses of stone, placed by the side of each other. One of them  
 “ is entire. The other, it is said, (*t*) was overthrown by the shock of an earthquake. If we may credit the general  
 “ opinion, that part of the statue remain-

(*s*) Strabo calls Memnonium a temple, near to which was the statue of Memnon.

(*t*) Strabo is the only one amongst the ancients who has attributed the fall of this Colossus to an earthquake; all the others agree in telling us that it was overthrown by order of Cambyfes.

“ ing on its basis, utters a sound once a  
“ day. Curious to examine the truth of  
“ this fact, I went thither with Ælius Gal-  
“ lus, who was accompanied by his friends,  
“ and followed by a numerous retinue of  
“ soldiers. I heard this sound towards six  
“ o'clock in the morning, but I dare not  
“ take upon me to determine, whether it  
“ proceeded from the base of the Colossus, or  
“ was produced by some of the assistants ;  
“ for, rather than ascribe it to the effect of  
“ an assemblage of stones, one is tempted  
“ to imagine a thousand different causes.  
“ Above Memnonium are the tombs of  
“ the kings, hewn with the chisel in the  
“ rock. We may reckon about forty, con-  
“ structed in a wonderful manner, and  
“ worthy of attracting the attention of  
“ travellers. Some obelisks hewn out near  
“ them, bear different inscriptions, which  
“ point out the riches, the power, and the  
“ extent of the empire of these sovereigns  
“ who governed Scythia, Bactria, India,  
“ and Ionia. They give the detail also of  
“ the greatness of the tributes they im-  
“ posed, and the number of their troops  
“ which

“ which amounted to a million of soldiers.”

Previous to laying before you, Sir, what actually remains of the monuments described by these two historians, it is proper to make you acquainted with the distribution of the ornaments, the vestibules, the courts, and edifices, which composed the Egyptian temples, that we may not lose ourselves amongst these ruins.

“ (u) The temples of Egypt are preceded by one or more paved avenues, one hundred feet wide, and three or four hundred long. Two rows of sphinxes, thirty feet distant from each other, adorn the sides. These avenues are terminated by porticoes, the number of which is indefinite. These porticoes lead to a magnificent square in the front of the temple. Beyond is the sanctuary, which is smaller, and in which human figures are never sculptured, and seldom even those of animals. The sides of this place are formed by walls of the same height with the temple. More extensive at their

(u) Strabo, l. 17.



“ origin than the width of its front, they af-  
 “ terwards approach each other about one  
 “ hundred feet. They are covered with  
 “ large sculptured figures in the taste of the  
 “ ancient Tuscan and Grecian works. A  
 “ spacious edifice, supported by a prodigious  
 “ number of columns, is the usual accom-  
 “ panyments of these temples.”

Having nothing to offer you but monu-  
 ments, mutilated by time or men, I hope  
 this description will serve to point out to you  
 what is wanting to their perfection. Guided  
 by this, let us proceed to the southward of  
 Cornack, where we fall in with the remains  
 of one of the four principal temples spoken  
 of by Diodorus Siculus. It has eight en-  
 tries, three of which have sphinxes before  
 them of an enormous size, with two large  
 statues on each side. These sphinxes and  
 colossuses, all of one single block of mar-  
 ble, are hewn in the antique stile. After  
 passing through these majestic alleys, we ar-  
 rive at four porticoes, each of which is  
 thirty feet wide, fifty-two in height, and  
 one hundred and fifty long. Pyramidical  
 gates serve by way of entrance, and stones  
 of

of an astonishing size rest on the two walls, and form the cieling.

The first of these porticoes is entirely built of red granite, perfectly polished. Four compartments, filled with hieroglyphics, occupy the exterior faces. The interior has only three rows, in each of which one remarks two human figures, larger than nature, sculptured with infinite art. The sides are decorated with colossal figures, elevated fifteen feet above the foundations of the gate. Two statues, thirty-three feet high, one of red granite, the other of granite spotted with black and grey, are placed without. There is another in the inside, composed of a block of white marble, the head of which is knocked off. These colossuses bear in their hand *a sort of Cross*, that is to say, the PHALLUS, which, amongst the Egyptians, was *the symbol of fecundity*.

The second portico is half ruined. The gate has only two ranks of hieroglyphics of a gigantic size; one to the south, the other to the north. All the faces of the third are covered with hieroglyphics, formed  
of



of colossal figures. At the entrance of the gate one sees the remains of a statue of white marble, the trunk of which is fifteen feet in circumference. Its head is covered with a helmet, with a serpent entwined round it. In the place of the fourth portico, are walls almost entirely overthrown, and heaps of rubbish. In the midst of them one distinguishes the fragments of a colossus of red granite, the body of which is thirty feet round.

At the extremity of these porticoes commenced those lofty walls, which formed the first court of the temple. The people entered it by twelve gates. Several of them are destroyed, and others much decayed. That which has suffered the least from the injuries of time, and the ravages of the barbarians, looks towards the west. There is a long avenue of sphinxes in the front. It is forty feet wide, about sixty in height, and forty-eight thick at the foundation. One remarks in the front two rows of small windows, and on the sides, the ruins of stair-cases, by which they ascended to the top. This gate, the mass of which appears immovable, is in the rustic stile,  
without



without hieroglyphics, and of an awful simplicity. It gives an entrance into the great square, the sides of which are formed by two terraces, elevated six feet from the ground, and eighty wide. The traveller admires there two beautiful colonades which extend the whole length of the terraces. Above and in the front of the temple, is a second court, the extent of which corresponds with the majesty of the building. It is likewise decorated with two ranges of columns, which are more than fifty feet high, by eighteen in circumference at the base. Their capitals are in the form of vases, crowned with large square stones, which served probably as pedestals for statues. Two colossuses of a prodigious size, but mutilated by barbarians, terminate these colonades. Arrived at this place, the eye views with astonishment the immensity of the temple. It is of a surprizing elevation; its walls built with marble, appear incapable of destruction. The roof, of a greater height in the middle than at the sides, is supported by eighteen rows of pillars. Those which support the part the most elevated, are thirty feet in circumference,

cumference, and about eighty in height; the others are one third smaller. There is not in the universe a building whose grandeur bears a more awful character, nor whose majesty strikes more forcibly the feelings. It seems conformable with the great idea the Egyptians entertained of the supreme Being; and it is impossible to enter it without being penetrated with respect. All its aspects, internal and external, are covered with hieroglyphics and extraordinary figures. On the north side are sculptured representations of battles, with horses and with chariots, one of which is drawn by stags. We distinguish on the south wall two barks covered with a canopy, at the extremity of which appears a sun. They are pushed by mariners with poles. Two men, seated at the stern, seem to direct their course, and to receive homage. These designs are allegorical. The Greeks, in their poetical language, painted the sun in a car, drawn by coursers, guided by Apollo. The Egyptians represented him borne on a vessel, conducted by Osiris, and seven mariners, emblematical of the

the



the planets (*x*). This entrance, which formed the front of the temple of *Luxor*, is much disfigured, but it must have been most sumptuously grand, if we may judge by the obelisks which announce it. We see two of them sixty feet high, by one and twenty in circumference at the base; and a little farther, two others, seventy-two feet high, by thirty in circumference. Each of these superb monuments, formed of a block of red granite, do honour to the genius and knowledge of the ancient Egyptians. Various hieroglyphics are engraved on them, divided into columns. Three of these obelisks are erect; one only is overthrown.

On quitting this vast temple, and proceeding towards the south, we arrive, across heaps of rubbish, at the building, called by Strabo the Sanctuary. It is not considerable; the gate is ornamented with pillars, three of which, grouped together, are united under a single capital. The interior is distributed into several halls of

(*x*) Macrobius, dream of Scipio.—Martian Capella, I. 2.



granite. It was here they kept the *Virgin*, consecrated to Jupiter, and *who offered herself as a sacrifice in a very extraordinary manner* (y).

I have only described such parts of this temple as are the best preserved. We discover in this vast enclosure several buildings, almost destroyed, which served, doubtless, for the Priests and the sacred animals. One remarks also a large piece of water, encompassed with ruins, and at every step we meet with the trunks of columns, sphinxes, statues, colossuses, and such magnificent ruins, that one is filled with astonishment and admiration. If we measure with accuracy the space occupied by the vestibules, the porticoes, and the courts of the temple, we shall find that the whole was at least half a league in circumference, and that Dio-

(y) Jovi quem præcipuè colunt (Thebani) Virgo quædam genere clarissima, & specie pulcherrima sacratur; quales Græci pallacas vocant. Ea pellicis more cum quibus vult, coit, usque ad naturalem corporis purgationem. Post purgationem vero viro datur; sed priusquam nubat post pellicatus tempus in mortuæ morem iugetur. *Strabo*, l. 17.

dorus

dorus Siculus is not deceived in allowing them that extent.

The plain which extends from *Carnak* to *Luxor* is not less than a league in length. This space was covered with the houses of the Egyptians who inhabited the eastern part of Thebes. Although they were, according to Diodorus Siculus (z), five stories high, and solidly constructed, they have not been able to resist the ravages of time and conquerors; they are totally destroyed (a). Now that the soil is greatly raised, and that the annual overflowings of the river have covered them with several feet of mud, the ground is cultivated on their ruins. Corn, flax, and vegetables, grow on those spots, where three thousand years ago, were admired public squares, palaces, and numerous edifices, inhabited by an enlightened people. At the extremity of this plain stands the village of *Luxor*, near to which

(z) Diodorus Siculus, l. i.

(a) Dr. Pocock, deceived by this total destruction, thought that there were formerly no other great edifices at Thebes but the temples; and that the dwellings of the inhabitants were either tents or huts, &c. But the testimony of Diodorus refutes this opinion.



we behold the avenues and remains of another temple, still more disfigured than the former. It occupied an extensive space. Large courts, surrounded by porticoes, supported by columns forty feet high, without including the bases, buried in the sand; pyramidal gates, covered with hieroglyphic sculpture, and of an awful majesty; the remains of walls, built with masses of granite, and which the barbarism alone of men has been able to overthrow; whole files of lofty marble colossuses, forty feet high, two thirds of their body buried up; all these monuments proclaim what the magnificence of the principal edifice must have been, whose site is marked out by a hill of piled ruins. But nothing gives a greater idea of it than two obelisks which served it as an ornament, and which seem to have been placed there by giants, or the Genii of Fable. Each of them, formed of a single block of granite, is seventy-two feet high above ground, and thirty-two in circumference; but as they are greatly sunk into the sand and mud, we may fairly imagine them  
to



to have been ninety feet from the base to the summit. One of them is split towards the middle; the other is in perfect preservation. The hieroglyphics that cover them, divided into columns, and cut in *relievo*, projecting an inch and a half, do honour to the artist who was their sculptor. The hardness of the stone has preserved them from the injury of the air; nothing can be more majestic than these obelisks. Egypt is the only country where such works have been executed; nor is there a city in the world in which they would not form its noblest ornament. Such, Sir, are the most remarkable monuments we find in our days in the eastern part of Thebes. The very sight of them alone would be sufficient to inflame the genius of a polished nation; but the Turks and the Coptis, bending under the iron yoke which lies heavy on their heads, look on them without admiration, and build around them earthen huts which hardly shelter them from the sun. These barbarians, when they want a mill-stone, do not

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blush to beat down the column that supported a temple, or a portico, and to saw it into pieces. To this abject state does despotism degrade men !

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R    X X X V .

DESCRIPTION OF THE WESTERN PART  
OF THEBES.

*Visit to the tombs of the Theban kings, excavated in the mountain. Description of these subterraneous places, the sepulchres, their galleries and heieroglyphics. Account of a great temple, the roof of which was supported by square pillars, ornamented on the top with statues. Fragments of a prodigious Colossus among its ruins. Ruins of Memnonium, marked out by heaps of marble fragments, and rows of statues, either mutilated, or with a third part of their height buried in the earth; and above all, by the colossal statue of Memnon, famous in ancient times for the sounds which it emitted at sun-rise.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**T**HE village of Gournou, Sir, and that of Medinet Abou, situated on the spot occupied by the western part of THEBES, are surrounded by grand ruins; a league to the



westward of the former are grottoes, called *Biban El melouk*, the gates of the Kings. It is there we see the tombs of the ancient sovereigns of the Thebais. The road that leads to it is strewed with marbles and with ruins. We arrive there by following the windings of a narrow pass, the sides of which in many places have been cut with the chisel. Spacious apartments are cut out of the rock, which must have been antecedent to the construction of the houses and the palaces. At the bottom of this valley, which widens to about two hundred toises, we discover in the foot of the mountains, openings which lead to these tombs. Strabo (*b*) reckons forty, Diodorus Siculus (*c*), forty-seven of them; but he adds, that in the reign of Augustus there remained but seventeen, some of which were then greatly damaged. At present the greatest part of them are closed up, and there is no getting into above nine of them. The subterraneous galleries which are before them are in general ten feet high, by as many wide; the

(*b*) Strabo, l. 17.

(*c*) Diodorus Siculus, l. 1.

walls and the roof hewn out of a white rock, preserve the brilliancy and the polish of stucco. Four principal alleys, longer and more lofty than the former, terminate at the gate of a large hall, in the middle of which we see a marble tomb, with the figure of the prince, sculptured in *relievo* on the lid. Another figure holding a sceptre in his hand, adorns one of the sides of the wall. A third, represented on the roof, bears a sceptre also, and wings which descend to his heels.

The second grotto, which is spacious and well decorated, presents to the sight a cieling covered with golden stars, birds painted in colours, the freshness and vivacity of which have lost nothing of their splendor, and hieroglyphicks divided into columns and cut on the walls. Two men are seated by the gate, to which we are conducted by a long flight of steps of very gentle descent. A block of red granite sixteen feet high, ten long, and six wide, forms the sarcophagus of the king, whose figure cut in *relievo*, adorns the lid. Around it is a hieroglyphic inscription. The niches formed in the  
E 3 rock,

rock, served doubtless as the repositories of the mummies of the royal family. The tombs deposited in other apartments have been carried off by violence, as their ruins testify. We observe here a very handsome grotto, where nothing remains but a lid of marble, ten feet long and six wide. At the end of the most remote cave, one distinguishes a human figure sculptured in *relievo*, the arms crossed on the breast, and two others at its side upon their knees.

These galleries, these subterraneous apartments, which extend very far under the mountains, a small part of which only I have described, are ornamented with innumerable figures of men, and birds, and different animals, some in *relievo*, some engraved, and others painted in ineffaceable colours. These unintelligible characters, which compose the history of the time, conceal most interesting subjects under their impenetrable veil, as well as the most remarkable events of the lives of the Theban monarchs, whose power extended even to India. One cannot stir in these labyrinths but by the light of flambeaux, for that of  
day



day never penetrates them. Such are the caverns where the bodies of these kings repose, surrounded by darkness and by silence. In surveying them, one is struck with a religious dread, as if the presence of the living could disturb the dead in these asylums of repose and peace.

Returning from these gloomy mansions, and proceeding towards the south-east, the traveller soon discovers the remains of a temple, the square pillars of which are crowned by statues, whose heads are all broken. In one hand they hold a sceptre, in the other a whip. The building is hardly better than a heap of ruins; on the south is a pyramidal gate which served as an entrance to a portico. The circumference of the courts which encompassed the temple is indicated by remains of columns and stones of an immeasurable size. One of these courts contains the trunks of two statues of black marble, which were thirty feet high. In the other, one stands in a state of stupefaction at the sight of a colossus lying on the earth and broken in the middle; it is one and twenty feet wide from

one shoulder to the other; its head is eleven feet long and eighteen in circumference. This gigantick statue is inferior only to that of Memnon. The remains of the buildings which belonged to this temple cover a mile of ground, and leave the mind deeply impressed with its magnificence.

Continuing this route half a league further on, we find the ruins of the *Memnonium* situated near to *Medinet Abou*. There we see the largest colossus of Egypt, which points out the tomb of *Osimondué*; for Diodorus Siculus marks it as being within that inclosure. Previous to laying before you the remains of this famous monument, permit me to represent you with the account Diodorus gives of it. “Ten stadia from the tombs  
“of the kings of Thebes (*d*), says this  
“historian, one admires that of *Osimondué*.  
“The entrance to it is formed by a vestibule

(*d*) Diodorus Siculus, l. 1. The grottoes, where one sees the tombs of the kings of Thebes, are only at three quarters of a league from *Medinet Abou*. Thus Diodorus is pretty exact, since he only is deceived at most in a quarter of a league. Pocock has committed a more considerable error, by placing down the tomb of *Osimondué* at Luxor, on the other side of the Nile.

“built



“ built with various coloured stones. It is  
“ two hundred feet long and sixty-eight in  
“ elevation. On coming thence one en-  
“ ters under a square perystile, each side  
“ of which is four hundred feet long.  
“ Animals formed of blocks of granite,  
“ twenty-four feet high, serve as columns to  
“ it, and support the cieling which is com-  
“ posed of squares of marble, of twenty-  
“ seven feet every way. Stars of gold upon  
“ an azure ground, shine there the whole  
“ length of it. Beyond this perystile, opens  
“ another entry, followed by a vestibule built  
“ like the former, but more loaded with all  
“ sorts of sculpture. Before it, are three  
“ statues formed of single stones and hewn  
“ by Memnon Sycnite. The principal one  
“ which represents the king, is seated. It  
“ is the largest in Egypt; one of his feet  
“ accurately measured, exceeds seven cubits.  
“ The two others borne on his knees, one on  
“ the right, the other on the left, are those  
“ of his mother and his daughter. The  
“ whole work is less remarkable for its  
“ enormous size, than for the beauty of the  
“ execution and the choice of the granite,  
“ which



“ which in so extensive a surface has neither  
 “ spot or blemish. The colossus has this  
 “ inscription: *I am Osimondue the King of*  
 “ *Kings; if any one wishes to know how great*  
 “ *I am and where I repose, let him destroy*  
 “ *some of these works (e).* Besides this, we  
 “ see another statue of his mother, cut out  
 “ of a single block of granite and thirty feet  
 “ high. Three queens are sculptured on  
 “ the head, to shew that she was daughter,  
 “ wife, and mother of a king. At the end  
 “ of this portico, one enters into a perystile  
 “ more beautiful than the former. On a  
 “ stone is engraved the history of the war  
 “ of Osimondue, against the revolted inha-  
 “ bitants of Bactria. The facade of the  
 “ front wall shews this prince attack-  
 “ ing ramparts, at the foot of which  
 “ runs a river. He combats advanced  
 “ troops, having by his side a terrible lion,  
 “ which defends him with ardour. The  
 “ wall on the right presents captives in  
 “ chains, their hands and private parts cut

(e) I imagine that this inscription was fatal to this  
 colossus, and induced Cambyfes to break it in the middle.

“ off

“ off in order to stigmatize their cowardice.  
“ On the wall to the left, different sym-  
“ bolical figures, very well sculptured, recal  
“ the triumphs and the sacrifices of Osi-  
“ mondué on his return from this war. In  
“ the middle of the perystile, at the place  
“ where it is exposed, an altar was prepared,  
“ composed of a single stone of a marvellous  
“ size and of exquisite workmanship. In  
“ short, against the bottom wall, two colos-  
“ suses, each of them of one block of marble  
“ and forty feet high, are seated on their  
“ pedestals. One comes out of this ad-  
“ mirable peristyle by three gates ; one of  
“ them between two statues, the two others  
“ are on the sides. They lead to an edi-  
“ fice two hundred feet long, the roof of  
“ which is supported by eight columns. It  
“ resembles a magnificent theatre ; several  
“ figures in wood represent a senate employ-  
“ ed in distributing justice. On one of the  
“ walls one observes thirty senators, and in  
“ the midst of them the president of justice,  
“ having at his feet a collection of books,  
“ and the figure of Truth with her eyes  
“ shut, suspended at his neck.

“ One

“ One passed thence into a square sur-  
“ rounded by palaces of different forms,  
“ where were seen carved on the table, all  
“ sorts of dishes which could flatter the taste.  
“ In one of them, Ofimondué, clad in a  
“ a magnificent dress, was offering to the  
“ gods the gold and silver he drew yearly  
“ from the mines of Egypt. Below was  
“ written the value of this revenue, which  
“ amounted to thirty-two millions of silver  
“ minas. Another palace contained the  
“ sacred library, at the entrance of which  
“ one read these words: *Remedies for the*  
“ *Soul*. A third contained all the divinities  
“ of Egypt, with the king who offered to  
“ each of them the suitable presents, calling  
“ Ofiris and the princes his predecessors, to  
“ witness that he had exercised piety to-  
“ wards the gods and justice towards men.  
“ By the side of the library, in one of the  
“ most beautiful buildings of the place,  
“ were to be seen twenty tables surrounded  
“ by their beds, on which reposed the sta-  
“ tues of Jupiter, Juno, and Ofimondué.  
“ His body is thought to be deposited in  
“ this place. Several adjoining buildings  
“ preserved



“ preserved the representations of all the  
“ sacred animals of Egypt. From these  
“ apartments one mounted to the king’s  
“ tomb, on the top of which was placed a  
“ crown of gold a cubit wide and three  
“ hundred and sixty-five round. Each  
“ cubit answered to one day of the year, and  
“ the rising and setting of the stars for that  
“ day was engraven on each of them, with  
“ such astrological observations as the super-  
“ stition of the Egyptians attached to them.  
“ It is said that Cambyfes carried off this  
“ circle, when he ravaged Egypt. Such,  
“ according to historians, was the tomb of  
“ *Ofimondué*, which surpassed all others,  
“ both by its extent and by the labour of the  
“ able artists employed on it.”

I dare not take upon me to warrant all these facts, advanced by Diodorus Siculus, on the authority of preceding writers; for in his time the principal part of these buildings no longer existed. I admit even that all these wonderful descriptions would pass for pure chimeras in any other country; but in this fruitful land, which seems to have been first honoured with the creative  
genius

genius of the arts, they acquire a degree of probability. Let us examine what remains to us of these monuments, and our eyes will compel us to believe in prodigy. Their ruins are in heaps near to *Medinet Abou* (f), in the space of half a league's circumference. The temple, the perystiles, the vestibules, present to the eye nothing but piles of ruins, amongst which rise up some pyramidal gates, whose solidity has preserved them from destruction; but the numerous colossuses, described by Diodorus, are still subsisting, though mutilated. That which is nearest to these ruins, composed of yellow marble, is buried two thirds of its height in the earth. There is another in the same line of black and white marble, the back of which is covered with hieroglyphics, for thirty feet in length. In the space between them, trunks of columns and broken statues cover the ground, and mark the continuation of the vestibules. Farther on, we distinguish two other colossal statues,

(f) *Medinet Abou* signifies the city of the Father. There is no doubt that *Memnonium* was at this place, since it is called also in the Itinerary, *Papa, Father*.



totally disfigured. A hundred toises from them, the traveller is struck with astonishment at the sight of two colossiuses, which, like rocks, are seated by the side of each other. Their pedestals are nearly equal, and formed of blocks of granite, thirty feet long, and eighteen feet wide. The smallest of these colossiuses is also of a single block of marble; the other, which is the largest in Egypt, is formed of five courses of granite, and broken in the middle. It appears to have been the statue of Osimondué (*g*); for one sees two figures, cut in *relievo*, the length of his legs, and which are about one third of his height. These are the mother and the daughter of this Prince. The other colossus, which is of one stone, and which corresponds with the dimensions of Diodorus Siculus, represented

(*g*) The only objection that can be urged against this opinion is, that according to Diodorus Siculus, the statue of Osimondué, with those of his mother and daughter, were formed of a single block, and that this colossus is composed of several; but the first layer rising from the sole of the feet up to the elbows, includes the two other figures. This is perhaps what our historian wishes to express. In other respects, the rest is conformable to his description.

also



also the mother of the King. To give you an idea of the gigantic stature of the great colossus, it is enough to tell you that his foot alone is near eleven feet long, which answers exactly to the seven cubits of Diodorus. This statue, the half of which remains upon its base, and is what Strabo calls the statue of Memnon, uttered a sound at the rising of the sun. It possessed formerly great renown. Several writers have spoken of it with enthusiasm, regarding it as one of the seven wonders of the world. A multitude of Greek and Latin inscriptions, that are still legible on the base, and the legs of the colossus, testify that Princes, Generals, Governors, and men of every condition, have heard this miraculous sound. You know, Sir, what the judicious Strabo thinks of it, and I hope you will be of his opinion.

Such, Sir, are the remains of Thebes, with her hundred gates, whose antiquity is lost in the obscurity of ages, and which announces to what a degree of perfection the arts were carried in these remote periods. Every thing about it was noble and majestic.

tic. It seems as if the Kings of that city, whose glory will never perish whilst her obelisks and her columns remain, laboured only for immortality. They had constructed works beyond the injuries of time ; but they have proved unable to protect them against the barbarism of conquerors, the most dreadful scourge of the sciences, and of the nations, which their insolence has banished from the earth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XXXVI.

ROUTE FROM THEBES TO ESNE.

*Description of Armant, formerly Hermunthis, adorned with two ancient temples, built in honour of Jupiter and Apollo; the latter in good preservation. Account of Okror, and its manufactures of earthen ware. An ancient temple situated in the town of Erné, and now used by the Turks as a place of security for their cattle. Another temple in the western part of the town, where the Egyptians worshipped Neith, denominated by the Greeks, Minerva. Account of the convent founded by St. Helena, and of the burial-place of the martyrs. Observations on the stone of Baram, employed for the making of kitchen utensils.*

To Mr. L. M:

Grand Cairo.

**O**NE tears oneself with difficulty, Sir, from Thebes, with her hundred gates (*h*). The monuments

(*h*) I like this epithet, by which Homer, at a single stroke, paints the greatness of this city. What renders it sublime



monuments which there strike the traveller, fill his mind with great ideas. At the sight of the colossiuses and superb obelisks, which seem to surpass the limits of human nature, he cannot help exclaiming, *This was the work of man*, and this sentiment seems to ennoble his existence. It is true, that when his eyes fall on the huts, placed at the foot of these magnificent works, when he perceives an ignorant people, substituted for a learned nation, he is afflicted at the annihilation of generations, and at the loss of the arts; but even this affecting thought has charms for hearts of sensibility.

The wind now drives us towards the confines of Egypt. Already the rocks,

sublime is, that there is no exaggeration in it. With the smallest attention to the porticoes, the vestibules, the perystiles, the courts belonging to the great temples of Egypt, we must be convinced that Thebes had at least one hundred gates. I should be apt to think, therefore, with Diodorus Siculus, that this epithet, worthy of the pen of Homer, was suggested rather by the gates of her temples, than by those of her boundary. It appears even that this famous city never was encompassed with walls. No historian makes mention of any, nor are there any traces of them.

hewn into colossal statues, have disappeared. Other objects fix the attention. We contemplate with pleasure the riches which border the two banks of the Nile. We land at the port of *Armant*. This village is built at the foot of the eminence where we view the ruins of *Hermuntis*. This ancient city, which honoured with a particular worship, Apollo and Jupiter, had erected two temples to these deities. Time has respected them. That of Apollo is small, but well preserved; its walls are formed of granite; a freeze covered with sparrow-hawks, consecrated to the God, runs round it. We mount on a platform by stairs formed in one of the sides. All its aspects are decorated with hieroglyphics; four rows of human figures are carved without, and three within. The building is divided into several halls. Five falcons, with their wings spread, adorn the cieling of the first; golden stars shine upon the roof of the second. Here are two rams which look at each other, with hieroglyphics, sculptured with an artist's hand; two marble

marble oxen (*i*) occupy the extremity of this apartment. Around it we see women suckling their children. Before this temple was a large building, of which nothing is remaining but the foundations. Beyond, opens out a large bason destined to receive the waters of the Nile. Further on, on the bank of the river is another edifice, the temple, probably of Jupiter. The Christians had converted it into a church. The plaster on which the crosses are painted, covers the Egyptian hieroglyphics and inscriptions.

Four leagues from Armant, up the country, we meet with the village of *Okfor*. Abulfeda says (*k*), that in his time a great deal of earthen-ware was made here; that manufacture still subsists. The inhabitants transport their vases to the banks of the Nile, fasten them on a bed of palm-branches, with their mouths downwards, place a second bed above that, disposed in the same manner, and then a third. This sort of raft floats on the water, supported by the

(*i*) The ox in Egypt was the symbol of fertility and the inundation.

(*k*) Abulfeda, description of Egypt.



air, which, inclosed within the hollow of the vases, produces the same effect as in the diving-bell. Two men seated on it, conduct it from town to town, until they have sold all their merchandize. I have seen several of these rafts descend even below Grand Cairo. *El Okfor* is situated in the middle of a fertile plain, producing abundance of grain, and excellent dates.

Ascending to the southern end, we pass by *Gebelein*, the two hills; at the first of which is the tomb of a Mahometan saint. Soon after, we discover *Affoun*, a pretty considerable town, placed on the ruins of *Aphroditopolis* (1). Between Thebes and Sienna one frequently perceives crocodiles, basking on the sandy islands, left uncovered by the Nile, when it retires. They sleep in the sun, but theirs is a very gentle slumber; for on the approach of boats they precipitate themselves into the water. They rarely descend into the lower Thebais, and never

(1) This is the third city of the name. The Greeks called them so. In treating of the ancient religion of the country, at the end of this volume, I shall give the Egyptian names, which have come down to our time.

below Cairo. These voracious animals, though covered with almost impenetrable scales, fly the places too much frequented by men, and prefer the vicinity of Assouan, where there are fewer boats. The ancients have told us that the Ichneumon enters into the maw of this monster when he is asleep, and devours his entrails. The Ichneumon, in fact, seeks after the eggs which the she crocodile hides in the sand, and eats them when it finds them. This possibly is the origin of that fable.

We land at the port of *Esné*, a considerable town, governed by an Arabian prince, and by a Cachef, dependant on the Bey of Girze. The Mahometans have several mosques here, and the Coptis a church served by two priests. "*Esné*," says Abulfeda(*m*), "remarkable for its public baths and its commerce, is built on the westward of the Nile, between *Assouan* and *Cous*, but nearer to this latter. It acknowledges, adds the geographer of Nubia, the

(*m*) Description of Egypt.

“ Coptis(*n*) for founders. Its well culti-  
 “ vated territory abounds in grain and palm  
 “ trees. It is surrounded by gardens filled  
 “ with fruit trees. One admires here seve-  
 “ ral ancient monuments constructed by the  
 “ Coptis, and superb ruins.” This de-  
 scription answers to *Efné* in our time, which  
 is situated on the edge of a rich country,  
 and shaded by groves of orange trees loaded  
 with fruits and flowers. This town, for-  
 merly called *Latopolis*, revered Minerva and  
 the fish *Latus(o)*. It contains within its  
 boundary an antique temple; thick walls  
 inclose it on three sides. Six large fluted  
 columns, crowned by a capital ornamented  
 with the palm leaf, form the facade of it;  
 eighteen others support the roof, which is  
 composed of large squares of marble: the  
 building is surrounded by a freeze, and in-  
 numerable hieroglyphics cover its exterior  
 aspects. Those of the inside, executed with  
 much more care, mark the progress made

(*n*) The Arabs call the ancient Egyptians by the  
 name of Coptis or *Cobtis*.

(*o*) Strabo, l. 17.



by the Egyptians in sculpture. This temple is soiled by the ordure of the cattle kept there by the Turks. These barbarians do not blush to convert the most beautiful monuments of ancient Egypt into stables.

A league to the west of *Esné* is another temple, on the walls of which is carved in several places a woman seated (*p*). It was here that Minerva was worshipped, and the fish *Latus*. The columns of this temple possibly gave the Greeks the idea of the Corinthian order. In fact, the capitals are ornamented with a foliage resembling very much the *Acanthus*; only it projects less, and is sometimes merely perceptible. Several animals painted on the ceiling, have preserved all the splendor of their colours. The Egyptians often employed in their paintings gold and ultramarine blue; but if we may judge by what remains of their

(*p*) This woman seated, was an Egyptian deity called *Neith*. The ancient Greeks gave her the name of Minerva, whom they at first painted and engraved in that position, in imitation of their preceptors, as we shall see at the end of these letters.

works,

works, they were unacquainted with the art of shading, by which the painter, passing insensibly from one shade to the other, knows how to bestow on objects their suitable forms and colours. Their colours are very brilliant, but almost always uniform and simply laid on,

To the south of *Esné* we see the ruins of a monastery founded by Saint Helena, and near it the burying place of the martyrs, adorned with tombs crowned by cupolas, supported by arcades. The inhabitants of *Esné* having revolted against the persecution of Dioclesian, that emperor destroyed this town and put them to the sword. This place, consecrated by religion, is become a celebrated pilgrimage among the Coptis. They repair thither from the most distant provinces of the kingdom.

In the chain of mountains which stretches to the eastward of the Nile, and nearly opposite *Esné*, are quarries of a soft stone, called *Baram*. It is made use of for kitchen utensils. It hardens in the fire, and forms excellent kettles and pans, which give no bad taste to the victuals. I shall conclude  
 4 this

this letter, by apprizing you, that Father Sicard and Vansleb have confounded this town with Sienna, situated under the tropic, thirty leagues farther to the southward.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## LETTER XXXVII.

## ROUTE FROM ESNE TO THE LAST CATARACT.

*Description of Edfou, famous for a temple erected in honour of Apollo. Dangerous passage of Hafar Salsalé. Situation of Coum Ombo, anciently Ombos. Observations on the Crocodiles, which are exceedingly numerous in that quarter. Arrival at Siène, now Assouan. Description of this city, its antiquities, the Solstice-well, the bottom of which reflected the image of the Sun when he reached the tropic of Cancer. Account of the islands of Philé and Elephantine, with their temples and antiquities. Observations on the quarries of granite situated on the west of Cataract. Succinct description of the country lying between Grand Cairo and Siène.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

OUR journey, Sir, is almost finished. The heat we begin to feel informs us of the approach of the tropic. The southerly wind

wind with its burning breath blows in gusts, and raises up whirlwinds of sands destructive to man and beast. The one and the other seek for shelter in their huts and in the caverns of the rocks. Happily, this dangerous wind seldom continues for two days together; but this space of time is sometimes sufficient to make the caravans be swallowed up in the middle of the deserts.

The country now assumes another aspect; on setting out we left them sowing their lands in the environs of Cairo. Near Girgé the corn was in ear. Here they reap it at the end of January. Such is Egypt. In travelling through it from one extremity to the other, we see it sensibly changing its decoration. The verdure, the flowers, the harvests rapidly succeed each other. It is to the progressive inundation and to the heat of the climate, that we are indebted for this diversity of scenery, this variety of produce, which are incessantly renewing through a long extent of country.

Above *Esné*, is the village of *Edfou*, governed by an Arab Scheik and built on the ruins of the great city of Apollo. It possesses

possesses an ancient temple covered with hieroglyphics; amongst which we distinguish men with falcons heads. Its inhabitants were enemies of the crocodile. At some leagues from *Edfou*, the bed of the river, hemmed in by rocks which project to the right and left, is only fifty toises wide. This place is called *Hajar Salsalé*, the stone of the chain, and it is thought that one formerly extended from one side to the other. The rocks on the western side are hewn in the shape of grottoes. We see columns, pilasters, and hieroglyphics, with a chapel cut out of a solid stone. The water confined between the mountains, precipitates itself with great rapidity, and it is impossible to ascend against the current without a favourable wind.

After passing *Hajar Salsalé*, we discover to the east of the Nile, *Coum ombo*. The ruins of a temple, situated at the foot of this hill, ascertain the position of the ancient *Ombos*, whose inhabitants honoured the crocodile. These animals are very common thus high up the Nile. One sees them descend in droves from the isles of sand, and swim



swim in long strings in the river. It seems as if these formidable animals had fixed their habitation near to a town where they received homage; but what renders them more numerous here than in the other parts of Egypt, is the solitude of the situation, the banks of the Nile in this place being almost deserted.

We land, Sir, at the port of *Affouan*, formerly Sienna, which will terminate our navigation. Here, as elsewhere, I shall follow the plan I have laid down. I shall present to you the local descriptions, as traced out by the best writers of antiquity, adding the picture of their present situation, and the changes which have taken place. No author has described Sienna and its environs better than Strabo (*q*). Let us hear him: “ Sienna is a town of Egypt, on the confines of Ethiopia. It has the island of Elephantina before it. One observes there a small town with the temple of Cneph (*r*), and a Nilometer. It is a

(*q*) Strabo, l. 17.

(*r*) An Egyptian Deity, whom I shall speak of at the end of these Letters.

“ well,

“ well, formed of a single stone, which,  
 “ placed on the banks of the Nile, serves to  
 “ measure the great, the moderate, and the  
 “ smallest overflowings; for the water of  
 “ this well rises and falls with the river.  
 “ Lines marked on the walls point out the  
 “ instant of its increase, that of attaining  
 “ its greatest height, and the other degrees  
 “ of its elevation. Men appointed to make  
 “ this observation announce it to all Egypt;  
 “ so that every body may know what will  
 “ be the increase of the year; in fact, they  
 “ know at a certain period, from infallible  
 “ symptoms, the height to which the Nile  
 “ will rise, long before it begins even to  
 “ overflow its banks. They lose no time  
 “ in acquainting the Governors of the pro-  
 “ vinces with it. This knowledge en-  
 “ lightens the countryman with respect to  
 “ the distribution of the waters, the labour  
 “ on his dykes, and the cleansing of the  
 “ canals. The officers deputed to collect  
 “ the tributes, proportion them to the de-  
 “ gree of the expected inundation (*s*).

(*s*) In our days, when the Nile does not rise above 16 cubits, Egypt pays no tribute to the Grand Signior.



“ Sienna is immediately under the Tro-  
“ pic; a well is dug there which marks  
“ the summer solstice. This day is  
“ discovered when the gnomon of the  
“ dial gives no shadow at noon. At  
“ that moment the vertical sun darts his  
“ rays to the bottom of the well, and his  
“ whole image is painted on the water that  
“ covers the bottom. Three cohorts, gar-  
“ risoned in this town, preserve the limits  
“ of the the Roman empire. At some  
“ distance above Elephantina the bed of the  
“ river is obstructed by a rock, and forms  
“ a small cataract. It is levelled in the  
“ middle, that the waters may pass over it.  
“ Perpendicularly cut at the two extremi-  
“ ties, it leaves a navigable canal on each  
“ side, which boats mount easily. The  
“ boatmen venture to allow themselves to  
“ drive with the current in flimsy skiffs, in  
“ the middle of the cataract, without re-  
“ ceiving any damage. The isle of Philé,  
“ situated above, is the common habitation  
“ of the Ethiopians and Egyptians. The  
“ latter occupy a hamlet similar to that of  
“ Elephantina in point of size and con-  
“ struction.



“struction. It has temples, in one of  
“which the sparrow-hawk of Ethiopia is  
“held sacred.”

The isle of Elephantina, Sir, is half a league long, by a quarter wide. The town described by Strabo subsists no longer. A small village is built on its ruins. Near to them we see a superb gate of granite which formed the entrance of one of the porticoes of the temple of *Cnept*. A building surrounded by thick walls and rubbish, formerly made a part of it; an elevated rampart at the point of the island served to defend it against the inundation. The Nilometer, so favourably situated in this place, to discover the first appearance of the increase of the waters, and to regulate the labours of the husbandman, appears no longer. From the description of Strabo, we may imagine that it was a hall similar to that of the *Mekias*, of the isle of *Raouda*, excepting that it was of a single stone, and that instead of one column divided into inches and cubits, the inundation was measured by lines traced upon the wall. This nilometer, formed of a block of marble,

ble, cannot have been destroyed; it is probably buried under the sand and mud of the Nile, whence it may one day be extricated.

The Isle of Elephantina is furrounded by four smaller ones, which are only rocks of granite. Enormous masses have been detached from them to be employed in the great edifices of Egypt. It is from one of these islets that the great cube of sixty feet on each side was taken, in the solid of which was hewn the sanctuary of the temple of Latona at Butis (*t*). History informs us, that several thousand workmen were employed three years in conveying it to the place of destination. This is the most enormous weight ever moved by human power.

*Assouan*, situated on the east of the river, is only a miserable hamlet, with a small fort commanded by an Aga of the Janizaries. The remains of Sienna are on the eminence

(*t*) See the first Vol. of the Letters on Egypt. Mr. Pocock places this large stone in the temple of Minerva at Sais; but that is in direct contradiction with Herodotus, who gives the description of it, and who asserts that he saw it at Butis, in the temple of Latona.

which rises to the south. Columns and pillars of granite, dispersed in several places, point out its site. One remarks there an ancient edifice, with openings at the top, and windows which look towards the east. Perhaps this was the observatory of the Egyptians. The well of the Solstice might correspond with one of these openings, and the image of the sun display itself on the surface of the water which covered the bottom. This fact, attested by all antiquity, cannot be called in question. It proves the astronomical knowledge of the Egyptians, and should be regarded as one of the most beautiful observations of mankind. It is very astonishing that, for eighteen hundred years, no traveller should have stopped at Sienna a few days before the summer solstice, to search for this wonderful well, and to establish so interesting a discovery. Having travelled with a limited fortune, and without the aid of Government, I did not go so high up as that town, where it would have been necessary to remain at least a week, because these journies are very expensive, and it is impossible to be in safety from robbers,



but by making continual presents to the Governors, and by keeping the Janizaries in pay. Thus, instead of my own observations, I have been forced to collect and verify with infinite pains the observations of others, in some particulars. It is true that I have had private journals, which aided me very much, but it would have been much more desirable to have seen every thing myself.

The cataract is still in our days what it is described by Strabo ; the rock which bars the middle of the river is bare for six months of the year. Then boats mount and descend by the sides. During the inundation, the waters heaped up between the mountains form one great sheet, and, breaking down every obstacle, spring from eleven feet height. The boats can no longer ascend the stream, and merchandize must be conveyed two leagues over land, above the cataract ; they descend, however, as usual, and suffer themselves to be plunged into the gulph. They precipitate themselves into it with the rapidity of an arrow, and in an instant are out of sight. It is necessary for the boats

to be moderately laden, and for the boatmen who hold by the stern, to be in exact equilibrium, otherwise they would infallibly be swallowed up in the abyss.

To the west of *Affouan*, a road is cut in the mountain that leads to *Philé*. On its sides are discovered immense quarries of granite. Mr. Pocock observed there obelisks and columns, half-hewn. They cut them in the flanks of the rock, and when detached, they were drawn to the river, whence they were transported on rafts to the place of their destination. The granite of these quarries, spotted with red and grey, resembles that of the column of Alexander Severus. It is extremely hard, and takes a fine polish.

The Isle of *Philé* is only half a league round; the Ethiopians and Egyptians inhabited it in common; at present it is deserted, but one admires there two magnificent temples (*u*). The largest has courts ornamented with colonnades. One enters into the first by a pyramidal gate, on the

(*u*) Pocock's travels in the east. Norden's Journey through Egypt.

side of which are two obelisks of granite. The inside of the temple is divided into several apartments. Its walls, formed of marble, present several rows of hieroglyphics, amongst which is distinguishable the sparrow-hawk described by Strabo. To the east of this edifice is another which forms a parallelogram. It is open on all sides. The capitals of the columns which support the roof are sculptured with art.

Now that we are on the confines of Egypt, let us cast an eye on the country we have passed through. In a space of two hundred leagues, we have remarked a narrow valley, bounded on the right and left by two chains of mountains and hills. Except towards the Faioum, the plain is not above ten leagues in its greatest extent, but it is covered throughout by the treasures of abundance. The pyramids, which extend from the environs of *Giza* as far as *Meidom*, first attracted our attention. These magnificent mausolea, erected by the power of the Pharaohs, have not prevented us from paying our tribute of admiration to the remains of lake Mæris, formed for the happiness of the

G 4

people.



people. Farther on we have observed porticoes and magnificent temples. The ruins of Thebes with her hundred gates, have then commanded our attention, and our thoughts have been elevated even to the height of her famous monuments. At length we arrived at Sienna, remarking every where on our route the most beautiful remains of antiquity.

To what event must we attribute the destruction of taste, and of the arts, under the same climate, on the same soil, amidst the same abundance, if not to the loss of liberty, and to the Government, which beats down or raises at its will the genius of nations? Egypt, become a part of the Persian empire, was ravaged for two hundred years by Cambyfes and his successors. This barbarous Prince, by destroying the temples and colleges of the Priests, extinguished the sacred fire which they had kindled for ages, under this favourable sky. Honoured, they cultivated with glory every branch of human knowledge; despised, they lost their sciences and their genius. Under the domination of the Ptolemies, knowledge did not

not revive, because these Kings, fixing the seat of Government at Alexandria, bestowed all their confidence on the Greeks, and disdained the Egyptians. Become a Roman province under Augustus, Egypt was looked upon as the granary of Italy, and agriculture and commerce alone met with encouragement. The monarchs of the lower empire having embraced Christianity, governed it with an iron sceptre, and overturned some of its most noble monuments. The Arabs wrested it from the cowardly Heraclius, too much occupied with theological disputes to send a single vessel to the succour of the Alexandrians, who implored his assistance for a whole year. They burnt there that valuable library, the loss of which will be a subject of regret to the learned in all countries, and in every age. The Turks, in short, an ignorant and barbarous people, have been its last masters. They have, as far as they are able, annihilated commerce, agriculture, and the sciences. After so many calamities, after the revolution of so many ages, behold,

Sir,

Sir, how many glorious ancient monuments this country still possesses; see if the whole globe combines as many as this little portion of the world. This observation alone is sufficient to give you an idea of its former inhabitants, and of the degree of perfection to which they carried the arts.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XXXVIII.

DESCRIPTION OF OASIS AND THE TEM-  
PLE OF JUPITER AMMON, WITH THE  
ROUTES LEADING THITHER.

*Situation of Oasis fixed by Ptolemy and the  
Arabian geographers. Description of the  
places inhabited in the middle of the Desert.  
Journey of Alexander to the temple of  
Jupiter Ammon, traced in the map which is  
prefixed to this volume. Account of the  
temple and the people who inhabit its envi-  
rons. Defeat of the army of Cambyfes,  
which had been sent to plunder it. Unfor-  
tunate expedition of this barbarous invader,  
against the Ethiopians, followed by the loss  
of a part of the troops which he commanded.  
Oasis a place of exile under the monarchs of  
the lower empire; and thither St. Athana-  
sius and other persons were banished.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE description of Egypt, Sir, would be  
incomplete, if I passed over in silence the *Oasis*,  
dependant

dependant on the Thebais (*x*). Strabo speaks of them as follows: "Africa, according to historians, and to Cneius Piso, who governed it, like to a leopard's skin, is interspersed with small habitations, surrounded by deserts, called by the Egyptians, *Oasis*." These remarkable places were known by Arabian geographers, who called them *Elouab*. Abulfeda (*y*), their guide, describes them in the following manner: "These *Elouab* are dependent on the Saïd. They are islands in the middle of sands. On quitting the Nile, it takes three days journey across the desert to arrive at them. *Jacout* who reckons three of them, places them in the west of lower Egypt, beyond the chain of mountains, parallel with the river. He adds that the first is well cultivated; that it possesses abundant rivulets, hot springs, fields covered with harvests, and other suprizing things, but that the people there are wretched."

(*x*) Strabo, l. 17.

(*y*) Abulfeda, description of Egypt.

Such, Sir, are the *Oasis* of the Greeks. We are pretty nearly acquainted with their distance from the Nile. Ptolemy determines their latitude ( $x$ ). He places the large one under the 26th degree, 30 minutes from the latitude of *Abydos*; it is called by the Arabs *Elberbi*, the temple, on account of the monument we find there. The second, in 25 degrees 45 minutes, that is to say, over against *Bebnèsé*; and the most northerly, in 29, 30, under the parallel of Lake Mæris. Let us now enquire, to which of these habitations the temple of Jupiter Ammon was near. The route taken by Alexander, when he undertook this journey, will point it out to us.

(a) “ Alexander having pacified the  
 “ upper Egypt, without effecting any  
 “ change in the ancient constitution of  
 “ government, resolved to repair to the tem-  
 “ ple of Jupiter Ammon. The road lead-  
 “ ing to it is almost impracticable. The  
 “ earth is without wells, and the heavens  
 “ without rain. One discovers on every

(x) Ptolemy, l. 4.

(a) Quintus Curtius, l. 4. chap. 7.



“ fide immense plains of sand, which, struck  
 “ continually by the rays of the sun, emit  
 “ suffocating vapours. Exhausted by the  
 “ drought and heat, travellers are obliged to  
 “ cross a deep sand, which yielding under  
 “ their feet, renders the march very difficult.  
 “ The Egyptians exaggerated even these  
 “ difficulties. But nothing could stop  
 “ Alexander, attracted by an ardent desire  
 “ towards the oracle of Jupiter. His soul  
 “ thirsting for glory, not being satisfied with  
 “ attaining the pinnacle of human greatness,  
 “ he imagined, or wished it to be believed,  
 “ that this god was his father (*b*).

“ He descended by the river to Lake  
 “ Mareotis, with the select companions of  
 “ his journey. From thence he set out to  
 “ accomplish his design. The fatigue of  
 “ the two first days was not great. Though  
 “ they travelled in fact on a barren soil, they  
 “ were not yet entered into the burning  
 “ solitudes. When they had reached them,  
 “ they perceived nothing around them but

(*b*) Callisthenes, according to Strabo, says that Alexander in undertaking this enterprize, wished to imitate Hercules and Perseus who had performed it before him.

“ prodigious

“prodigious heaps of sand, without trees,  
“or plants, or the smallest trace of culti-  
“vation. From amidst this parched desert,  
“their eyes were looking out for land, like  
“navigators. The water carried in skins  
“upon the camels was soon exhausted, a  
“loss which was irreparable, in a country  
“destitute of springs, and where every thing  
“was burnt up by the sun. In this ex-  
“tremity, whether by the bounty of the  
“gods, or the result of chance, the heavens  
“became covered with thick clouds and  
“the rain came down in torrents. Life  
“was restored to these unfortunate men,  
“dying with thirst, and sinking under the  
“excessive heat. In short, after four days  
“march across this frightful solitude, they  
“reached the territory sacred to Jupiter  
“Ammon. With what astonishment did  
“they behold in this country, surrounded  
“by deserts, forests impenetrable to day-  
“light, streams of excellent water, and a  
“delicious temperature, where the charms  
“of the spring reigned throughout the  
“year, and bestowed the precious gift of  
“salubrity!”

“ The inhabitants of these woods, called  
 “ Ammonians, dwell in huts dispersed here  
 “ and there under the shade. A triple  
 “ wall built in the middle, serves them by  
 “ way of citadel. The first inclosure con-  
 “ tains the palace of their ancient kings;  
 “ the second, where the temple stands, is  
 “ destined for the women, the children and  
 “ the slaves; the warriors entrusted with  
 “ the defence of this asylum, occupy  
 “ the third. The fountain of the Sun  
 “ flows through another thicket, alike con-  
 “ secrated to the oracle of Ammon. Its  
 “ water is tepid in the morning, cool at  
 “ noon, warm in the evening, and scalding  
 “ at midnight.

“ The statue that is worshipped at this  
 “ place, by no means resembles those usually  
 “ fabricated by sculptors. Formed of  
 “ emeralds and precious stones, it is in the  
 “ shape of a ram (*c*) from the head to the  
 “ middle

(*c*) This idol had the form of a ram, because that  
 animal was consecrated to Jupiter Ammon, a symbolical  
 deity, which denoted the sun entering the sign of the ram.  
 The boat in which it was carried, represented the vessel  
 in



“ middle of the body. When it is to be  
“ consulted, the priests carry it in a gilded  
“ boat, on each side of which are suspended  
“ cups of silver. The matrons and virgins  
“ follow the god, singing a hymn in the  
“ language of the country, to make Jupiter  
“ favourable, and to receive from him a  
“ certain oracle, &c.”

Alexander set out from Lake Mareotis to repair to the temple of Ammon. The two first days he proceeded over a barren soil, but where he did not sink in marching, that is to say, he followed the sea shore towards the west; for had he taken a southerly or south westerly direction, he must have immediately entered the desert covered with deep sands. Arrived at seven or eight leagues from Panætonium he entered the burning desert, through which he marched four days; he then bent his course directly towards the habitation of the Ammonians, nearly following the line punctuated on the map. I am persuaded of this from the position in which Ptolemy lays down the

in which the Egyptians placed the sun describing his course in the air. These emblems will be explained in the succeeding letters.

first *Oasis*, in the parallel of Lake Mæris, and from Strabo (*d*), who assures us that the temple of Ammon was not far from it. Callisthenes, who makes Alexander depart from Porætonium, does not vary much from our route. It is possible that the conqueror may have advanced as far as that city, and afterwards have ascended towards the south.

Strabo (*e*) informs us that under the reign of Augustus, the verses of the sybils, and the Tuscan divinations had made the oracle of Ammon greatly lose its credit. In the thirteenth century it was forgotten; but the Arabs assert that they still possessed inhabitants. It appears from their relations, that the fountain of the Sun described by Quintus Curtius in a wonderful manner, was nothing more than a hot spring which seemed to be warmer in the night than in the day.

Under the sovereigns of the lower empire, the *Oasis* became a place of exile. These

(*d*) Strabo, l. 17.

(*e*) Strabo, l. 17.

princes tainted with theology, a science which ought to be reserved for those to whom religion has entrusted the sacred repository, and occupied in promoting the triumph sometimes of a new sect, sometimes of the true doctrine, sent there alternately both sectaries, and catholics. Nestorius and Athanasius were exiled there. In the digest are these words (*f*): “There is a  
 “ sort of exile which consists in banishing  
 “ the criminal into the Oasis of Egypt,  
 “ where he is as if in an island.” Saint Athanasius complains of this cruelty in his apology. “The Arians, says he, have  
 “ exceeded the orders of the emperor, by  
 “ confining the elders and the bishops in  
 “ the middle of frightful deserts; those of  
 “ Lybia in the great Oasis, those of Thebais,  
 “ in the Oasis of Ammon, in order to make  
 “ them perish in crossing the burning  
 “ sands.”

These habitations, become famous from the banishment of the most learned personages of the lower empire, were little known

(*f*) Lib. 48. lit. 22.



by the Persians. Cambyfes, after ravaging Egypt, wished to carry off the spoils of the temple of Jupiter Ammon (g). "The  
" troops he fent againft the Ammonians  
" left Thebes and arrived at the city of  
" Oafis, inhabited by the Samians of the  
" tribe of *Efcryptionia*. This country, diftant  
" feven days march from the capital of  
" Egypt, is called by the Greeks, *The Ifle*  
" *of the Happy*. It is reported that the  
" army reached the place of their deftina-  
" tion, but the Ammonians alone know  
" what became of it, for it has never fince  
" been heard of. It is faid alfo, that being  
" on their march towards the temple of  
" Jupiter, and having got half way, it was  
" fwallowed by torrents of burning fand  
" blown up by the fouthery wind."

From the route of this army, it appears that the guides, who abhorred the Persians, led them aftray in the middle of the defarts. In fact, to arrive at the temple of Ammon, they ought to have taken their departure from the borders of Lake Mareotis, or the

(g) Herodotus, l. 3.

environs of Memphis. The Egyptians, who intended to make their enemies perish, conducted them from Thebes to the great Oasis, distant three days journey from *Abydos*. After leading them, doubtless, into the vast solitudes of Lybia, they abandoned them during the night, and gave them up to death.

The Oasis of Ammon is little known by the modern Egyptians. They are better acquainted with the second. *Abulfeda* (*b*) places a city there, named *Behnèse*, and different from that one seen on the canal of Joseph. He marks another higher up, that corresponds with that of *Achmonain*, and around which are admired magnificent remains of antiquity. The great Oasis, the most frequented of the three, being on the road of the caravans of Abyssinia, contains a great number of inhabitants. The Bey of *Girgé* sends a Cachef there as governor, and to collect a tribute. When the Abyf-

(*b*) *Abulfeda*, description of Egypt. *Behnèse*, says he, is a town situated near Joseph's canal. We find another town of the same name in the country of the *Ellouah*, on the confines of the Negro country, &c.

finians who set out from Egypt on their return, have laid in their stock of provisions in this fruitful valley, they mount to the southward, and fall in with another under the tropic, which the geographer of Nubia describes in these terms: "The country  
 " of the *Ellouab*, situated to the west of  
 " Assouan, was formerly much peopled.  
 " At present it has no inhabitants. We  
 " meet with abundant springs there, and  
 " fruit trees, with cities buried under ruins."  
 It was in passing from this valley into Ethiopia that another division of the troops of Cambyfes was destroyed.

(i) " Cambyfes being arrived at Thebes,  
 " selected fifty thousand men whom he  
 " ordered to sack and burn the temple of  
 " Jupiter Ammon. He marched himself  
 " against the Ethiopians with the remain-  
 " der of his army. But the provisions they  
 " carried, failed them before they had pro-  
 " ceeded the fifth part of the way. They  
 " ate their horses, but this resource was but  
 " of a short duration. Had this prince

(i) Herodotus, l. 3.

" been



“ been guided by prudence, he would have  
 “ returned by the same road; but animated  
 “ by a blind fury, he went on. As long as  
 “ the soldiers found herbs and plants they  
 “ fed on them. This feeble succour failing  
 “ them in the midst of the sands, they were  
 “ *decimated*, and those on whom the lot fell  
 “ were devoured by their companions. At  
 “ this dreadful news the king of Persia aban-  
 “ doned his Ethiopian expedition, and re-  
 “ treated to Thebes with the loss of half  
 “ his army (*k*).”

What actually happens in this journey,  
 renders that event very credible. Travel-  
 lers who set out from the fertile valley  
 situated under the tropic, march seven days  
 journey before they reach the first town in  
 Ethiopia. They proceed in the day by  
 establishing signals, and at night by observ-  
 ing the stars. The hills of sand, which  
 have been remarked in the preceding jour-  
 ney hurried along by the winds, frequently  
 deceive the guides. If these errors lead

(*k*) It is highly probable that in this as well as the  
 former expedition, the guides purposely misled Cambyfes,  
 who had been setting fire to all the temples of Egypt.

them ever so little astray from their route, the camels after living for five or six days without water, sink under their burden and die. The men soon follow the same fate, and sometimes out of a numerous caravan not a single traveller escapes. At other times the scorching southerly winds lift up whirlwinds of dust, which stifle man and beast. The next caravan that passes, beholds the earth covered with dead bodies perfectly dried up. This frightful spectacle, these terrible dangers, do not deter the Abyssinians, who from the most remote antiquity have been the carriers of gold dust, of musk, and elephants teeth into Egypt. Such an empire has habit over men.

I have the honour to be, &c.

H  
LETTER

## L E T T E R    X X X I X .

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INCREASE OF  
THE NILE.

*Remarks on the Nile, its sources, and the phenomena of its annual inundation. Time when they cut the dyke, at the head of the canal which conducts the waters to Grand Cairo. Description of the public festivals and rejoicings at that season. Nocturnal recreations on the water in the great squares of the capital. The pleasures thence arising. Means of securing to Egypt a regular inundation, and an inexhaustible abundance.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Nile, Sir, is the most celebrated river on the earth. Travellers in all ages have spoken with enthusiasm of the fecundity of its waters. The poets have sung its seven mouths, and all history is filled with the wonders of its inundation. It owed its celebrity to the ancient people who cultivated on its banks the arts and sciences,  
and



and brought them to perfection. Loaded with its bounties, they established a festival in honour of this river, and raised altars to it as to a God, or rather as to the most exalted gift of the Creator. Had this river nourished only Turks and Arabs, its name, like that of many others, would only have been known on maps and charts of geography; but its glory was connected with that of a celebrated nation, and from the ends of the universe men came to admire the noble works constructed to contain it, and the immortal monuments erected on its borders.

All the ancients, excepting the Egyptians, were ignorant of its origin. A Portuguese Jesuit in the last century pretended to have discovered it. The following is his narrative: “ In the province of Sahala, situated  
“ to the west of the kingdom of Goiam,  
“ the inhabitants of which are called *Agous*,  
“ we discover the sources of the Nile. They  
“ are two deep fountains in an elevated situation. The earth around them is marshy,  
“ and trembles under the feet. The water  
“ spouts up from the foot of the mountain, with a noise like that of a cannon.  
“ After

“ After running some time in the valley, it  
“ receives a second rivulet which comes from  
“ the east. Joining together, they direct  
“ their course towards the north. Two  
“ other torrents discharge themselves into  
“ them, and form a river which joins the  
“ river *Jemam*; and, after long circuits to  
“ the east and west, throws itself into a  
“ great lake. On coming out of that lake  
“ it forms the river of the Nile, which pre-  
“ cipitates its course towards the Mediter-  
“ ranean.”

Whether this account be true or false, this quantity of water would not supply the general inundation, which covers a space of near four hundred leagues; for it is also felt sensibly in Ethiopia. But in the months of March, April, May, and June, the northerly winds drive the clouds towards the lofty mountains on the other side of the Equator. Stopped by this barrier, they collect in heaps upon their lofty summits, dissolve into rain, which falls in torrents, and fills the vallies. The junction of such an innumerable multitude of streams forms the Nile, and produces the inundation. From the unanimous testimony

testimony of the Abyſſinians, who bring the gold-duſt to Grand Cairo, we learn that this river on reaching Ethiopia ſeparates itſelf into two branches, one of which, known by the name of *Aſerac*, or the Blue River, ſtrikes off to join the Niger, and, tra- verſing Africa from eaſt to weſt, throws itſelf into the Atlantic Ocean. The other branch flows towards the north, between two chains of mountains, and, meeting with rocks of granite which obſtruct its bed, forms fix cataracts, far more frightful than thoſe of Sienna. Theſe tremendous falls abſolutely prevent the navigation of the river. Arrived at the firſt town in Egypt, it falls eleven feet into a gulph it has formed, and the dangers of which are ſurmounded by the boldneſs of navigators. Deſcended into this beautiful kingdom, it fills the canals and the lakes, overflows the lands, leaving behind it a fruitful mud, and throws itſelf, as formerly, by ſeven mouths, into the Mediterranean.

At the beginning of June the Nile begins to ſwell, but its increaſe is not very ſenſible till the ſolſtice. At this period its waters  
become



become troubled, assuming a reddish tinge, and are then esteemed unwholesome. They must be purified before they are drinkable. This is done by throwing the powder of bitter almonds, bruised, into a jar full of water, and stirring them for some minutes with your arm plunged in the middle of the vessel. After this operation they are left to settle, and at the end of five or six hours all the heterogeneous particles are precipitated to the bottom of the vessel, and the water is clear, limpid, and excellent to drink (*1*). The inhabitants of Egypt attribute this fermentation of the Nile to the dew which then falls in abundance. Even several historians have gravely told us that it contributes to the inundation. But it is much more natural to imagine that the river, overflowing its banks in Abyssinia and Ethiopia, carries with it a great quantity of sand, and millions of eggs of insects, which, hatching towards the solstice, produce the fermentation of the wa-

(1) I have tried this process, which I have observed throughout all Egypt, with the waters of the Seine, when they were muddy, and I found the same result. For the operation to succeed, the vessels must be large.

ters, and that reddish tinge that renders them unwholesome.

The Nile continues to swell till towards the middle of August, and often even in September. Formerly the nilometer of Elephantinos served to indicate the future inundation. Particular signs, founded on the experience of several ages, announced it to those who were entrusted with this observation. They lost no time in giving notice to the Prefects of the provinces. According to the nature of this intelligence the husbandman regulated his labours. When the Arabs conquered Egypt, the nilometer was placed at the Burg of Halouan, opposite to Memphis. Amrou having overturned that superb capital, and built the city of Fostat, the Governors or the Caliphs fixed their residence there. Some centuries after the *Mekias* was built on the point of the island of *Raouda*, and the column for measuring was placed there, in the middle of a low hall, whose walls are very solid, and its bottom is on a level with that of the Nile. From that period the *Mekias* has not changed its place. At this day officers appointed

appointed to examine the progress of the inundation, communicate it to the public criers, who proclaim it daily in the streets of Grand Cairo. The people who are interested in this event, make them a small acknowledgment. It becomes the public topic. Egypt owing no tribute to the Grand Signior, when the waters do not rise to sixteen cubits, they often conceal the truth, and do not publish their attainment of a certain point, even when they have passed it.

The moment of this proclamation is a day of rejoicing, and a solemn festival for the Egyptians. The Pacha descends from the castle, accompanied by his whole court, and repairs in pomp to Fostat, where the canal begins that traverses Grand Cairo. He places himself under a magnificent pavillion, prepared at the head of the dyke. The Beys, preceded by their music, and followed by their Mamalukes, compose his retinue. The Chiefs of their religion appear mounted on horses richly caparisoned. All the inhabitants on horseback, on foot, and in boats, are anxious to assist at this ceremony.



mony. The land and the water are covered by upwards of three hundred thousand men. The boats in general are agreeably painted, well carved, and ornamented with canopies, and flags of different colours. Those of the women are to be distinguished by their elegance, their richness, the gilded columns that support the canopy, and above all, by the blinds let down over the windows. Every body remains silent until the moment when the Pacha gives the signal. In an instant the air is filled with shouts of joy, the trumpets sound a flourish, and the timbrels and other instruments resound from every side. Workmen, collected for the purpose, throw down a statue of earth placed upon the dyke, which is called the *New Bridge*. This is the remains of the ancient worship of the Egyptians, who consecrated a virgin to the Nile, and who, in times of calamity, sometimes precipitated her into the river. The dam is soon destroyed, and the waters having no longer any obstacle, flow towards Grand Cairo. The Viceroy throws into the canal some pieces of gold and silver, which are immediately picked up by skilful

skilful divers.. This transaction may be regarded as an homage rendered to the Nile, the source of the riches of Egypt. During this day's amusement the inhabitants seem in a state of intoxication. Mutual compliments and congratulations pass, and one hears on every side songs of thanksgiving. A crowd of dancing girls run along the banks of the *Calich*, and enliven the spectators by their lascivious dances. Every body resigns himself to good cheer and joy, and the poor themselves have their entertainments. This universal gladness is not surprizing. The fate of the country depends on the inundation. When it arrives, each individual sees the hope of a good crop, the image of abundance, and anticipates the enjoyment of all its attendant advantages.

The succeeding nights afford a spectacle still more agreeable. The canal fills with water the great squares of the capital. In the evening each family is collected in boats, ornamented with carpets and rich cushions, and where voluptuousness has every possible accommodation. The streets, the mosques,



the minarets, are illuminated. The company go from place to place, carrying with them fruits and refreshments. The most numerous assembly is usually at *Lesbekie*. This square, which is the largest in the city, is near half a league in circumference. It forms an immense basin, surrounded by the palaces of the Beys, lighted with lamps of various colours. Several thousand boats with masts, from which lamps are suspended, produce a moving illumination, the aspects of which are continually varying. The serenity of the sky seldom or ever interrupted by fogs, the golden colour of the stars upon a perfect azure, the fire of so many lights reflected in the water, make one enjoy in these charming parties at once the lightness of the day, and the delicious coolness of the night. Imagine, Sir, how voluptuous it must be for a people, burnt for twelve hours by an ardent sun, to come and respire on these lakes the refreshing breath of the zephyrs. What adds to the pleasure of this nocturnal scene is, that the calm serenity of the air is seldom interrupted by the impetuous breath of winds.

They



They fall at the setting of the sun, and the atmosphere is gently agitated by a slight breeze. The singularity of the Oriental manners puts an European who assists at these exhibitions a little out of his way. The men accompany the men, and the women the women. It is difficult to procure the charm of their society. The disguise that must be assumed, the dangers that attend it, alarm the reason, and compel to prudence. They are obliged also to keep lamps continually burning. The public safety requires this precaution, and the *Ouali*, who patrol during the night, enforce a rigid obedience. If the head of the police meets with a boat without light, he has the right to cut off the heads of the persons who are in it, and without such a present as can stay the hand of the executioner, who attends him, he executes this rigorous justice in a moment.

When the Ramazan falls at the time of the inundation, that month so dreaded by the poor, is a continual festival for the rich man. He passes his night upon the water, and in a constant round of entertainments. In the day time he sleeps in a vast saloon, in

the circulation of a pure air, near a marble basin, from whence plays a *jet d'eau*, quite limpid, the edges of which are surrounded by Arabian jessamine and odoriferous flowers; a window, always open, placed near the top of the dome, and facing the north, preserves the salubrity with the luxury of the apartment. Whilst the burnt husbandman in the country is bedewing the earth with the sweat of his brow, he enjoys a delicious sleep, amidst coolness and the exhalations of balsamic plants. To live agreeably, without heeding the affairs of this world, is all the ambition of a Turk out of place; the Beys, on the contrary, a prey to anxieties and fears, make a figure for a moment at the head of the Republic they lay waste, to perish at length by the sabre of their colleagues, or by the poison of their slaves.

In the course of the vast number of ages that the Nile has overflowed Egypt, it has prodigiously elevated the soil. Obelisks, buried from fifteen to twenty feet, and half-buried porticoes, testify this fact. The ancient cities built on artificial mounds, the dykes opposed to the impetuosity of the river,

ver,

ver, announce that the Egyptians formerly were much more afraid of the great than of the moderate over-overflowings. At this day, that the soil is considerably raised, the inundation rises so high as to be sometimes injurious to the cultivation of the country. When it remains below sixteen cubits, the people are threatened with famine; from eighteen to twenty-two, they may count upon plentiful years. Exceeding this, the waters remaining too long upon the lands, prevent them from sowing them in time. This event seldom or never occurs; too frequently the overflowings are moderate, and all the elevated ground is unproductive. If canals were dug, the dykes repaired, and the great reservoirs filled, a much greater extent of country might be watered, and astonishing crops be produced from them.

It is very possible to secure a regular inundation and a constant fertility to Egypt; but Ethiopia must be conquered, or a treaty formed with its inhabitants, by which they would permit dykes to be formed in the places where the waters of the Nile are lost in the sands.



sands, and waste themselves to the westward.

“(m) In the year 1106, during the reign of *Elmes Tensor*, Sultan of Egypt, the inundation totally failed. This Prince sent Michael, Patriarch of the Jacobines, to the Emperor of Ethiopia with magnificent presents. The King came to meet him, gave him a favourable reception, and demanded the subject of his mission: the Patriarch answered him, that he had come thither on account of the deficiency of the Nile, and that this event, which made the Egyptians dread a famine, had thrown them into the greatest consternation. On these remonstrances, the Emperor made a dyke be cut which diverted the channel of the river, and the waters taking their usual course, rose three cubits in one day. Michael returned from his embassy, and was received with great honours.”

(m) Elamacin, History of the Arabs. This event happened under the Emperor *Aboulcasem*, the twenty-seventh *Abassid* Caliph, and the eight and fortieth from Mahomet.

This

This anecdote demonstrates the possibility of diverting the waters of the Nile, but it proves at the same time, that by stopping up by a dyke the great arm of it that communicates with the Niger, the volume of its waters would be prodigiously augmented. If an enlightened and powerful people possessed Egypt, it would be no difficult matter to operate miraculous changes, which would render it the richest country in the world. In this country there is a certain token of the inundation, and of the height to which it is to rise. When the north wind, during the month I have mentioned, repulsed by the impetuous winds from the south, is driven back on the northern countries, the clouds retire in a small quantity into the upper Abyssinia, and the swell is then very inconsiderable. The dykes would in that case be of the greatest utility. When, on the contrary, the north wind prevails in that season, and drives the hurricanes of the south towards the Equator, it conveys there numerous clouds, and one is sure of a favourable inundation: under these circumstances, the sluices of Ethiopia should be opened to

give the superfluous waters liberty to escape by their ancient drain. One might avail ones-self of this augmentation too, to form a canal from *Cophos* to *Coffeir*, a work which would be ranked amongst the most famous and most useful ever executed in Egypt. These, Sir, are a few ideas thrown into the void of possibility. *The ambition of several powers is looking with eager eyes on this delightful kingdom, governed by barbarians incapable of defending it. IT WILL INEVITABLY FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE FIRST NATION THAT ATTACKS IT, and will undoubtedly assume a new appearance.*

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R    X L.

## GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

*Egyptian Government from the conquest of the Arabs to the present time. Changes which it has undergone by the different revolutions of the supreme power. Articles of the agreement made in favour of the Circassian Mamalukes by the Emperor Selim. Limited power of the Pachas. The great authority of the Beys, and of that which is annexed to the dignities of Scheick Elbalad and of Emir Haji. The manner in which the representatives of the Grand Signior are received in Egypt. Scandalous manner of sending them back. Observations on the small degree of authority which the Ottoman Porte really maintains in Egypt.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I**PROMISED you, Sir, some details on the Government of Egypt, which is almost unknown in France; and I flatter myself that the observations of several years will enable

enable me to fulfil my engagements ; but it will first be proper to give you some ideas which may throw a light on the objects I am about to submit to your discernment.

The Arabs were in possession of Egypt from the middle of the sixth century to the year 1250. During this time it formed a part of the vast empire of the Caliphs. They sent thither Visirs to govern in their name. Invested with unlimited powers, these Viceroys exercised the supreme authority. Possessing the right of life and death, being accountable for their conduct only to the Caliphs, they ruled over this country according to the dictates of their caprice. Whatever might be their tyranny, the voice of the oppressed people never could reach the throne, because they took care by rich presents to gain the persons who surrounded it. This government therefore was despotic, and the happiness or misery of a nation depended on the virtues or the criminal character of a single man. Several of these Visirs crushed this unhappy country with an iron sceptre ; others promoted commerce, agriculture, and the arts. Some, amongst whom

whom was the famous *Ebn Toulon*, revolted against their Sovereigns, and assumed the title of Kings; but the crown seldom descended to their children. After the death of the rebels, this province returned to its masters.

In the year 982, *Moaz*, King of the western side of Africa, and a descendant of the Fatimite Caliphs, who had founded a kingdom there for two centuries past, conquered Egypt by his Generals, and came and fixed in it the seat of his empire. His posterity reigned over it until 1189, that *Salah Eddin* established there the dynasty of the *Aioubites*. This warlike Prince, the terror of the crusaders, whom he almost totally drove out of Palestine, was overthrown by *Richard Cœur de Lion*, near the walls of St. John of Acre, and the name of the English Monarch became the signal of consternation throughout the eastern world. The Government of *Salah Eddin*, and his successors, was monarchical, and Egypt flourished under their dominion. In our days we still see the remains of the academies they founded at Grand Cairo, and  
where



where they attracted, by large salaries, the learned men of the east. In 1250, immediately after the defeat of St. Louis, the Bakarite (*n*) Mamalukes, of Turkish origin, murdered *Touran Chah*, the last Prince of the family of the *Aioubites*, and the son of *Nejim Eddin*, their benefactor. In his person terminated the government of the Arabian Princes in Egypt. From that moment it has been always governed by foreigners.

The Baharite Mamalukes changed the form of government for that of the Republican. The principal amongst them elected a Chief, whom they entrusted with great authority. He had the right of making war or peace, with the advice of his council, of which they were the members. He could appoint Ministers, Ambassadors, Governors, and Generals, provided he chose them from the Mamalukes. The necessity of gaining the suffrages of the Chiefs marked the limits of his power. His policy consisted

(*n*) *Mamlouk* signifies acquired, possessed. They were called *Bakarites*, or maritime, because *Nejim Eddin*, who created them, gave them the government of the castles on the sea shore, and in the island of *Raouda*.

in conciliating their favour, securing the most powerful party, and in stifling in their origin the plots that might be formed against his person: for in this aristocracy, each of the Mamalukes, on attaining the first employments, strove to overthrow the possessor of the throne, to seat himself in his place. Though the people were considered as nothing, the Prince naturally dreaded their discontent, lest an ambitious Chief might avail himself of it to deprive him of the crown. Thus was the Chief of this Republic surrounded by precipices, the duration of his empire solely depending on his personal qualities, nor could he transmit his power to his children, unless they possessed distinguished talents; accordingly, in the space of one hundred and thirty-six years, that the Bahorite Mamalukes governed Egypt, they had twenty-seven of these Kings, a proof that their reigns were very short, and very turbulent.

Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, the *Circassian* Mamalukes dethroned the *Baharites*, retaining the same form of government.

government. They kept possession of Egypt until the conquest of Selim, Emperor of the Turks, who took it from them in 1517. Before I speak of the changes he made in the constitution, it is proper to give you a clear and precise idea of the Mamalukes. This name, the meaning of which you know, is bestowed on the children carried off by merchants, or by robbers from Georgia, Circassia, Natolia, and the different provinces of the Ottoman empire, and sold at Constantinople, and Grand Cairo. The Grandees of Egypt, who are of a similar origin, bring them up in their families, and destine them to succeed to their dignities. The antiquity of this custom is far more remote perhaps than in the time of Joseph, who being sold in this manner to Potiphar (o), High-Priest of Heliopolis, became "Ruler over all the land of Egypt." At present none but these strangers can have the title of Bey, and fill the posts of government. This law is so express, that the son of a Bey can never attain that eminent station. He

(o) This Egyptian name comes from *Potiphre*, Priest of the Sun.



usually embraces the military life. The Divan assigns him a decent revenue, and calls him *Ebn Elbalad*, child of the country (*p*).

The Mamalukes are almost all of Christian families. When sold, they are forced to embrace the Mahometan religion, and be circumcised. Language-masters teach them the Turkish and the Arabic. As soon as they can read and write well, they are taught the Coran, which is the code of their religion and their laws. The knowledge of these clear, simple, and precise laws, enables them to judge equitably every affair that happens on the spot. The Mahometan, who is perfect master of this book, knows all his duties towards God, and to-

(*p*) From what I have said, you see, Sir, that the word Mamaluke is very different from that of *Abd*, which signifies slave. The former are destined to fill the most distinguished offices; the others are employed in the lowest, and never arrive at dignities. It is improperly, therefore, that historians give the name of slave to the Mamalukes, and that the historians of the lower empire call them *Mammelus*. Writers ought to be scrupulous about disfiguring the names of things and persons, and should give them their real signification; then would history afford distinct ideas and faithful pictures.

wards

wards man. He may then occupy every civil, military, and ecclesiastical employment.

From the tenderest age, the Mamalukes learn to ride, to throw the javelin, to make use of the sabre and fire-arms. They are continually exercised in military evolutions, and are taught to support with constancy the heat of the climate, and the distressing thirst of the deserts. These exercises give them a strong constitution, and an unconquerable courage. They want no requisite to form excellent soldiers, but masters versed in the European tactics. If this corps were disciplined by our officers, it would be second in bravery to no nation on the earth; but they fight without order, and are totally ignorant of the art of artillery, brought to such perfection in our days.

At fifteen or eighteen years of age, these young men manage with address horses not broken in, speak and write several languages, possess a profound knowledge of the worship and the laws of the country, and are capable of filling any employments to which they may be destined. They pass successively  
3 through



through the different degrees in the household of the Beys, and their elevation is generally the result of merit. Having attained the post of *Cachef* (q), they govern the towns dependent on their patrons. They are allowed to purchase Mamalukes, who follow their fate, and become the companions and instruments of their fortunes. There is now only one step to arrive at the dignity of Bey, which gives a seat amongst the twenty-four members of the Divan, or Council of the Republic; but on their attaining it, they do not cease to look upon themselves as the servants of their former master, and to preserve for him the most profound submission. Such, Sir, is the origin of the Mamalukes; such is the routine of their career. Let us resume the thread of our narrative.

The Emperor Selim, having conquered Egypt, and overturned the Circassian Mamalukes, unable to resist the innumerable hosts with which he bore them down, after

(q) The *Cachefs* are the Lieutenants of the Beys; they command in the towns of which their patrons have the government.



many bloody battles, hung up *Thomam Bey* at one of the gates of Cairo. This barbarous action alienated their minds, and they waited only for the departure of the Turks to resume their arms. The fumes of glory with which the Ottoman Emperor was intoxicated being dissipated, he felt his error, and, to secure this important conquest, he strove to regain the good opinion of the Mamalukes. To succeed in this, he made very little alteration in the constitution of their government, and granted them specific privileges in a treaty, of which the following are the principal articles :

“ Notwithstanding our invincible armies  
“ have conquered, with the aid of the Al-  
“ mighty, the kingdom of Egypt, never-  
“ theless, from an effect of our benevolence,  
“ we grant to the twenty-four Sangiaks(*r*)  
“ of that country a republican government  
on the following conditions :”

I. The Republic of Egypt shall acknowledge our sovereignty, and that of our successors ; and as a token of her obedience,

(*r*) They are called Sangiaks, or Beys.

he shall regard as our representative such Lieutenant as we shall think proper to depute, and who shall have his residence in the castle of Cairo. During his administration he shall undertake nothing against our will, nor against the interests of the Republic; but he shall concert with the Beys every thing concerning the welfare of the state. Should our Lieutenant make himself disagreeable to the Beys, should he attack their privileges, we authorize them to suspend him from his functions, and to convey their complaints to our Sublime Porte, in order that they may be relieved from his oppression.

II. In time of war, the Republic shall be obliged to furnish us and our successors with twelve thousand troops, commanded by Sangiaks, and to maintain them at her expence until the peace.

III. The Republic shall levy annually five hundred and sixty thousand *asiani* (s),  
and

(s) This sum has been since carried to 800,000 *asiani*; but as the Beys make a plea of excessive expences for the maintenance of the canals and fortresses, they do not send



and shall send them under escort of a Bey to our Sublime Porte, and there shall be delivered to him by our *Defterdar* (Treasurer) a receipt in due form, to which shall be affixed our seal, and that of our Visir.

IV. The Republic shall levy a similar *Khafné* (treasure) of five hundred and sixty thousand assani, destined to the support of Medina, and of the *Caaba*, or temple of Mecca. This treasure shall be conveyed annually, under the escort of the *Scheik Elbalad* (t), or of the *Emir Haji*, who will deliver it to the Scherif, successor of our Prophet, to be employed in the service of the house of God, and distributed to the persons residing there, in order to obtain their prayers for us and the faithful believers of the Coran (u).

the half of it to Constantinople. The assani is a piece of silver coin, worth about three livres French (or half a crown English money).

(t) *Scheik Elbalad* signifies, properly, *the old of the country*. This is the title of the first Bey, or Chief of the Republic. *Emir Haji* signifies Prince of the Caravan. This is the second dignity of the Republic.

(u) This treasure is not conveyed in money, but in corn, grain, and other produce of the soil of Egypt.

V. The



V. The Republic shall not keep up, in time of peace, more than fourteen thousand foldiers or Janizaries; but we allow her to augment this army in time of war, that she may be able to oppose our enemies and hers.

VI. The Republic shall deduct annually from the produce of the country one million of *couffes* (*x*) of grain, six hundred thousand of wheat, and four hundred thousand of barley, to be delivered into our magazines.

VII. In virtue of the execution of these articles, the Republic shall enjoy an absolute empire over all the inhabitants of Egypt; but in all affairs concerning religion, she shall consult the Mollah, or High-Priest, who shall be under our authority, and under that of our successors.

VIII. The Republic shall enjoy as heretofore, the right of coining money, and of striking on it the name of *Masr* (*y*), but

(*x*) A sort of oval basket made of the leaves of the date-tree, which contains 170 pound weight.

(*y*) *Masr* is the name given by the Arabs to Egypt in general, and to Grand Cairo in particular, because they pretend that this country was peopled by *Misraim*, the grandson of Noah.

she shall add thereto our name and that of our successors. The Lieutenant we shall send shall have the inspection of the fabrication of the coin, that the title of it may not be altered.

IX. The Beys shall elect from amongst them a *Scheik Elbalad*, who, confirmed by our Lieutenant, shall be their representative, and our officers shall acknowledge him for Chief of the Republic. In the case where our Lieutenant shall render himself guilty of tyranny, and exceed the limits of his power, the *Scheik Elbalad* shall have the right of representing the grievances of the Republic to our Sublime Porte. If it happens that foreign enemies disturb her peace, we promise for us and our successors to protect her with all our might, without claiming any indemnity for the expences incurred on her account.

Done and signed by our clemency in favour of the Republic of Egypt, in the year 887 of the Hegira (1517 of our æra).

This treaty, Sir, makes you acquainted with the last revolution the Egyptian government, become now a mixture of monarchy



narchy and aristocracy, has undergone. The former is represented by the Pacha, the second by the Beys, who compose essentially the Republic. The Viceroy, properly speaking, is nothing but a phantom, overturned by the slightest breath. The Sangiaks, at the head of the provinces and the armies, really possess all the power. The people are abandoned to their mercy. This treaty does not say a word in their favour. Is it not the language of a merchant, who for five hundred and sixty thousand aslani, sells three or four millions of slaves, to four and twenty strangers? An absolute power, in fact, is vested in their hands; they are permitted to levy arbitrary tributes, and, without any controul whatever, to exercise every species of tyranny. Is it thus then that despots make a traffic of whole nations? and they submit to this disgrace without vindicating the sacred rights bestowed on them by nature!!! It appears as if Selim, through the extent of his vast empire, saw no *men*, but only a vile herd of *slaves*, whom he could dispose of at his pleasure. The Beys are perfectly sensible of their situation,



ation, and abuse it to the utmost excess. A Pacha retains his place no longer than he is subservient to their designs. If he dares to lift his voice in defence of the intentions of his master, or of the Egyptians, he becomes a state criminal: the Divan assembles, and he is sent off. The following is the manner in which they receive and dismiss these lieutenants of the Ottoman Emperor.

As soon as the new Pacha has landed at the port of Alexandria, he informs the council of the Republic of his arrival. The *Scheik Elbalad* dispatches the most artful of the Beys to compliment him. They carry presents to him, and give tokens of the most profound submission. Whilst they surround his person, they dexterously sound his disposition, study his character, and endeavour to learn from his own mouth, or from his officers, what orders he brings with him. If they find them contrary to their desires, they expedite a courier to the *Scheik Elbalad*, who assembles the Divan, and forbids the Pacha to advance. They write to the Porte, that the new Viceroy  
comes

comes with hostile intentions, fit to excite rebellion amongst his faithful subjects, and they demand his recal, which never is refused. When the chiefs of the republic think that there is nothing to fear from the lieutenant that is sent them, they invite him to repair to Grand Cairo. The deputies place him in a superb galley, and escort him in his journey. All the boats that surround him are agreeably dressed out, and many of them filled with musicians. He advances slowly at the head of the little fleet, and no boat is permitted to pass his. Unlucky, the travellers who are mounting the Nile, for they are obliged to swell his retinue! When he is arrived at the *Hellé* (z), he halts. The *Scheik Elbalad* deputed several Sangiaks to receive him, or he comes himself. At his landing, the chiefs of the republic congratulate him anew, and the Janizary Aga presents him with the keys of the castle, requesting him to make it his residence. He is conducted with pomp into the city. I have seen the entry of a Pacha,

(z) A small village a little below Boulak.



and can therefore give you a description of it.

First, several corps of infantry, preceded by their noisy musick, filed off in two ranks, with colours flying. Then followed the cavalry. The horsemen, to the number of five or six thousand, advanced in good order. Their cloathing was formed of the most splendid stuffs. Their flowing robes, their enormous whiskers, and their long lances tipped with glittering iron, gave them a majestic and warlike air. After them came the Beys superbly clad, attended by their Mamalukes, mounted on Arabian horses full of fire, and covered with housings embroidered with gold and silver. The bridles of the horses of the chiefs were ornamented with fine pearls and precious stones. The saddles sparkled with gold. These different retinues, for each Bey had his own, were very elegant. The beauty of the young men, the richness of their dresses, the address with which they managed their couriers, formed a most agreeable coup d'oeil. The Pacha terminated the procession. He advanced solemnly, preceded by two hundred



dred horsemen and a band of musick. Four led horses, conducted by slaves on foot, walked with slow steps before him. They were covered with long housings, loaded with embroidery in pearls and gold. The Viceroy was mounted on a Barb of great beauty, and wore on his turban an aigret of large diamonds, which reflected in flashes the rays of the sun. This entry gives me an idea of the oriental pomp, and of the pageantry which encompassed the ancient Asiatic monarchs, when they shewed themselves in public. The procession commenced at eight in the morning and lasted till noon.

The next day the Pacha assembles the Divan, and invites the Beys to favour him with their company. The convention is held in a gallery, with a window with iron bars before it, like that of the Grand Signior. His Kiaïa, or lieutenant reads the orders of the Porte, the Sangiaks make a profound reverence, and promise to obey them in every thing not contrary to their privileges. When the reading is finished, a collation is served, and at the breaking up of the assembly, the Viceroy makes a pretent of a rich  
fur

fur and a horse magnificently harnessed to the *Scheik Elbalad*, and of a castan to each of the other Beys. Such, Sir, is the installation of the Pacha.

The post he occupies is a sort of exile. He cannot stir out of his palace without the permission of the *Scheik Elbalad*. He is really a state prisoner, who amidst the splendor that surrounds him, cannot but feel the weight of his chains. His revenues arising from the custom-house at Suez, and from the merchandize which arrives by the Arabic gulph, amount to near three millions of livres. The ambition of the Beys too, affords him a fruitful source of wealth. When the knowledge of his situation, and a refined policy have taught him to sow dissention amongst the chiefs of the republic, and to form a powerful party, each of them strives to avail himself of his credit, and he receives gold and silver by handfuls. The Sangiaks named by the Divan, purchase also from the Pacha the confirmation of their dignity. His treasures are augmented likewise by the inheritance of persons who die without children. It is thus that the representative



representative of the Grand Signior is able to preserve his place, and to acquire immense riches in a very few years; but he must use the greatest circumspection in all his measures. In the delicate post he fills, the slightest fault may ruin him. Frequently, even unexpected events upset all the schemes of his politics. If amongst the Sangiaks, some young desperado destroys, by courage and by crimes, the party favoured by the Pacha; if he attains the dignity of *Scheik Elbalad*, he assembles the council, and the Viceroy is ignominiously dismissed. The order for his departure is entrusted to an officer cloathed in black, who carries it in his bosom, advances into the hall of audience, makes a profound reverence, and taking one of the corners of the carpet that covers the sofa, says to him, in lifting it up, *Insel Pacha*. Descend Pacha: after pronouncing these words, he departs. The Viceroy is obliged instantly to decamp, and withdraw in four and twenty hours to Boulak, where he waits for his orders from Constantinople. In general his person is in safety, but if the ruling Beys have any complaints



plaints against him, they make him give an account of his administration, and of the presents he has received, and divide his spoils amongst them. During this interregnum, the council of the republic elect a *Caimacam* to fill his place, until the arrival of the new Pacha. These are events, Sir, to which I have been a witness several times during my stay in Egypt. I hope these details will serve to make you acquainted with the government of this country. The history of *Ali Bey* and of some of his successors, whose picture I shall trace out to you, in the following letters, will shew you the actors on the stage, and will furnish you with the means of making the application of those principles.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLI.

## HISTORY OF ALI BEY.

*Birth-day of Ali Bey. Transportation from his own country, and his change of religion after he had been sold to a Bey of Grand Cairo. His promotion to different offices in the state. Conduct of the Caravan. Defeat of the Arabs, followed by the dignity of Bey, which gave him a seat among the members of the Divan. Death of his patron, who was murdered by the opposite party. Ali obtains the rank of Cheik Elbalad, and avenges the blood of his protector. Conspiracy formed to make him prisoner. He takes refuge in Jerusalem, and afterwards at St. Jean d'Acre, where Cheik Daher receives him with open arms. On being recalled into the capital, he found it impossible to triumph over the hatred of his enemies, and, to save his life, was a second time obliged to take to flight. He visits Arabia, and retires to Jean d'Acre, where Cheik Daher treated him with every demonstration of the sincerest friendship. He returns*



returns to Cairo, sacrifices his rivals to his resentment, and governs Egypt with wisdom. Treachery of some Beys, and of the Divan at Constantinople. He punishes with death the officers who had been sent to demand his head, and enters into an alliance with the Russians, to revenge the injustice of the Ottomans. He represses the wandering tribes of Arabs, protects commerce, and reduces to subjection both Arabia and Syria by means of his Generals. He is betrayed by Mahomet Abou Dabab, his son-in-law, and obliged to save himself a third time in Syria. Ali Bey makes himself master of a number of towns, enters Egypt with the principal part of his forces, intimidates an army much superior to his own, and is conquered by the treachery of his infantry, which went over to Abou Dabab. The death of Ali, of Mahamed, and of Scheik Daber, basely assassinated by order of the Ottoman Port.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**ALI BEY** was born in Natolia, in 1728, and received at his birth the name of Jouseph, Joseph



Joseph. *Daoud* (*a*), his father, a Greek Priest of one of the most distinguished families in the country, designed him to succeed to his dignity, and neglected no part of his education, but fate had otherwise ordained. At thirteen years old, Joseph, hurried on by the ardour of his age, was hunting with other young men in a neighbouring forest. Robbers fell upon them, and carried them off in spite of their cries and their resistance. The son of *Daoud* being taken to Grand Cairo, was sold to Ibrahim *Kiaia* (*b*), or Lieutenant of the Janizaries, who had him circumcised, cloathed him in the dress of the Mamalukes, and called him by the name of *Ali*, under which he has been since known. He gave him masters of the Turkish and Arabic languages, and of horsemanship. Compelled to give way, he deplored in his heart the loss of his parents, and his change of religion. Insensibly the kind treatment of

(*a*) *Daoud*, that is to say, David.

(*b*) The *Kiaia* and *Aga* of the Janizaries, that is to say, their Lieutenant and their Colonel have the title of Beys, and are in general held in great consideration.

his patron, the dignities with which his vanity flattered him, and above all, the example of his companions, gave him a relish for his new situation. The vivacity of his mind afforded him the means of distinguishing himself. In the course of a few years he was perfect master of the languages that were taught him, and even excelled in all bodily exercises. None of the Mamalukes managed a horse with more address, nor threw the javelin with greater force, nor made use of the sabre and fire-arms with more dexterity than him. His application to study, and his graceful manners, made him dear to Ibrahim Kiaia. Charmed with his talents, he raised him rapidly to the different employments of his household. He soon attained the post of *Seličtar Aga*, Sword-bearer, and of *Kasnadar*, Treasurer. The intelligence he displayed in these employments gained him more and more the good graces of his patron, who created him a *Cachef* at the age of two and twenty.

Become a Governor of towns, he manifested his natural equity in the administration of justice, and his discernment in the acquisition.



acquisition of the Mamalukes, to whom he endeavoured to communicate his genius. It was here he laid secretly the foundation of his future greatness. Not only had he gained the affection of Ibrahim, but judging that the favour of the Pacha might be made subservient to his ambitious views, he made a point of pleasing him. This Viceroy was called *Rabiph*; he was a man of real merit. Discovering in the young Cachef an upright and elevated mind, he granted him his friendship, and declared himself his protector. He would have raised him in a short time to the dignity of Bey, had not an unforeseen catastrophe unhinged his projects. *Rabiph*, endowed with one of those happy characters, which carry with them an irresistible charm, had gained the confidence of the Chiefs of the Republic. Far from imitating his predecessors, who had uniformly built their authority on the dissensions they fomented against the Sanguaks, he was indefatigable in promoting peace and union. For the first time, the representative of the Grand Signior and the leaders of the Government united together,



to promote the general good. The people enjoyed a peaceable administration, and wished for its continuance. The Beys themselves loved the Pacha, and dreaded his recall. This was ample food for envy, that monster which is continually on the watch for the misfortunes of mankind, and breathes its poison from one end of the world to the other. The Members of the Divan at Constantinople represented to Sultan Mahmoud the good understanding that prevailed between his Lieutenant and the Chiefs of the Republic, as a conspiracy formed to withdraw the country from its obedience. They coloured their calumnies with these specious reasons, which in Courts too frequently appear convincing proofs. Without farther enquiry the Grand Signior was determined to put the fidelity of *Rabiph* to the test. He sent him a Firman, commanding him to put to death immediately as many of the Beys as he could. This iniquitous order shocked the Pacha; but he must either obey or lose his head. He hesitated for three days. At length he adopted the first measure. Having sent for the  
most

most faithful of his slaves, he shewed them the Firman, and ordered each of them to kill a Bey, at the moment of their assembling in the hall of audience. Accordingly when they were holding the Divan, these Satellites, who had swords concealed under their robes, ponyarded the unhappy victims of calumny. Four of them lay dead on the spot; the rest, being only wounded, defended themselves courageously, and made their escape. Even at this day the marble of the hall where they were assassinated is red with their blood. I have frequently shuddered on beholding the marks of this barbarous execution, commanded on a bare suspicion, by a despotic Government.

The astonishment of the Sangiaks who escaped from this butchery was extreme. They could not reconcile this atrocious action with the past conduct of *Rakiph*. The Council was assembled; they resolved to punish the traitor, and to expiate by his death the outrage committed on the Republic. But when they wanted to make sure of the criminal, he produced the Firman of the Porte, and they contented themselves



with banishing him on the spot. The Pachalick of Natolia, that of Damascus, and at length the brilliant station of Grand Visir, became the recompence of his crime.

This painful event retarded the elevation of *Ali*. He remained several years a Cachef. His patron, Ibrahim, being elected *Emir Haji*, or Prince of the Caravan, which is the second dignity in Egypt, he took him with him to escort the pilgrims. In their march they were attacked by the Arabs. Ali fell upon them at the head of the Mamelukes he commanded, and behaved with so much valour, that he repulsed the enemy, and killed a great number on the spot. On his return, several tribes being collected, were determined to avenge their defeat. The young Cachef gave them battle. He precipitated himself like lightning amidst their squadrons, and, overturning every thing that opposed his passage, he obtained a signal victory. The Arabs appeared no more. Ibrahim did justice to the services of his Lieutenant in full council, and proposed to create him a Sangiak. Ibrahim, the *Circassian*,



*caffian*, an enemy to the former, opposed it with all his might, and employed all his eloquence to prevent a nomination which displeased him. The *Emir Haji* prevailed. *Ali* was nominated by the Divan; Eddin Mohamed, the Pacha, confirmed this choice, cloathed him with a caftan, and gave him, agreeable to custom, the Firman of *Bey*.

Become now one of the 24 members of the Republic, he never forgot his obligations to his patron, and defended his interests with an admirable constancy. In 1758 the *Emir Haji* was murdered by the party of Ibrahim, the *Circassian*. From this moment *Ali* meditated vengeance. For three years he concealed in his heart his resentment for this murder, and employed all the resources of his mind to arrive at the post of *Scheik Elbalad*, the first dignity of the Republic. In 1763 he attained that dangerous title, the summit of his ambition. Soon after, he revenged the blood of his protector, by sacrificing Ibrahim, the *Circassian*, with his own hand. In committing this desperate action, he followed the impulse of hatred, rather than of prudence; for it raised up

numerous enemies against him. All the Sangiaks attached to the party of the Circassian, conspired against him. Exposed to their intrigues, and on the point of being murdered, he saved himself by flight. After rapidly crossing the deserts of the isthmus of Suez, he repaired to Jerusalem. Having gained the good graces of the Governor of that city, he thought himself in safety. But friendship has no sacred asylum amongst the Turks, when opposed to the commands of the despot. His enemies were afraid of him even in his exile. They wrote to the Porte to demand his death, and orders were immediately sent to the Governor to strike off his head. Fortunately, *Rabiph*, his old friend, now one of the members of the Divan, gave him timely warning, and advised him to fly Jerusalem. *Ali* therefore anticipated the arrival of the *Capigi Bachi* (d), and took refuge with *Scheik Daber*, Prince of St. John of Acre. This respectable old man, who for fifty years had defended his

(d) Messengers of the Grand Signior, who, provided with a Firman, are sent to take off the heads of the disgraced Grandees.



little principality against the whole forces of the Ottoman empire, received with open arms the unfortunate *Scheik Elbalad*, and afforded him *hospitality*, that sacred pledge of the safety of mankind, whose holy ties are never violated by the Arabs. He was not long in discovering the merit of his guest, and from that moment loaded him with caresses, and called him his son. He exhorted him to support adversity with courage, flattered his hopes, soothed his sorrows, and made him taste of pleasures in the bosom even of his disgrace. *Ali Bey* might have passed his days happily with *Scheik Daber*, but ambition, that preyed upon him, would not suffer him to remain inactive. He carried on a secret correspondence with some of the *Sangiaks* attached to his interest. He inflamed their zeal by the temptation of better governments. The Prince of Acre on his part, wrote to his friends at Grand Cairo, and urged them to hasten the recal of the *Scheik Elbalad*. While this was going on, *Rahib*, now Grand Visir, openly espoused the interest of his old friend, and employed all his credit to obtain his re-establishment.



establishment. These different means succeeded to the wishes of *Ali*. The Beys invited him to return to Grand Cairo, and to resume his dignity. He set off immediately, and was received with the acclamations of the people.

The *Scheik Elbalad* restored, was nevertheless perfectly acquainted with the precariousness of his situation. He could never reckon upon a tranquil administration. Hatreds were stifled, but not extinguished. On all sides the storm was gathering around him. All those whom the murder of Ibrahim, the Circassian, had offended, were constantly spreading snares for him. All his penetration was necessary to avoid them. They waited only for a favourable occasion to let their resentment break out. The death of *Rahib*, which happened in 1763, furnished them this opportunity. They threw off the mask, and declared open war against him. On the point of perishing, he escaped into Arabia Felix, visiting the coasts of the Red Sea, and once more took refuge with the *Scheik* of *Aber*, who received him with the same tenderness. This

4 wife

wife old man, taught by the experience of fourscore years, had gone through every reverse of fortune. He was calculated to furnish consolation to the wretched. He charmed by the wisdom of his conversation the listlessness of his guest; he revived his courage by the hope of a happier hereafter, and endeavoured to make him forget his misfortunes. Whilst he was alleviating his destiny, the Sangiaks of the party of Ibrahim, the Circassian, trusting in the total destruction of their enemy, abandoned themselves to all sorts of vexations, and persecuted those who were devoted to the interests of *Ali*. This imprudence opened the eyes of the majority. They perceived that they were the dupes of a few ambitious men, and to strengthen their party, recalled the *Scheik Elbalad*, and promised to support him with all their power. He set off immediately, with the embraces of the *Scheik Daher*, who proffered the sincerest wishes for his prosperity.

On his return to Grand Cairo in 1766, *Ali* held a council with his partizans. He represented to them, that moderation had only



only excited to revenge the friends of Ibrahim; that nothing but flight would have saved him from their plots; and that to secure the common safety, these turbulent spirits must be sacrificed. The whole assembly applauded this resolution, and the next day they took off the heads of four of them. This execution insured the tranquillity of *Ali*. He saw himself at the head of the government, and in the space of six years he raised sixteen of his Mamalukes to the dignity of Beys, and one of them to that of Janizary Aga. The principals were *Mahamed Abou Dabab*, *Ismael*, *Mourad*, *Hassan*, *Tentaoui*, and *Ibrahim*. The first was his countryman. He purchased him in 1758, and had a particular affection for him.

Supreme chief of the republic, he adopted every measure to render her power durable. Not content with increasing his Mamalukes to the number of six thousand, he took into pay ten thousand *Mograbi* (e). He made his

(e) *Mograbi* signifies western people. The Egyptians bestow this name on the inhabitants of the coast of Barbary.



troops observe the most rigid discipline, and by continually exercising them in the handling of arms, formed excellent soldiers. He attached to himself the young men who composed his household, by the paternal attention he paid to their education, and above all by bestowing favours and rewards on those who were the most worthy. His party became so powerful, that such of his colleagues as were not his friends, dreaded his power, and did not dare to thwart his projects. Believing his authority established on a solid basis, he turned his attention to the welfare of the people. The Arabs, dispersed over the deserts, and on the frontiers of Egypt, committed ravages not to be suppressed by a fluctuating government. He declared war, and sent against them bodies of cavalry which beat them every where, and drove them back into the depth of their solitudes. Egypt began to respire, and agriculture encouraged, flourished once more in that rich country. Having rendered the chiefs of each village responsible for the crimes of the inhabitants, he punished them until the authors of the offence were

were delivered into the hands of justice. In this manner, the principal citizens looked after the public safety, and for the first time, since the commencement of the Turkish empire, the traveller and the merchant could pass through the whole extent of the kingdom, without the apprehension of an insult. Acquainted with the excesses of mercenary soldiers, both in the capital and in the provinces, he ordered the persons injured to address their complaints immediately to him, and he never failed to do them justice. Amongst the numerous anecdotes that are cited of his impartial equity, I shall relate only one. A Sangiak meeting with a Venetian merchant, near to old Cairo, made him dismount, and tore from him his *shawl*. *Ali* being informed of it, sent for the offender, (*though a Sangiak*) reprimanded him severely in the presence of the foreigner, forced him to make a public apology, and was very near taking off his head. This integrity, which he observed in every part of his administration, rendered the Egyptians happy. They thought they saw the revival of the golden age. Even at this day, they  
never



never cease to bless his memory, and to sing his praises.

*Ali Bey* had purchased a female slave, who had been carried off from the Red Ruffia. She was beautiful. Her white locks flowing to the ground, a noble stature, a complexion of the most dazzling fairness, blue eyes arched over with black eyebrows; these were amongst the smallest treasures with which nature had adorned the young *Maria*. She had a soul far superior to her beauty. Never could the misfortune of her destiny prevail on her to comply with the desires of her master. He spoke of his power, but she shewed him that she was free even in her chains. He tried to dazzle her with the splendor that surrounded him. She appeared insensible to the allurements of grandeur. Charmed with the loftiness of her character, a sentiment was deeply impressed in his own mind; he addressed her with the ardour of a lover, and offered her his hand, on condition of her renouncing christianity. *Maria*, though she felt an inclination for a man who had treated her with



with all the respect due to her sex, had the courage to refuse. At length, he permitted her to remain in the religion of her fathers, provided she gave no exterior marks of it, and he obtained her consent. He loved her tenderly, and as long as he lived he had no other wife.

Having attained the pinnacle of greatness, *Ali* did not forget the authors of his being. On his reconciliation with the Porte, he entrusted to *Tentaoui* the escort of the *Khafné*, sent annually to Constantinople, charging him to pass into Natolia, and to bring to him his father and his family. On hearing of their arrival at Boulak, he went to meet them, followed by a numerous retinue. As soon as he perceived the aged *Daoud*, he dismounted from his horse, flew to meet him, and throwing himself on his knees, kissed his feet, calling him his father. The old man shed tears of joy, and this was the happiest day of his life. He embraced his sister, and a nephew he presented him. After this tender acknowledgment, he conducted them to his palace which looked  
upon

upon the square of the *Esbekie* (f). The Mamalukes eagerly pressed forward to wash the feet of the father of their master, and after cloathing him in a magnificent dress, he was introduced into the Haram, where the wife of *Ali* loaded him with caresses.

Daoud, mounted on a superb horse, was conducted to the hall of the Divan. The Beys, the Pacha himself, complimented him, and made him presents. After seven months stay in Egypt, he was desirous of returning into his own country, and Ali sent him back to his native place laden with riches. You see, Sir, that events similar to the history of Joseph frequently occur in Egypt (g).

The Scheik Elbalad, wishing to give a fresh proof of his friendship to Mahomed *Abou-Dabab*, and to attach him by an in-

(f) The name of the largest square of Cairo. The Beys in general have their palaces here.

(g) Jacob being arrived in Egypt, Joseph mounted on his chariot, and went to meet his father. On perceiving him, he immediately descended, and "fell on his neck and wept." Genesis, chap. 46. This new Joseph shewed no less tenderness for his relations.

diffoluble tie, bestowed his sister in marriage on him. For three days their nuptials were celebrated by illuminations, by horse races, and brilliant entertainments. But this was only accumulating favours on a traitor, who was meditating in silence the ruin of his benefactor. Connected secretly with the remains of Ibrahim's family, he aspired to the sovereign power. Ambition and thirst of gold (*b*) had corrupted his heart. Every method by which he might possibly attain the dignity of *Scheik Elbalad* appeared to him legitimate. The Sangiaks with whom he had an understanding, being no strangers to his avarice, gave him considerable sums to engage him to put *Ali* out of the way. Knowing how difficult his own vigilance, and the love of those about him, rendered the execution of this plot, and fearing for his life, he deferred it to a more favourable moment, and kept the gold. But to encrease the confidence of his friend, and still more to blind him,

(*b*) He was called *Abou Dabab*, Father of gold, on account of his avarice.



he discovered the conspiracy. This confession succeeded beyond his expectation. The tendernefs of *Ali* for a brother-in-law, to whom he thought himself indebted for his life, became excessive. *Abou Dahab* never lost fight of his infamous project. He attempted the fidelity of *Tentaoui*, and offered him 300,000 livres to murder his patron, whilst he played at chess with him. This brave chief flew immediately to acquaint *Ali* with the proposal. The Scheik Elbalad, too much prejudiced in favour of Mahomed, only laughed at it. The traitor defeated in this, tried another method. He endeavoured to force his wife to poison a brother she loved, by presenting him a dish of coffee. She rejected the proposition with horror, and sent a faithful slave to conjure *Ali* to be upon his guard, and to fear every thing from *Abou Dahab*, as his most dangerous enemy. So many warnings ought to have opened his eyes, but his tendernefs for him was excessive. He could not believe in crimes his own heart revolted at, and the conscioufness of his bounties removed every apprehension.

In 1768, the Russians declared war against the Porte, and their fleets penetrated into the Mediterranean. The Scheik Elbalad, according to custom, levied twelve thousand men to send to the assistance of the Grand Signior. His enemies availed themselves of this circumstance to ruin him. They wrote to the Divan of Constantinople, that the troops he was collecting were destined to serve in the Russian armies, with which court he had formed a treaty of alliance. The letter was signed by several Beys. The calumny was credited without further examination, and the Sultan immediately dispatched a Capigi Bachi, with four Satellites, to take off his head. Fortunately for *Ali*, he had a trusty agent in the council. He sent off without loss of time, two couriers, one by sea, the other by land, to acquaint him with this treachery. They arrived before the Grand Signior's messengers. The Scheik Elbalad kept the matter secret. He sent to *Tentaoui*, in whom he placed great confidence, and discovering to him the mystery, commanded him to disguise himself like an Arab, and to go with twelve Mamalukes,



Mamalukes, twenty miles distant from Cairo, and wait for the Grand Signior's emissaries. You will take from them, added he, their dispatches, and you will put them to death.

*Tentaoui* acquitted himself perfectly well of his commission. After waiting some time in the station assigned him, the Capigi Bachi and his Satellites made their appearance. He laid hold of their persons, wrested from them the fatal order, slew them all, and buried them in the sand. Possessed of the Firman the *Scheik Elbalad* assembled the chiefs of the republic, and after communicating it, he addressed them: "How long  
" shall we submit to be the victims of the  
" despotism of the Ottoman Porte? What  
" confidence can we have in treaties with  
" her? A few years since, she made a part  
" of the chiefs of this republic perish, con-  
" trary to all justice. Several amongst you  
" witnessed that bloody execution, and still  
" bear the marks of it. Behold the blood  
" of four of your colleagues, with which  
" this marble we are this moment tread-  
" ing on is still red. To-day my death is



“ ordered. To-morrow will be demanded  
“ the head of him who shall fill my place.  
“ This is the moment to shake off the yoke  
“ of a despot, who, violating our privileges  
“ and our laws, seems to dispose of our  
“ lives as he thinks proper. Let us join  
“ our arms to those of Russia. Let us free  
“ this republic from the domination of a  
“ barbarous master. Aid me with your  
“ efforts, and I will answer for the liberty  
“ of Egypt.” This discourse produced all  
the effect that *Ali* had a right to expect  
from it. The sixteen Beys of his party ex-  
claimed with one voice, that war must be  
declared against the Grand Signior. Such  
as were of a contrary opinion, unable to  
oppose the project, promised to second it  
with all their power. The Pacha received  
an order to quit Egypt in four and twenty  
hours. The Scheik Elbalad communicated  
this resolution to the Prince of Acre, pro-  
mising to join his troops with those of  
Egypt, in order to conquer Syria.

As soon as the Divan of Constantinople  
heard of the rebellion of the Beys, and of  
the storm that menaced Syria, they com-  
manded

manded the Pacha of Damascus to attack *Scheik Daher* before this junction took place. This Viceroy marched immediately at the head of twenty thousand men, hastily collected, to surprize St. John of Acre. The old Prince, who all his life had made war against the Turks, was not at all alarmed at their approach. He mounts on horseback, calls together his seven sons, who all commanded fortified castles, and putting himself at the head of nine thousand horsemen, marches strait towards the enemy. Whilst one of his sons harrassed them with a body of light cavalry, *Scheik Daher* went and took post near Lake Tyberias. He was informed of all their motions. When he knew for certain that the Turks were near at hand, he separated his troops into three divisions. He ordered the two first to conceal themselves in the mountains until he gave the signal. As for himself, abandoning his camp full of provisions, he retreated to some distance. At the beginning of the night, the Pacha, thinking to surprize the Arabs, advanced in silence, under favour of the darkness. He reaches the camp, and



the few troops left in it fled precipitately after a slight skirmish. Their flight he attributed to fear, and his soldiers, heated by a forced march, looked upon the abundant provisions they found there as a conquest, and drank greedily of the wine. At the break of day Scheik Daher gave the appointed signal, and the three corps of cavalry poured together into the camp, sabre in hand. Finding nothing but drunken men, they had no trouble but to slay them. They killed eight thousand of them, made a great number of prisoners, and took all the tents, arms, and baggage of the Pacha, who escaped during the tumult, and hid himself within the walls of Damascus. The Scheik dispatched a courier to Grand Cairo with the news of his victory, and returned into his principality.

*Ali*, seeing his ally in safety, turned his arms to another quarter. He had formerly, as we have seen, surveyed the Jemen, and the eastern coast of the Red Sea. Judging what advantages he might derive from the commerce and productions of those countries, if he could subject them to his government, he



he levied two armies, the one of twenty-six thousand cavalry, the other of nine. The command of the former he gave to his brother-in-law, and that of the second to Ismael Bey. *Abou Dahab* was to attack Arabia Felix, and the interior provinces; Ismael the maritime towns, and the sea-ports. He gave the Generals the plans they were to follow, and equipped a fleet to coast along the Red Sea, and supply them with provisions. He had calculated, like an able warrior, the obstacles they had to surmount, and success depended on their fidelity in carrying his orders into execution. The Egyptian Cohorts left Egypt in 1770. Whilst they were on their march to the conquest of Arabia, the Scheik Elbalad remained in the capital, where he gave up his whole attention to the internal police of the kingdom, and to the happiness of the people.

The custom-houses of Egypt had long been in the hands of Jews, who committed horrid depredations, and harrassed foreigners with impunity. He removed them, and entrusted their administration to Christians of Syria, with a particular recommendation to

to favour the European merchants. He was sensible how flourishing Egypt might become by commerce. His project was to open it to all the nations of the world, and to render it the emporium of the merchandize of Europe, India, and Africa. To effect this, it was only necessary to provide for the security of the caravans, and to put the merchants under the protection of the laws ; which he did, by checking on every side the vagabond Arabs, and by establishing at Grand Cairo, Selim, Aga, and Soliman, Kiaia of the Janizaries to protect the merchants, and to see justice done them. With the same view he ordered his Generals to leave officers in the sea-ports they might take, to receive the vessels from India, and to defend them against the natives of the country. He was not long in reaping the fruits of his wise administration. He had the happiness to see the Egyptians relieved, strangers favourably received, the public safety established, agriculture encouraged, and the Republic raised to a pitch of splendor she never had attained from the first hour of her existence.

Whilst



Whilst he was thus gloriously employed, his Generals triumphed in Arabia. *Abou Dabab* conquered the Jemen in one campaign, destroyed the Scherif of Mecca, and substituted in his place the Emir Abdalla, who, to pay his court to Ali, gratified him with the pompous title of Sultan of Egypt and the two seas. Ismael, on his side, made himself master of all the towns bordering on the eastern shore of the Arabic Gulph. They returned to Cairo covered with laurels. The inhabitants received them with loud acclamations, and their triumphs were celebrated by splendid festivals.

*Ali* had not laid aside the expedition against Syria. In 1771 he sent Mahamed *Abou Dabab* to attempt that conquest, at the head of forty thousand men. Whilst these troops were traversing the desert, vessels equipped at Damietta, transported to St. John of Acre the necessary supplies for them. Availing himself, like an able politician, of the present circumstances, the Scheik Elbalad wrote to Count Alexis Orlov, then at Leghorn, to form a treaty of alliance with the Empress of Russia. He offered the Admiral



ral on his part, money, provisions, and soldiers ; requiring only a few engineers, and engaged to unite his forces with those of the Russians to overthrow the Ottoman throne. The Count thanked *Ali*, encouraged him in his glorious enterprize, made him great promises, which were never realized, and assured him that he should lose no time in laying his dispatches before his sovereign.

He had deputed the year before a Venetian merchant called Rosetti, to propose an alliance with the Republic of Venice, and to encourage her to retake from the Turks those islands and delightful provinces she had formerly possessed in the Mediterranean. He promised to aid her with all the forces of Egypt, and to re-establish there her ancient commerce ; but the Republic declined this hardy enterprize.

During these negotiations, *Abou Dakab*, assisted by the counsels and the succours of the Prince of Acre, took all the towns of Syria from the Ottomans, and drove them before him like a flock of sheep. Arriving, on the 9th of March, near the walls of Gaza, which was provided with a strong garrison, he

he carried it by storm in three days. Ramacost him more time and trouble. The besieged defended themselves with such intrepidity, that he could not become master of it by force. He formed a blockade, and, after a month's resistance, it capitulated. The Governor had made his escape, dreading the fate that awaited him. The Turks durst not appear in the field, and defended themselves only under shelter of their walls. After these two conquests the victor laid siege to *Naplous*, formerly Neapolis. The obstinate resistance of the besieged, joined to the inexperience of the Egyptians in the use of artillery, protracted the siege. Various encounters took place round the walls, but without any decisive success. *Abou Dabab*, despairing of carrying the place by storm, contracted his lines of circumvallation, and carried it by famine. He then turned his arms against Jerusalem, called by the Mahometans, as well as the Christians, the Holy City, and which they held in great veneration, pretending that Mahomet was miraculously transported thither, where he  
prayed



prayed in the company of the Prophets (*i*). Having summoned it to surrender, the Governor and the High-Priest sent a deputation to him with presents. They conjured him to avert the storm from the walls of Jerusalem, to respect the place where the Prophet had offered up his prayers, assuring him that if he succeeded in reducing Damascus, they would submit to follow the fate of the capital, and open their gates to him. The Egyptian General acquiesced in their request, and led his troops to *Jaffa*, the ancient Joppa. It is built on a rock that projects into the sea. Its fortifications and advantageous position rendered the siege long and bloody. For two months, *Abou Dabab* battered the walls with all his artillery; but as it neither was considerable, nor directed by skilful engineers, he could not make any breach in them. The Egyptians made many assaults, and the intrepid Mamalukes mount-

(*i*) " Praise to God ! who has transported, during the  
" night, his servant of the Temple of Mecca to the Tem-  
" ple of Jerusalem, the enclosure of which we have  
" blessed in order to leave the marks of our power."  
Coran, chap. 17.



ed to the top of the ramparts, but they were repulsed with loss. A part of the besieged, however, had perished. Such as remained, fearing to be put to the sword, should the place be carried by storm, at length capitulated. The General, after leaving a strong garrison, repaired to St. John of Acre at the beginning of September. The Arab Prince received him with joy, congratulated him on his success, and supplied him with provisions and ammunition.

Mahomed, after giving his troops a fortnight's repose, marched to attack *Seide*, the ancient Sidon, near which flourished in former days the city of Tyre, so celebrated for her commerce, her arts, and her navy. The peninsula on which it stands presents nothing but ruins. *Seide* surrendered on the first summons. Master of the most important towns in Syria, *Abou Dabab* proceeded to the capital. *Damascus*, situated in a rich plain, is surrounded by rivulets, and gardens filled with orange, pistachio, and pomegranate, and a multitude of other fruit-trees, bearing the most delicious fruits. Exquisite sweetmeats are made of them, which  
serve

serve in the *Sorbet*, or *Sherbet*, and which are sold throughout the east. Nothing can be more beautiful, gayer, or more fresh than the environs of this city. Nothing is to be seen on every side but groves, rivulets, and charming pavillions, where Turkish effeminacy is lulled asleep on cushions of velvet and of fatten. The Arabs call it *Ech-chams*, the City of the Sun. The water is of an admirable quality for the tempering of steel; and the arms, the poniards, the sabres, fabricated here, are renowned throughout the world. The Pacha was shut up there with a numerous garrison. For two months he defended it with courage. At the end of November, seeing the walls overthrown, the advanced works destroyed, and the enemy ready to mount to the assault, he fled during the night, and the city surrendered. The garrison had retired into the citadel. It was necessary to form a second siege, and it cost the Egyptians many efforts to get possession of it.

The Turks had now no considerable place remaining but Aleppo. The capture of that city would have secured to the Republic of Egypt



Egypt the entire possession of Syria; but *Abou Dabab* feared lest this conquest might retard his designs. He had long meditated the ruin of *Ali*, his patron, his brother in law, his friend. The desire of gaining the soldiery, by making them the companions of his victories, had alone induced him to take arms, and influenced all his measures. The interest of Egypt, which the union with Syria would have rendered independent of the Porte, had no part in his projects. No sooner was he sure of his officers and soldiers, than, after making them take an oath of fidelity, he hoisted the standard of rebellion. He withdrew all his garrisons from the conquered places, and rendering abortive the fruit of so much blood spilt, and of a whole year of conquests, he re-entered Egypt. On his departure the Turks retook, without a struggle, the cities he had taken from them, raised their walls, and added new fortifications. *Abou Dabab*, thus elated with success, did not dare at first to attack the capital, where his rival was too powerful. He kept along the western coast of the Red Sea, crossed the de-



part, and marched into upper Egypt. It was then he made an open display of his criminal intentions. He took Girgé, and other important towns. By force, or by address, he gained the Beys who commanded there, and descended towards Cairo.

*Ali Bey* repented, but too late, having followed the emotions of his heart, rather than the dictates of prudence, by placing in the hand of a traitor a command with which he should never have entrusted him. He still had resources, and he hastened to oppose them to his enemy. Having collected twenty thousand men, he put at their head *Ismael Bey*, on whose experience and fidelity he thought he could safely reckon. *Abou Dahab* was incamped near Gaza; *Ali* ordered his General to take post near to Old Cairo, and prevent the enemy from passing the river. Nothing was more easy; but the perfidious *Ismael*, basely betraying the interests of his patron, formed a treaty of alliance with *Abou Dahab*, and passed over to his camp. The junction of the two armies was a thunderstroke for the generous *Ali*. In the first emotions of de-  
spair,

spair, he determined to shut himself up in the castle of Grand Cairo with his few brave adherents, and to bury himself under its ruins. The sons of *Scheik Daher*, who loved him, represented to him the folly of this resolution, and conjured him once more to escape with them to St. John of Acre. He felt the wisdom of their counsel, and followed it. He wrote instantly to Count *Orlow*, requesting him to send some warlike stores, and some officers to him into Syria. He entrusted these dispatches to the Armenian Jacob, who had already acquitted himself of a similar commission, collected his treasures, and loaded them on twenty camels. He sent to demand from *Mallem Reisk*, whom he had made Intendant of the revenues of Egypt, all the money he had collected; but the knave had hid himself, and it was impossible to find him. In the middle of the night, *Ali Bey*, accompanied by the sons of *Scheik Daher*, by *Tentaoui*, *Rossuan*, *Hassan*, *Kalil*, *Mourad*, *Abd Errohman*, *Latif*, *Moustafa*, *Ibrahim*, *Zoulficar*, *Hacheph*, *Osman*, *Selim*, *Aga*, and *Soliman*, *Kiaia* of the Janizaries, all



Beys of his creation, and about 7000 troops, left Cairo for the third time, and fled across the deserts. He carried with him twenty-four millions of livres (about one million sterling) in gold and silver. After five days forced march, he arrived on the 16th of April, 1772, at the gates of Gaza, and his troops began to breathe. The treason of two men, on whose friendship he had the strictest claims, rent his heart with sorrow. He shuddered at the very name of *Abou Dabab*, and his blood boiled in his veins. This agitation, added to the fatigue of so difficult a route, brought on a serious malady. A prey to the most gloomy melancholy, he looked for death with a sort of consolation. Liberty procured to Egypt, Arabia submitted to his sway, justice established in the cities, commerce flourishing, the good he had already done the people; all those advantages, which it was the wish of his heart still further to procure them, he saw for ever vanished, and this bitter reflection filled the measure of his misfortunes. Whilst he was cruelly suffering under these poignant cares, the *Scheik*



*Daber*, that respectable old man, his faithful friend, his protector in adversity, came to visit him in his tent. After mingling his tears with those of *Ali*, he called him his son, and tried by exhortations full of sense and tenderness, to communicate some comfort to his sorrows. He represented to him that his situation was not desperate, that the Russian squadron was at hand, and that, with this succour, he might still regain the dignity from which he had been precipitated by treason. How powerful are the tender consolations of friendship on sensible hearts! It is a salutary balm that penetrates all our senses, and heals, as if by enchantment, the wounds both of the soul and of the body. *Ali* experienced its effects, and hope once more appeared to renew the lamp of life. The Arab Prince had brought with him a physician, whom he left with his sick friend, and he recovered his health in a few weeks.

A detachment of the Russian squadron appearing before Acre, *Ali* took the advantage of this opportunity to write to *Count Orlov*. He made the same request as

before, desiring him to send him some cannon and engineers, and a corps of three thousand Albanians. He assured him, that immediately after his reinstatement, all the forces of Egypt should be at his disposal. Besides this, he addressed a letter to the Czarina, in which he solicited her alliance, and proposed to her a commercial treaty with Egypt. Zulficar Bey, the bearer of these dispatches, was commissioned to present to the Russian Admiral three fine horses, richly caparisoned. *It is certain that if Russia had only sent this feeble succour to the SCHEIK ELBALAD, he would have triumphed over his enemies, and have been proclaimed King of Egypt.* Nor can it be doubted from his character, and every concurrent circumstance, that he would have delivered *into the hands of the Russians the commerce of the eastern world, and have granted them ports in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.* This alliance might have operated a total change of affairs in the east. The Russian ships set sail for Paros the 18th of May, 1772, and conducted the Ambassador of *Ali*.

The precipitate retreat of *Abou Dakab*  
had



had given the Turks time to regain their possessions, and to fortify them. Ali endeavoured to expel them a second time. Having formed a corps of six thousand men, he gave the command of it to the brave *Tentaoui*, and ordered him to attack Seide. *Scheik Lebi*, and *Scheik Crim*, one the son, the other the son-in-law of the Prince of Acre, joined the Egyptian Chief, and marched in concert with him. In their route they fell in with the celebrated *Hassan Pacha*, who was expecting them, in an advantageous post, at the head of thirteen thousand men. Notwithstanding their inferiority, they did not hesitate to give him battle. Their cavalry was excellent. They rushed in a body on the Turks, broke through their ranks, cut a great number of them in pieces, and put the rest to flight. The fugitives conveyed the alarm to Seide, which instantly opened her gates to the conquerors. *Tentaoui* leaving a garrison in the town, under the orders of *Hassan Bey*, returned to the camp, where he received the compliments of Ali, and of the Prince of Acre.



On the 13th of August in the same year, *Ali* marched against Jaffa, accompanied by the valiant sons of the Scheik Daher. This prince equipped two vessels to carry ammunition and provisions to the assailants. As soon as the troops were assembled before the place, the general summoned the commandant to surrender, and on his refusal laid siege to it. He battered the walls for forty days, but his artillery was too weak to form any considerable breach. Nevertheless he gave the signal for the assault, and his soldiers went to it with intrepidity. The difficulty of storming the place, and the valour of the besieged, compelled him to retreat. Despairing of being able to carry it by force, he formed a blockade and determined to take it by famine. During the blockade, he sent *Tentaoui* with a detachment of cavalry to surprize Gaza. This brave captain set off like lightning, carried the place on the first onset, and after leaving a garrison, returned to the camp covered with laurels. The inhabitants of Jaffa receiving succours by sea, defended themselves with resolution. They were in want of nothing  
but

but wood. The adjacent country is delightful; it is intersected with gardens deliciously shaded by orange and lemon trees. They are supplied by copious springs, which gliding from the foot of the mountain serves to water them, and preserve their perpetual verdure. These beautiful trees are at one season of the year loaded both with flowers and fruit. *Ali* had spared them. Perceiving however that the besieged came and cut them down, and carried them off under favour of the night, he made them all suffer the same fate, and destroyed these charming plantations.

Whilst all this was going on, *Ali's* ambassador, and the Armenian *Jacob* returned from their mission on board of an English vessel commanded by *Captain Brown*. *Count Orlov* sent him two Russian officers with dispatches, in which he assured him of his friendship, and promised him powerful succours. These officers presented him, on the part of the admiral, with *three* brass field pieces, four pounders, 500 balls, and *seven* barrels of powder. This was all the assistance



ance he derived from the magnificent promises of *Count Alexis*!!

The siege still continued. *Clinginoff*, a Russian captain, raised a new battery of three cannon, twelve pounders, with which he did great damage to the town. He had already beat down a part of the wall, when desirous of observing the effect of the artillery, and looking through an embrasure, he was killed by a musket shot. A short time before, this brave officer embarked with one single man during the night, to burn the Turkish ships at anchor in the harbour. Being discovered, before he could put his design in execution, the fire from the ramparts obliged him to make a precipitate retreat.

*Captain Brown* made an addition of six cannon to those which were already playing on the town. These various batteries at length formed practicable breaches. *Ali* sounded the charge, and his troops mounted to the assault. In spite of their ardour, they were obliged to give way to the valour of a numerous garrison, who were continually receiving fresh reinforcements by sea.



Several Russian ships, at the request of *Ali*, approached Jaffa, bombarded the town for two days, and beat down a part of the houses; but fearing to be thrown upon the coast, if the westerly winds should blow with violence, they quitted this dangerous road. These multiplied attacks had reduced the besieged to great extremity. They saw nothing around them but heaps of ruins. The governor, terrified, escaped during the night, and eluding the vigilance of the enemy, gained *Naplous* where his brother commanded. The next day, the thirty-first of January, 1773, *Ali* entered the town. This bloody siege cost him three Beys, and a great number of Mamalukes. He delivered the place to the Prince of Acre who had supplied his army with stores and provisions.

Whilst he lay encamped before Jaffa, *Mallem Reisk*, the Intendant of the Custom-house of Egypt, came and found him in his tent, in the disguise of a Dervise. His sunburnt visage, his meagre appearance, his dirty and torn garments, rendered him difficult to be known. He pleaded in his excuse,

cuse, that as soon as he learnt the elevation of *Abou Dabab*, dreading the avarice of that traitor, he had buried his riches, and escaped into the deserts, where for above a year he had led a miserable life. *Ali* seeing him wretched, took pity on his hard fortune, forgot his perfidy, and supplied him with cloaths and money. At the same period, the camp witnessed another example of the vicissitude of human affairs. The *Emir Abdalla*, who by *Ali's* orders had been elevated to the principality of Mecca, in the place of the *Scherif*, came likewise to implore his assistance. The enemy had restored his rival, and he was obliged to fly. *Ali* consoled him, loaded him with presents, and he returned to Medina. It is thus that the misfortune of the Chief of the Egyptian Republic involves the downfall of every person attached to his party.

After the capture of Jaffa, the Scheik Elbalad led his troops to Rama, which was carried sword in hand. These successes raised the hopes of his partizans, and inspired him with the confidence of returning triumphant to Grand Cairo. *Ali* had constantly



stantly maintained a correspondence with the chiefs of the Janizaries, who have great power in the capital. The promises with which he flattered them, and the aversion with which *Abou Dabab's* avarice inspired them, determined them openly to espouse his party, and to demand his recal. They wrote to him, that he might return, and that they would defend his interests. This news overwhelmed him with joy; he imparted it to his friends, and prepared for his return to Egypt. *Scheik Daher* was of a different opinion. He advises him to wait the promised succours of the Russians, to foment divisions amongst the chiefs of the Republic, to be previously well assured of the disposition of the troops in his favour, and not rashly risk his fortune and his life. These councils, dictated by prudence, were not followed. *Ali*, impatient to return to Grand Cairo, and humble his enemies, fondly imagined he was marching to victory. He collected the garrisons of the conquered towns, raised contributions in them, arrived at Gaza the 21st of March, and left it on the 4th of April, 1773.

His



His whole cavalry consisted of two thousand men, and two hundred and fifty Mamelukes. Three thousand four hundred Mograbi composed his infantry. *Tentaoui, Kalil, Latif, Hassan, Abd Errohman, Mourad, Selim* the Aga, and *Soliman* Kiaia of the Janizaries, were all his remaining Beys. Six hundred and fifty horse, commanded by the son and son in law of *Scheik Daber*, accompanied this little army, which formed in all six thousand three hundred and ten combatants.

*Abou Dabab* had sent twelve thousand men to Salakia, a town situated on the Isthmus of Suez, to oppose *Ali's* passage. As soon therefore as he approached this place, these troops advanced to meet him, and ranged themselves in line of battle. The *Scheik Elbalad*, without hesitation, accepted the challenge. He rushed upon him with the rapidity of lightning. He fought sabre in hand at the head of his Mamelukes, who, encouraged by his presence, carried destruction through the ranks. The enemy sustained this terrible shock for four hours. At length, penetrated in all  
parts,

parts, they fled into the desert, leaving a great number of dead upon the field of battle. This glorious victory encouraged the little troop of *Ali*, who thought themselves invincible under so brave a leader. Profiting by the ardour of his warriors, he advanced directly to Grand Cairo. The fugitives carried the news of their defeat, and of his approach. *Abou Dabab* assembled the Beys brought over to his interest, and the principal people, and addressed them in these terms: “ Brave chiefs of the Republic, and you Egyptians, who cherish the law of our Prophet, you know *Ali*. He is a christian in his heart, and has contracted alliances with the infidels. He wishes to subject this country, that he may abolish the religion of Mahomet, and force you to adopt christianity. REMEMBER WHAT THE EUROPEANS HAVE DONE IN INDIA; the Mussulmen of those rich countries received them with kindness, admitted them into their ports, granted them factories, and made commercial treaties with them. What was the consequence? The *Christians* have

“ have ravaged their provinces, destroyed their  
 “ cities, conquered their kingdoms, and after  
 “ reducing them to slavery, have established  
 “ idolatry (*k*) on the ruins of the true reli-  
 “ gion. Faithful Mussulmen, a similar fate a-  
 “ waits you. *Ali*, the ally of these Europeans,  
 “ is about to overturn the constitution of  
 “ your empire, to throw open Egypt to  
 “ the infidels, and force you to become  
 “ christians. Aid me to repulse the enemy  
 “ of the Republic, of your laws, of Isla-  
 “ mism; or prepare yourselves for all *the*  
 “ *miseries* your BRETHREN OF BENGAL  
 “ have suffered.---Chuse between him and  
 “ me.” At the conclusion of this ha-  
 rangue, *Abou Dabab* pretended a desire to  
 abdicate the dignity of Scheik Elbalad, and  
 to withdraw. But the whole audience pro-  
 nounced with one unanimous cry, anathe-  
 mas against *Ali*, and promised to spill the  
 last drop of their blood in defence of the  
 common cause. Availing himself adroitly

(*k*) The Mahometans call us idolaters, because being  
 unable to comprehend our mysteries—they say we worship  
 several gods.



of this moment of enthusiasm, *Abou Dabab* published a manifesto in the city, by which every man who loved his religion and his country was invited to take arms, and before the close of day, twenty thousand men were ranged under his banners. He set out immediately at the head of this army, to attack the enemy. The Janizaries, faithful to their promise, refused to follow him, and waited with tranquillity the result of the combat.

*Ali* was unprepared for this event. He no sooner heard that *Abou Dabab* was approaching with troops, three times superior to his in number, than he abandoned himself to despair, and fell dangerously ill. His friends advised him to return to Acre, but he declared he would sooner perish than retreat an inch.

The 13th of April, 1773, the army of Grand Cairo appeared in the presence of his camp. He immediately ranged his troops in order of battle. *Scheik Lebi* and *Scheik Crim* had the command of the left wing. The right he gave to *Tentaoui*, and placed his infantry in the centre. Having made

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these able dispositions, and exhorted the Chiefs to fight valiantly, he made them convey him to his tent, for he was too weak to sit on horseback. The battle began at eleven in the morning. Both parties charged with fury, and, in spite of the inferiority of *Ali's* troops, they at first had the advantage. Scheik Lebi and Scheik Crim gloriously repulsed the Egyptian cavalry. Tentaoui, at the head of the brave Mamelukes, overthrew every thing before him. Victory was declaring for *Ali*, when the *Mograbi*, those mercenary troops, invariably led by the allurements of gain, suffered themselves to be corrupted by the splendid promises of *Abou Dabab*, and passed over to his side. The fortune of the day was changed. The fugitives rallied, and having now but three thousand men to contend with, they environed them on every side, and slew a great number of them. The generous *Tentaoui* could not survive his defeat. He precipitated himself into the middle of their squadrons, and fell, covered with wounds, on a heap of dead, whom he had sacrificed. *Scheik Lebi*, the valiant son of the Prince



of Acre, defended himself for a long time with his Arabs, and died combating. Scheik Crim, opening himself a passage through the Egyptian ranks, rode full speed to the tent of *Ali*, and conjured him to take refuge with him at St. John of Acre. Mourad, Ibrahim, Soliman, and Abd Errohman, arrived there also, and made the same remonstrances. My friends, replied he, fly, I command you; as for me, my hour is come. Scarcely had they quitted him before he was surrounded by the victorious troops. The Mamalukes, who was near his tent, defended their master to the last drop of their blood, and all perished with their arms in their hands. Despair having given new force to the unhappy *Scheik Elbalad*, he rose up, and slew the first two soldiers who attempted to seize him. He was fired upon, and wounded with two balls. At this moment the Lieutenant of *Abou Dabab* appearing, sabre in hand, *Ali* shot him with a pistol. Swimming in his blood, he fought like a lion, but a soldier having beat him down by the back stroke of a sabre, they threw themselves upon him,



and carried him to the tent of the conqueror. The traitor carrying his perfidy to its greatest height, shed feigned tears on seeing him in this condition, and tried to console him for his disgrace. *Ali* turned away his eyes, and uttered not a word. He died of his wounds eight days after. Others have assured me that they were not mortal, and that he was poisoned by his infamous brother-in-law. This was to complete his enormities; nor can we reflect, without shuddering, on the horrors to which men are hurried by ambition.

*Ali* was of the middle size; he had large eyes, full of fire; his carriage was graceful and noble, and his character frank and generous. Nature had endowed him with an unfurmountable courage, and a lofty genius. Far removed from that barbarous pride which leads the Turks to despise strangers, he loved them for their talents, and generously repaid their services. He wished ardently for officers to discipline his troops, and teach them the European tactics. He died the victim of his friendship. His misfortune arose from nourishing and bringing  
up

up a traitor, who took advantage of his bounty to embitter his days, and to conduct him to his grave. Had *Russia* availed herself of his offers, had she but granted him some engineers, and three or four thousand men, he would have made himself Sovereign of Syria and Egypt, and have transferred to his ally the commerce of Arabia and India. He perished at 45 years of age. The Egyptians long wept his loss, and saw themselves again plunged into all the miseries from which he had delivered them.

As soon as Scheik Daher heard of the death of *Ali*, and that of his son, he abandoned himself to sorrow and regret. The wretched old man threw himself on his face upon the earth, covered himself with dust, and shed torrents of tears. But he must soon think of defending his life and his principality. *Abou Dabab*, elated with his triumph, determined to take revenge for the protection afforded by the Arabian Prince to *Ali*. He marched against Syria with the whole force of Egypt, leaving *Ismael* to govern in his absence. *Jaffa* was the first city he attacked. Scheik *Crim* defended it



with courage, and the siege was protracted for some time. Unfortunately an European, gained by the promise of *Abou Dabab*, sprung a mine, which overthrew a considerable part of the walls. The Egyptians entered by the breach, and put *all the inhabitants to death*\*. After this barbarous execution they marched towards St. John of Acre. *Scheik Daber*, who loved his people, and who was afraid of exposing them to the same cruel fate, advised them to open their gates to the conquerors, and retired himself into the mountains with his children. *Abou Dabab* meeting with no resistance, spared their blood. But imagining that the Monks of Nazareth concealed the treasures of the Prince, he sent for them, and commanded them to deliver them upon the spot. These unhappy men in vain assured him that they knew nothing of them.

\* *Baron de Tott* has the following passage in his *Memoirs* :—" On approaching the coast, they shewed me the horrid pyramid erected by Mahomed Bey. This monster had formed it of *fifteen hundred heads* he had ordered to be cut off, after taking of this town" (*Joppa*). P. 113, 4th part, 2d vol. edit. by Jarvis.



He took off the heads of three of them. Not content with this cruelty, he put to death by torture *Mallem Ibrahim Saba*, the Intendant of *Scheik Daher*, to force him to discover these imaginary treasures. Some of the sons of the Arabian Prince underwent the same fate, but with no more success.

Here finished the crimes of *Abou Dabab*. One morning he was found dead in his bed. It was pretended that he was poisoned by one of his slaves, but this fact is uncertain. On this news, the Egyptian troops took the route of Grand Cairo, and the traitor *Ismael* was elected *Scheik Elbalad*. The Prince of Acre immediately descended from the mountains, and re-entered his principality. The people celebrated his return by shouts of joy and solemn festivals §.

During these transactions, a Turkish squadron came to anchor on the coast of Syria.

§ The same *enlightened author* bears his testimony to the virtues of this good Prince. In speaking of *Acre*, he says, "It was only, therefore, under the *quiet and beneficent* reign of *Scheik Daher* that the plentiful crops multiplied our establishments in Syria; and it is since the tragical end of that Prince that commerce has begun to decline. P. 319, 4th part, 2d vol. edit. by Jarvis.

The *Captain Pacha* (that too celebrated tyrant) having obtained permission from Scheik Daher to pay him a visit, brought him a Firman of the Grand Signior, granting to him and his descendants the sovereignty of Acre, and the pardon of what was past. The old man was overcome with joy. Ready to drop into the grave, he said that he should die without regret, now that he saw that power rendered legitimate which he had purchased by sixty years war and trouble. The Captain Pacha testified his thanks, and before he quitted him, pressed him to come and dine on board his vessel. The Arabian Prince, after the Firman he had received, had not the smallest suspicion of the treachery intended him, and accepted of the invitation. On entering the ship, he was saluted by a discharge of artillery, and the next moment the Admiral drew from his bosom another Firman, ordering his death, and instantly took off his head. This respectable old man, so basely betrayed, was 86 years of age. He was adored by his people, whom he had all his life defended against the tyranny of the Pacha. It is



thus that the Divan of Constantinople treats the great men under its dominion ! But any Government that employs such means to reduce Princes and Governors to their duty, betrays its weakness ; and an empire which has no other arms to preserve its provinces with than perfidy, is *on the brink of ruin*. When the Greek Emperors, corrupted by effeminacy, flattery, and the spirit of sect, destroyed by poison and the dagger every person who gave them umbrage in the whole extent of their dominions, they were soon dethroned, and Constantinople passed into the hands of a more generous people. At this day, when the degraded Ottomans make use of similar expedients, a similar destiny awaits them. I believe these reflections to be just ; for on perusing with attention the annals of all history, we see kingdoms fall with the virtue and manners of the nations.



## L E T T E R XLII.

## SEQUEL OF THE HISTORY OF ALI.

*History of Ismael Bey become Scheik Elbalad. Passage of Mourad and Ibrahim, Beys in upper Egypt. Their connections with the Arabs. Ismael dispatches a body of troops against them, and they retreat into the Desert. They fortify themselves, take possession of some of the principal towns in the district of Saïd, penetrate as far as Gaza, and enter into a treaty of alliance with Ismael. Re-entering Grand Cairo, and on the point of being massacred, they betake themselves to flight, retire precipitately to Girgè, call to their assistance the Arabians, and defeat the army which was sent by Ismael to oppose them. He arrives in person at the head of a body of troops. The associated Beys contrive means to corrupt their fidelity; and the Scheik Elbalad retires into Syria with his treasures. On their return to the capital, they promote their creatures to the rank of Bey, and assume the govern-*

government of Egypt. Engagement with Hassan Bey abandoned in the streets of Grand Cairo, and its consequences. Mourad conducts the caravan of Mecca; and the usual tribute being demanded of him by the Arabs, he orders them to be beheaded. Attacked and wounded on his return, he obliges the enemy to retreat. His quarrels with Ibrahim.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I Hope, Sir, it will not be disagreeable to you to be informed of such events as may serve as a continuation of the history of *Ali*, of the greatest part of which I was myself a spectator. After the death of this valiant chief, and that of Mahamed *Abou Dabab*, Ismael enjoyed quietly the fruits of his treachery. Elected Scheik Elbalad, he governed Egypt as a sovereign. Having distributed the provinces amongst his creatures, he was surrounded by persons he had protected, and reigned at Grand Cairo. To secure his power, he availed himself of the credit

credit of the Pacha, an artful and enterprising man. As soon as he had gained the Viceroy, and the officers of the Janizaries, he issued his commands from one end of Egypt to the other, and his will became a law. Educated by Ali, he was exercised in the profession of arms, was courageous, and had a thorough knowledge of business. But all these qualities were tarnished by avarice. He collected gold from every part, and instead of occupying himself with the welfare of his people, and the glory of the state, he thought of nothing but swelling his treasures. Whilst he imagined he had nothing to apprehend, Mourad and Ibrahim were burning with the desire of avenging the defeat of their patron. The former, full of fire and ardour, was courageous and frank, but inconsiderate; the latter united to moderation of character, an acute understanding, well adapted to form a party. Having vowed perpetual friendship, they set out from Syria with a small body of Mamelukes attached to their fortune, crossed the deserts, and proceeded into the Saïd. Before they had time to form partizans there,

Ismael



Ismael sent an army against them. Mourad wished to engage with their handful of men, but was prevented by the prudence of Ibrahim, and they retired into the depths of those solitudes where the enemy did not dare to follow them. During their abode here, they brought over to their interest an independent Arab prince, promising to augment his dominions if, by his means, they might regain the capital. The Emir, charmed with the opportunity of affording protection to disgraced Beys, against Ismael who had attempted to levy contributions within his jurisdiction, vowed that he would aid them with all his power. He gave orders for his Arabs to take arms, and six thousand horsemen ranged themselves in an instant under his banners. With this little army they kept along the Nile, took possession of the principal towns situated on its banks, and descended towards Cairo. After defeating several parties Ismael had sent against them, they encamped near Giza in 1777. The *Scheik Elbalad* set out from the castle at the head of a numerous army, to stop them at the passage of the Nile. Whilst  
the

the armies were in presence of each other, deputies reciprocally passed between the two generals, and treated of an accommodation. Ismael, who dreaded the impetuous valour of Mourad, and the wisdom of Ibrahim, was unwilling to risk his fortune on the event of a battle, and offered to suffer them to resume their station as members of the Republic. Peace was signed on this condition. They entered the capital therefore, preceded by the Arabian prince, who, mounted on a superb horse, marched at the head of cavaliers, armed with sabres and with lances. After three days stay at Grand Cairo, seeing the completion of his designs, he returned into his principality, loaded with presents and flattering promises. The reconciliation was not sincere. Ismael had seduced his enemies to destroy them without fighting. Possessed of the treasures and the power, he imagined he should find no difficulty in accomplishing his project. The new Beys therefore were surrounded by precipices on every side. Great address was necessary to avoid the snares that were laid for them. In 1778, the *Scheik Elbalad* fearing, lest if he attacked them

them



them in their palaces, where they were always on their guard, the people might take part with the remains of the house of *Ali*, formed in concert with the Pacha and his partizans, the resolution to massacre them the first time they appeared at the Divan. They were apprized of this plot, and escaped in the night into upper Egypt. They fortified themselves in Girgé, called the Arabs to their succour, and waited boldly for the enemy. Ismael sent a body of cavalry to pursue them. The fugitives gave them battle and discomfited them. He then marched himself at the head of thirty thousand men. Full of confidence in his forces, he reckoned on a certain victory. But the dexterous Ibrahim employed against him the same arts which had proved of such service to *Abou Dabab*. Acquainted with his avarice, and knowing that his soldiers were ill paid, he offered them more considerable pay, and promised to promote the officers. No more was necessary to debauch a part of these mercenary troops, always ready to sell themselves to the best bidder. Ismael no sooner perceived himself abandoned, than he fled precipitately



precipitately towards Cairo, loaded fifty camels with gold and silver, and traversing the Isthmus, he took refuge in Syria. This villain, justly punished for having betrayed his friend and master, from that moment led a wretched life, in the different provinces of the Ottoman empire. I have been assured that he afterwards repaired to Constantinople, on the faith of the promises of the Porte, whose authority he had restored in Egypt, and that the Divan, after stripping him of his wealth, had given him up to his unhappy destiny.

The retreat of Ismael rendered *Mourad* and *Ibrahim* masters of the kingdom. They entered in triumph into Grand Cairo, where they were received with the acclamations of the people. The latter was appointed *Scheik Elbalad*, and the former *Emir Haji*. Their first step was to depose the Pacha, who had been imprudent enough to take part against them, by declaring them enemies of the Grand Signior. The *Caracoulouck*, or emissary dressed in black, repaired to his apartment, folded up the corner of the carpet, and the Viceroy immediately retired to Boulak, where

where he waited his orders from Constantinople. As soon as a new Pacha was sent, they thought of raising their Mamalukes to the dignity of Beys. *I assisted* at this nomination, by means of my Turkish habit. The Sangiaks were seated at the extremity of the hall of council, near to the grating where the Pacha was. After delivering to the *Kiaia* the names of those they wished to create, he read them with a loud voice, cloathed them with a Caftan, gave them the Firman of Sangiak, and they were proclaimed Beys. This ceremony finished, they conducted the Scheik and the Emir Haji back to their palaces with pomp. The procession was very brilliant. Ibrahim and Mourad, mounted on horses covered with gold and diamonds, saluted, to the right and left, the people ranged on each side, who repeated their names with shouts of joy, wishing them all sort of prosperity. These two chiefs threw amongst them every instant, handfuls of Medinas, of Piafters, and Sequins, which were greedily picked up by the Egyptians. They were preceded by six hundred Mamalukes magnificently clad,

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and mounted on courfers richly caparifoned. The Janizaries, the Arabs, and the different bodies of troops followed in good order. This pompous fpectacle laſted two hours. Upwards of four hundred thouſand perſons were ſpectators. I could not help being ſurprized at ſeeing ſo numerous a body of men voluntarily ſubmitting themſelves to ſeven or eight thouſand foreigners, who have no other employment than their deſtruction. But the natives of Egypt, gentle and peaceable, without force, and without energy, ſeemed deſtined to eternal bondage. Bent for ages under the yoke of deſpotiſm, they ſuffer every ſort of miſery, without lifting up their heads. Were they ſubjects of a mild government, there would not be a happier people upon earth. In ſpight of their wretched deſtiny, they paſſionately love their country, and nothing can tear them from it \*.

Ibrahim

\* *Colonel Capper*, in the admirable account he gives, in his *Voyage, and Journey from India*, ſpeaks as follows of the Egyptians: “The preſent Egyptians are an heterogeneous mixture of all nations, and having unfortunately  
“retained



Ibrahim and Mourad, having expelled Ismael from Grand Cairo, resolved to exterminate, root and branch, every person belonging to his household. Above all, they dreaded *Hassan Bey*, who, by his generosity, his justice, and his valour, had gained the favour of the people and the Grandees. Not succeeding by stratagem, they determined to make use of open violence. Retiring into the castle, they directed a battery of six cannon against his palace, and distributed bodies of troops in the en-

“ retained only the worst features both of the minds and  
 “ persons of their ancestors, in my opinion they are now  
 “ become the most disagreeable nation on earth, bearing  
 “ no more resemblance to the former Egyptians than the  
 “ present ruins do to their once magnificent buildings.”

The translator takes the liberty to remark, that Mr. *Savary* passed three years *in*, the Colonel only passed *through* the country. The *Englishman*, constitutionally the advocate for freedom, contents himself with abusing and contemning this unhappy people. The *French* writer acknowledges their degraded character, spares his invective, benevolently deplores their fate, and philosophically assigns the cause of it. A citizen of the world prefers the latter mode of seeing things, and of expressing them. Do not Englishmen too often travel thus?—

*Translator.*

virons to attack it in parts. Haffan defended himself valiantly with his Mâmalukes, and repulsed every assault. The noise of the artillery spread consternation amongst the inhabitants. War was made in the middle of the streets, and from the tops of the roofs. On all sides was heard the tumult of the combatants, horses falling, and the cries of the unhappy victims of the dissension. Bands of villains, taking advantage of the confusion, ran through every quarter of the city, breaking open doors, entering into houses, and putting all to fire and sword. The French merchants were dismayed. They expected at every instant to see the gate of their district forced, their fortune destroyed, and to perish amidst their wives and children. I was present at this tragedy, determined with some other young men to defend the entrance of the street to the last drop of blood, and to die at least in combating. Our alarms were not ill-founded. About two hundred robbers came with axes and arms of every kind, to beat down the only gate we had to shelter us; but as it was very strong, and they expected



to meet with some resistance, they went off another way, and pillaged the neighbouring houses. Two days and two nights did the scene of horror last, during which the noise of cannon and musketry, and the shrieks of despair were continually heard. We were well able to judge of this, for not one amongst us had the least desire to go to sleep. At length, on the third day of the combat, we perceived, from the top of our terraces, *Hassan Bey*, who, accompanied by two hundred Mamalukes, sabre in hand, opened a passage through his enemies, and made his escape from Grand Cairo. In his attempt to reach Syria, he fell in with a body of three thousand Arabs of the enemy's party in the desert, who cut off his retreat. He strove to cut his way through their squadrons, and fought most desperately. All his Mamalukes perished by his side. Though covered with blood, he defended himself for an hour. Being taken, the Arabs brought him back towards the capital. On his arrival at Boulak, he conjured them to permit him for an instant to enter the house of a Scheik, his friend, to take a last fare-



well of him. They complied with his request, and dispatched a courier to acquaint Mourad that they were bringing his enemy a prisoner. On this news the Emir Haji sent two hundred Satellites to cut off his head. They surrounded the house, and loudly demanded him. The Scheik refused, and declared that he never would violate the laws of hospitality by delivering up his friend. They were preparing to carry him off by force. "I will not suffer  
" you, says Hassan, to expose yourself to  
" the violence of these madmen, who would  
" murder you, your wife, and children.  
" Let me go out." Saying this, he tears himself from the arms of the Scheik, mounts upon the terrace, passes over to another, and perceiving that the gate of that house was only guarded by one soldier, he descends without making any noise, opens it, seizes the arm that was about to strike him, knocks the Cavalier from his horse, wrests from him his sabre, and sets off full speed to Cairo. At this spectacle the Satellites were struck motionless with surprize. Recovering themselves, they fired upon the fugitive,

gitive, and pursued him with all their might. Two horsemen had already overtaken him; but he overset them with blows of his sabre, and continued his course. All the streets of Grand Cairo have gates for the public safety. In passing, he made several of them be shut, and carrying the keys with him, they stopped the progress of his enemies. Repairing to the palace of *Ibrahim*, he entered by the Court of the Haram, covering his visage with his shawl, that he might not be discovered. The wife of the Scheik Elbalad was his relation: he prayed her to intercede for him with her husband. She went and threw herself on her knees, imploring the life of her cousin. Ibrahim gave way, took Hassan under his protection, had him cured of his wounds, and, for a long time, resisted *Mourad*, who solicited his death. Seeing that the Emir-Haji was preparing to go to war with him, unless he obtained his demand, he became reconciled to him, on consenting that the prisoner should be banished to Gedda. He was conducted to Suez, and delivered to the Captain of a small vessel, who received or-



ders to transport him to the place of his exile. Two of his slaves, the voluntary companions of his misfortunes, followed him from attachment. They were apprized that the Captain was possessed of a Firman, signed by Mourad, which condemned the head of their master on their landing, and lost no time in acquainting him with it. Hassan, feigning ignorance of his destiny, begged the Captain to put him on shore on the coast of Egypt, instead of conveying him to Gedda. Neither promises nor menaces could prevail upon him. On his refusal, he seized on the arms which were on board, during the night, and, assisted by his two slaves, cut off the head of the Captain, and of three sailors, threw them into the sea, and taking the helm, conducted the vessel to Cossair, whence he repaired into the Sayde, carrying with him the sum of 400,000 livres which he found in the vessel. From that moment he is labouring to procure himself partizans, and he may one day, perhaps, re-enter Cairo, where he is looked for by the wishes of the people.

The



The death of six Beys of Ismael's party, and the flight of the others, rendered Ibrahim and Mourad absolute masters at Grand Cairo. Having now nothing to disturb them, the Emir Haji prepared, according to custom, to conduct the caravan of Mecca. The pilgrims gathered together from all parts in the plain of *Hellé*, in the neighbourhood of the city. About ten thousand tents were pitched; they covered a great extent of ground. Those of the officers and chiefs were composed of painted linen, lined on the inside with fatten, and adorned with cushions embroidered in gold and silver. During the night, a great number of lamps of coloured glass were lighted around each tent, which produced a brilliant and variegated illumination. The reflections of the light, gilding the foliage of the orange and date-trees spread over the plain, formed a charming spectacle. The relations and friends of the pilgrims came to pass the night with them. At the break of day the Emir Haji gave the signal with the drum and trumpets. Every man struck his tent, and putting his baggage and provisions

sions on camels, began the journey.— First went the van guard, escorted by a corps of cavalry, well mounted. Next appeared the camel bearing the tapestry destined to cover the *Caaba*, or house of God. His head was decorated with a magnificent plume of feathers, and his back covered with a cloth of gold. He was environed by Priests, singing the hymns of the Coran. About twenty thousand pilgrims followed on foot, on horseback, and on camels. A body of five thousand cavalry, distributed in different troops, under the command of the Emir Haji, marched on the flanks of the caravan. A few ladies also, borne in litters, were making the pilgrimage. Nothing can be more magnificent than the departure of this caravan. The men, neatly clad, seem full of health and vigour; the horses, of fire and ardour. On their return every thing is changed; the animals meagre and languid, and the pilgrims pale, lank, and sun-burnt, appear like skeletons. In fact, this journey, which is extremely difficult, lasts forty days across the deserts, where they are obliged sometimes to travel fifty leagues without



without finding a single drop of water that is drinkable. The heat of the sun is excessive, and the dust raised by the feet of such a multitude of men and animals, darkens the air, fills the eyes and mouth, and prevents respiration. Sometimes the pestiferous winds from the south-east roll it along in such terrible whirls, that three or four hundred men perish in a day. This calamity is highly advantageous to the *Emir Haji*, who is entitled to the baggage and commercial effects of all those who die upon the way. Accordingly he frequently returns to Cairo possessed of the third of the property that went from it.

The caravan under the convoy of Mourad, after turning the extremity of the Red Sea, entered Arabia Deserta. The Arabs presented themselves, and attempted to exact the customary tribute. He cut off the heads of their Chiefs, and the others, unable to dispute the passage with him, returned to their tents, breathing vengeance. The caravan arrived safely at *Bedder*, where, according to custom, it joined that of Damascus, and six days after they reached Mecca.



Mecca. During the fourteen days that the Mahometans, collected from all parts of the world, remain in this city, to perform the duties of religion, an immense commerce is carried on. Part of the pilgrims repair thither to fulfil the precept which commands every Mussulman once in his life to visit the house of God. The rest are drawn by the allurements of interest, and carry with them the rarest produce of their respective countries. Here the pilgrim meets with abundance of the precious stuffs, and of the diamonds of India; the beautiful pearls of the Persian Gulph, the balsam, in such request amongst the Orientals, the steel weapons of Damascus, Moka coffee, the gold-dust of Africa, and the sequins of Grand Cairo. It is perhaps the richest fair in the whole world. Upwards of one hundred thousand merchants are collected here; and as the time is short, one cannot calculate the number of millions that are bartered for in the space of fourteen days. It were to be wished, that some European, versed in the Arabic tongue, and disguised as a merchant, could assist at this solemnity, and give us such details

details of it, as we are now forced to receive from the mouth of those in whom we cannot place perfect confidence, the Mussulmen never willingly conversing with Infidels on subjects respecting their religion. Vessels which could at this time reach Gedda, laden with certain European and Indian merchandize, *would be sure of selling their cargoes in a few hours, and of being paid for them immediately in gold.* The English have made some successful adventures of this sort, which, no doubt, they would have continued, had not political views, and disputes between them and the natives of the country, prevented their prosecution\*.

Mourad

\* Colonel Capper states this matter in his voyage and journey from India. "*It is much to be lamented,*" says he, "that the *Coventry frigate*, which lately went up the Red Sea, was *inadvertently betrayed* into a quarrel with the inhabitants of *Coffeir*, a place about six degrees north of *Gedda*, on the western shore, and only one hundred and twenty miles from the banks of the Nile.—It is said, that not only the fort and a number of houses were destroyed, but that also near

*“ six*

Mourad Bey was not so prosperous in his return as he had been in going to Mecca. Several Arab tribes combined their forces to avenge the blood of their chiefs. They waited the moment when the caravan must pass between the mountains, and attacked it with advantage. At first, there was no-

“ *six hundred of the inhabitants were killed.* This account is probably much exaggerated; but it is much to be feared as a heavy fire was kept up on the town for upwards of two hours, many of the people must have fallen, (and considering the population, why not six hundred?) and therefore at present it is unnecessary to examine more minutely into this route. I cannot however conclude this digression without expressing a hope (*spes vana!*) that some atonement will be made to them for their losses, (*the loss of life!*) which, whether they were attacked justly or not, is absolutely necessary before any European ought to venture to pass that way.” There is abundant matter for reflection in this extract from the work of a good citizen as well as excellent foldier; but if England will persist in her domineering spirit every where, though marked with blood, let her remember she is a *commercial* nation, and observe the above passage of *Mr. Savary*, and above all let her attend to the example of her rival nation, who is seldom or never engaged in such ill-judged or dangerous disputes.

Translator.  
thing



thing but confusion amongst this vast multitude, who overturned each other in endeavouring to take to flight. A great number of them was crushed to death, and many killed by the continual fire of the enemy. The Emir Haji, collecting his troops, put himself in a posture to repulse them. He marched at the head of his Mamelukes, and in spite of the fire of the Arabian artillery, climbed up the mountains and gave them a bloody battle. He lost a great number of men, and was himself wounded in the thigh and arm by two balls. These wounds however did not prevent him from vanquishing the Arabs, and obliging them to fly in confusion. They appeared no more during the remainder of his route. He arrived at Grand Cairo, spent with fatigue, and almost dying. Mr. Grace, physician of the French, was called, and cured him, but not without very serious anxiety, *for his life was to answer for that of the sick Bey.* All the inhabitants of Grand Cairo went out to meet their friends and relations. Some of them had to lament the loss of a brother, a father, a husband, and gave way

to bitter lamentations. Mothers in despair were seen tearing their clothes, and covering their faces with the dust. Others, joyful at the return of the persons who were dear to them, filled the air with shouts of gladness, and returned thanks to heaven. It is impossible to express the various sentiments this spectacle inspired. One was a witness alternately to the excess of grief, and the intoxication of joy. On returning to his house, each pilgrim found an apartment prepared according to his situation. The walls were newly painted; all the furniture, the carpets, the sofas, the cushions were new, as if any thing ancient were unworthy of belonging to a man returned from the holy pilgrimage. These traits testify at once, Sir, the filial tenderness, and the piety of the Egyptians; and the sublime idea they entertain of their religion. The persons returned from Mecca assume for the remainder of their lives the surname of *Hajji* (1), and bear it as an honourable title. The rich who dread the fatigues of the

(1) Pilgrim.



journey, imagine they fulfil the precept, by sending a substitute in their place, and by defraying his expences.

Having quitted Egypt at the end of 1779, I am unable to give a circumstantial detail of the subsequent events. I have only learnt by letters from Grand Cairo, that the impetuous *Mourad*, wishing to attain to the dignity of *Scheik Elbalad*, had declared war against his rival; that they had fought and been reconciled; and that in 1784, being embroiled anew, they were, each of them, at the head of an army, and ready to come to blows. I am ignorant of the success of the battle, but whoever be the victor, he will strive to elevate his creatures, and to exterminate all the Beys of the opposite party, until treason or defeat shall have made him experience a similar destiny.

You will readily conceive, Sir, what must be the fate of Egypt, resigned to the robbery of eight thousand foreigners, who devour the produce of her rich provinces, and make her incessantly suffer all the horrors of war. But whatever ideas you may form of her misfortunes, they will be much below

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the reality. Agriculture destroyed; the canals, which circulated abundance through every part of it, choaked up; arbitrary tributes levied by violence; men of property stripped and massacred; rogues employed in every department; war, pestilence and famine, the usual result of the discord of her chiefs; such are the miseries to which the people of Egypt are condemned.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XLIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE AGRICULTURE  
OF THE COUNTRY.

*Agriculture anciently flourishing in Egypt.*

*The immense labour which has been bestowed on confining the river, and on watering the land. The decay of those useful monuments.*

*Productions of the soil. The seasons of sowing and reaping different according to the situation of the lands. Their prodigious fertility in ancient times. The means necessary to be employed for procuring much fertility. The method of raising the bees which the Egyptians carry in a boat from one extremity of the kingdom to the other.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**GRICULTURE, Sir, was in great esteem amongst the ancient Egyptians. They had rendered it very flourishing in the whole extent of their empire; witness the immense works they have made, in the distribution of

the canals and for watering the lands. At present we reckon eighty canals like rivers, all dug by the hand of man, several of which are twenty, thirty, and forty leagues in length. They receive the inundation, and circulate the waters through the country. Six only have water in them the whole year. The others nearly choaked up, are dry upon the fall of the Nile. The great lakes of *Mæris*, of *Bebiré*, and *Mareotis* form vast reservoirs calculated to contain the superfluous waters, and at length to spread them over the adjacent plains. They raised them upon the elevated grounds by means of vertical wheels, the invention of which is due to the Egyptians. One ox was sufficient to turn them, and to water a vast field. These wheels gave to Archimedes, in his journey into Egypt, the idea of the ingenious chain, or *chapelet*, still made use of in our days. Besides these reservoirs, all the towns at some distance from the Nile are furrounded by spacious ponds to supply the wants of the inhabitants, and for the advantage of cultivation. Some great dykes, the ruins of which are still to be seen,

served



served to keep in the river; others were opposed to the torrents of sand which have a continual tendency to cover the face of Egypt. The waters are conveyed by aqueducts to the very summit of the hills. They were received there in immense basons hewn out of the rock, from whence, flowing into the midst of deserts, they converted them into fruitful fields. Near to *Babain* we discover the ruins of one of these aqueducts, which bends its course towards Lybia. It bears the character of majesty, peculiar to all the Egyptian monuments. These works, not less marvellous than the pyramids and colossuses of the Thebais, had infinitely more utility. They prevented the ravages of extraordinary overflows, supplied the deficiency of moderate ones, and gave food to millions of inhabitants.

In the period of 1200 years that this country has been subject to nations who are not cultivators, they have suffered the greatest part of these noble works to go to ruin. The barbarism of the present government will put the finishing hand to their destruction. Every year, the limits of cultivated

Egypt are encroached upon, and barren sands accumulate from all parts. In 1517, the æra of the Turkish conquest, Lake Mareotis was at no distance from the walls of Alexandria, and the canal which conveyed the waters into that city was still navigable. At this day the lake has disappeared, and the lands it watered, and which, according to historians, produced abundance of corn, wine, and various fruits, are changed into deserts, where the sorrowful traveller finds neither shrub, nor plant, nor verdure. The canal itself, the work of Alexander, necessary even to the subsistence of the inhabitants of the city he built, is nearly choaked up. It only receives the waters when the inundation is at its highest point, and preserves them but for a short time. Forty years ago a part of the mud deposited by the river was cleared out of it, and it retained the water three months longer. By completing this operation, it would resume its ancient utility. The pelusiatic branch which discharges itself into the eastern part of the lake of *Tanis* or *Menzalé*, is totally destroyed. With it perished  
the



the beautiful province it fertilized, and the famous canal begun by Necos (*m*), and finished by Ptolemy Philadelphus. It was drawn from this branch to Aggeroud (*n*), the ancient Arfinoé, situated at the extremity of the Red Sea. As they were apprehensive lest by opening this communication, the Arabic gulph, which was thought to be eleven feet higher than the Mediterranean, might overflow the country, they had placed large sluices at the entrance. But I am of opinion that this supposition was ill founded, since other canals drawn from the Nile to the Arabic gulph, have produced no inconvenience. These immortal works, executed by kings who made the prosperity of the people their happiness, and the glory of their empire, have not been able to resist the ravages of conquerors, and that despotism which destroys every thing, until it

(*m*) Strabo and Pliny attest this fact, as well as Diodorus Siculus; see also the *Memoirs of Baron de Tott*, 2d vol. edit. by Jarvis.

(*n*) Between the time of Ptolemy and our days, the Red Sea has retired *two leagues*, for Aggeroud is at that distance from Suez.



buries itself under the wreck of the kingdoms, whose foundations it has fapped. The canal of *Amrou*, the last of the great works of Egypt, and which communicated Fostat to Colzoum, reaches no farther at present than to four leagues beyond Cairo, and loses itself in the Lake of Pilgrims. Such, Sir, is the present state of this country. We may confidently assert that upwards of one third of the lands formerly in cultivation, are metamorphosed into desarts, whose horrid aspect frights the traveller.

It is the same with respect to population. Ancient Egypt furnished subsistence for about eight millions of inhabitants, and supplied Italy and the neighbouring provinces with provisions. At this day we do not reckon half the number. I will not believe with Herodotus and Pliny that there were twenty thousand cities in this kingdom in the time of Pharaoh Amasis, but the astonishing ruins we meet with at every step, and in uninhabited places, announces that they must have been three times more numerous than in our days. If you have deigned to read with attention the picture I have  
traced

traced out to you of the present Government, you will cease your surprize at the downfall of this country. The population of a state is never beyond the proportion of the means of subsistence. It increases, diminishes, and terminates with them. Now that the merchant and the husbandman is despoiled at the pleasure of eight thousand foreigners, one abandons his commercial speculations, the other the labours of agriculture, and the country is sensibly depopulating every day.

All the lands belong to the Chiefs. They sell them to individuals. At the death of the proprietors they revert to the public Exchequer. The son is obliged to purchase the inheritance of his father, but without being always sure of obtaining it. The best bidder, or he who has the most credit, obtains the investiture. What can a husbandman be expected to perform for the improvement of lands, who is not certain of transmitting his possessions to his children? His cares are limited to a present livelihood, and he leaves part of his lands untilled. The Cachefs and the Sangiaks, authorized  
by

by the treaty with the Grand Signior to levy arbitrary tributes, commit unheard-of vexations. Frequently the wretched countryman wants common necessaries in the midst of the abundance that furrounds him, and is obliged to sell his instruments of husbandry to pay the imposts. This tyranny disables them from cultivating the richest spot of ground on earth.

Another evil, not less fatal, results from the vicissitudes of the Government. When the Beys go to war, the people take part in their quarrels, and employ fire and sword mutually to destroy each other. I have more than once seen villages burnt, all the inhabitants murdered by their neighbours, and the fruit of their harvest perish in the flames.

The Chiefs of the Republic retain from the tribute sent annually to Constantinople, considerable sums, which ought to be employed in the support of the public buildings and the canals. Their continual dissensions, the necessity they are under of amassing gold to purchase the Mamalukes, to pay troops, and to encrease their party, prevents



prevents them from attending to this indispensable labour. This negligence gives a mortal stab to agriculture; a whole district, which owed its fertility and its riches to the waters of a canal, no longer receiving a sufficient quantity, becomes uncultivated and abandoned. The Nile, in the course of 900 leagues, traversing deserts and barren mountains, brings with it a prodigious quantity of sand and mud. I have seen rivulets dug, where, after remaining a year, it had deposited three feet of ooze. Judge with what rapidity it must fill up the most useful canals, did not human skill constantly look after their preservation. This fact alone will explain to you why immense lakes are at this day dried up, and once-fruitful provinces are become servile and uninhabited.

How culpable are they who thus suffer the springs of plenty to dry up? for wherever the waters of the Nile are conveyed, there is the earth covered with treasures; it only seeks to be productive. In the Delta, as in the Saïd, the plough is made use of in cultivation. When the ox has traced out a  
flight

flight furrow, the clods are broken with the hoe, and the ground is made as level as a garden. After it is sown, it undergoes a flight harrowing. Here finish the labours of the husbandman till the harvest, which is extremely plentiful, and never fails, but with the failure of the inundation. When the barley and the corn are ripe, they are reaped and spread out on the barn floor. A peasant seated on a cart, the wheels of which are very sharp, and drawn by oxen with a bandage over their eyes, drives over the straw, and hatches it in pieces. The corn is then separated from the chaff. The grain is yellow, large, and of an excellent quality. The Egyptians make a sort of red bread of it, half baked, and bad; because, instead of employing wind and water-mills, they make use only of hand-mills, and do not sufficiently bolt the flour. The French baker here, with the same corn, made bread as white as snow, and admirably well tasted. The rice, as I have already observed to you, requires a little more attention. The field designed for it must be overflowed, all other herbs rooted out, and must be watered every day

day after it is planted, which is done by *roses à chapelet*. At the end of five months they cut it, and usually reap eighty bushels for one. Besides these grains, Egypt produces in abundance, dourra, or Indian millet, flax, formerly so famous, hemp, char-tame, or *safranum*, and innumerable sorts of exquisite melons and vegetables, which the people feed on during the heats.

The seed time is different in different provinces, and according to the exposure of the lands. Near to Sienna they sow the barley and the corn in October, and reap it in January. Towards Gingé, they cut it in February, and in the month of March in the neighbourhood of Cairo. This is the usual progress of the harvest in the Saïd. There are also a number of partial harvests, according as the lands are nearer or at a greater distance from the river, lower or more elevated. In the lower Egypt they are sowing and reaping all the year. Wherever the waters of the river can be procured, the earth is never idle, and furnishes three crops annually. It is there that the traveller has constantly before his eyes



eyes the charming spectacle of flowers, fruits, and harvests, and that the spring, the summer, and the autumn, present all their treasures at a time. In descending from the cataracts at the beginning of January, one perceives the corn almost ripe ; lower down it is in ear, and, advancing farther, the plains are covered with verdure.

The Lucern, which they cut three times between the months of March and November, is the only hay of the Egyptians. Their flocks are principally fed with it. The horses, asses, mules, and camels, graze in the meadows during the winter ; the rest of the year they eat cut straw, barley, and beans. This food contributes to their health, and gives them great force and ardour. The Arabs accustom their horses to the greatest abstinence, leading them only once a day to water, and feeding them with a little barley and milk.

The Egyptians rarely cultivating the olive-tree, they purchase their oil in Crete and Syria. But as they derived from their ancestors a taste for illuminations, they extract oil from different plants. The most  
3 common

common is the produce of the Sefame, called by them, *Sireg*, oil for burning. They make oil also of the seed of the chartame, of flax, of the poppy, and the lettuce. The people eat that made of chartame.

I have already spoken to you, Sir, of the art with which the Egyptians hatch chickens, an art peculiar to themselves. Their manner of bringing up bees is not less extraordinary, and announces a great deal of understanding.

As, upper Egypt only retains its verdure for four or five months, and the flowers and harvests are earlier there, the inhabitants of the Lower profit by these precious moments. They collect the bees of different villages in large boats. Each proprietor trusts to them his hives, which have a particular mark. When the bark is loaded, the men who have the management of them, gradually mount the river, and stop at every place where they find flowers and verdure. The bees, at the break of day, quit their cells by thousands, and go in search of the treasures with which they compose their nectar. They go and come several

ral times laden with their booty. In the evening these ingenious labourers return to their habitations, without ever mistaking their dwelling. After travelling three months in this manner on the Nile, the bees having culled the perfumes of the orange flower of the Saïd, the essence of roses of the Faioum, the treasures of the Arabian Jessamine, and a variety of flowers, are brought back to the places they had been carried from, where they now find new riches to partake of. This industry procures the Egyptians delicious honey, and bees-wax in abundance. The proprietors, in return, pay the boatmen a recompence proportioned to the number of hives he has been thus carrying about from one end of Egypt to the other.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XLIV.

ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPERATURE OF  
THE CLIMATE.

*The heats excessive in Upper Egypt, and moderate in the Lower. The small number of diseases which prevail among the Egyptians. The means they use for curing a fever, and preserving their health. During a part of the winter and spring, the wind blows from the South, and proves prejudicial. Through the remaining part of the year, the North wind produces salutary effects. The leprosy unknown in the country. The plague not a native disease of the climate. The Europeans avoid this terrible scourge by shutting themselves up.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

YOU are now, Sir, well acquainted with Egypt and its productions; but you must have still some doubts remaining on the salubrity of the climate. The overflowings

of the Nile, the stagnant waters in many parts of it, will naturally have induced you to imagine that this country is unhealthy, and its inhabitants subject to a great many disorders. A pretty long experience, and information obtained upon the spot, will furnish you with materials calculated to calm your fears, and to form your opinion.

This kingdom begins at the Torrid, and extends itself nine degrees into the Temperate Zone. It is true that the heats of the Thebais exceed those we experience in many countries directly under the Equator. While the fiery breath of the south wind continues, Reaumur's thermometer sometimes rises to 38 degrees above the freezing point, and frequently to 36 degrees. This phenomenon must be attributed to the arid nature of the sandy plains with which Upper Egypt is environed, and to the reverberation from the mountains which hem it in, in its whole length. If heat were the source of the disorders, the Saïd would be uninhabitable. The burning fever is the only one it seems to give rise to, and to which the inhabitants are

are subject. They soon get rid of it by regimen, drinking a great deal of water, and bathing themselves in the river. In other respects they are a robust and healthy race of people. They have a great many old men amongst them, several of whom mount on horseback at fourscore years of age. The regimen they observe during the hot season, greatly contributes to the preservation of their health. They scarcely take any thing but vegetables, pulse, and milk. They make frequent use of the bath, eat little, rarely drink fermented liquors, and mix a great deal of lemon-juice in their aliment. This sobriety preserves their vigour to a very advanced age.

Soon after the inundation, the fields are cloathed with harvests. The exhalations of the waters, attracted by the sun in the daytime, are condensed by the coolness of the nights, and fall in copious dews. The north wind which prevails constantly during the summer, meeting with no obstacle in its current in the extent of Egypt, the mountains of which are of no considerable height, drives the vapours of the lakes and marshes



towards Abyſſinia, and perpetually renews the atmosphere. Perhaps, too, the baſmamic emanations from the orange-flower, the roſes, the Arabian jeſſamine, and other odoriferous plants, contribute to the ſalubrity of the air. Undoubtedly the water of the Nile alſo, which is lighter, ſweeter, and more agreeable to the palate than any I ever taſted, has a great influence on the health of the inhabitants. Its excellence is acknowledged by all antiquity (*a*). It is very certain at leaſt, that one drinks it with a ſort of voluptuouſneſs, and that no bad conſequence ever follows from taking any quantity of it. But as it is ſlightly impregnated with nitre, it poſſeſſes a gentle laxative quality when uſed to exceſs. I

(*a*) Ptolemy Philadelphus, having married his daughter Berenice, to Antiochus, King of Syria, ſent her ſome Nile water, as the only water ſhe could drink. *Athenæus*. The Kings of Perſia ſent for Nile water, with ſal-ammoniac. *Dion. Hiſtory of Perſia*.

The Egyptians alone of all people preſerved the Nile water in ſealed vaſes, and drank it when old, with the ſame pleaſure that we drink old wine. *Ariſtides, the Rhetorician*.

ſhall

shall not say, with many writers, that these waters procure fecundity to women, and bestow vigour and good plight of body on the men. The faithful historian should stop where the marvellous begins, and cite no facts beyond the reach of testimony.

In Lower Egypt, the neighbourhood of the sea, the immensity of the lakes, the abundance of the waters, deaden the fires of the sun, and maintain there a delightful temperature. Neither Strabo nor Diodorus Siculus, who long resided in this country, looked upon it as unhealthy.

They have praised the fertility of its soil, the excellence of its productions, the grandeur of its monuments, and its numerous population, without so much as mentioning those frightful maladies, of which the moderns make this country the focus. Herodotus expressly says, “ The Egyptians  
“ are the most healthy people in the world,  
“ an advantage they owe to the salubrity of  
“ the air, and the temperature of their climate,  
“ which varies very little ; for most of the  
“ disorders of men are to be attributed to  
“ the rapid vicissitudes of the seasons.” It



was reserved for some moderns, who have never travelled in this beautiful country, and above all to Mr. Paw, to lay down a contrary doctrine. He pretends, that in our days, “ it is become, by the negligence  
“ of the Turks and Arabs, the cradle of  
“ the plague (*b*); that another epidemic  
“ distemper, as terrible as that brought to  
“ Cairo by the caravans from Nubia, manifests itself there from time to time; that  
“ the culture of rice alone is sufficient to  
“ engender numerous maladies; that the  
“ want of rain and thunder makes the air  
“ of the Thebais acquire violence enough  
“ to occasion a fermentation of the humours  
“ of the human body, &c.” These assertions carry with them an air of probability, calculated to impose on persons who have not dwelt in Egypt. But Mr. Paw has hazarded them from his closet, without being guided by experience. Had he lived at any time on the spot, facts would have convinced him of his error\*.

In

(*b*) Recherches sur les Egyptiens & les Chinois.

\* Baron de Tott, in his ingenious Memoirs, Vol. XI.



In the vallies hemmed in by lofty mountains, where the atmosphere cannot be perpetually renewed by a current of air, the culture of rice is unwholesome, and the husbandmen often pay with their lives the rich harvest they are seeking from the earth. It is not the same in the environs of Damietta and Rosetta. The plains are almost always on a level with the sea. There is neither eminence nor hill to divert the refreshing breeze of the north wind. It drives towards the south the clouds and exhalations of the deluged fields. It continually

p. 288 fully confirms this. "The inquiries I carefully made, says he, respecting the plague, which I had always imagined to be of Egyptian origin, convinced me that it would not even be known in that country, were not the infection conveyed to *Alexandria* by its commerce with *Constantinople*. It is in the former town it always begins to shew itself. It is but very seldom too that it reaches *Cairo*, although no precaution is taken to prevent it; and when it does, the great heats soon put a stop to it, and hinder it from penetrating into that city; besides, it is well known that the piercing dews which fall in Egypt towards midsummer, destroy, even at *Alexandria*, the very seeds of this disorder."

*Translator.*

purifies the atmosphere and preserves the health of the inhabitants. Whether it be owing to this cause or to others of which I am ignorant, it is at least certain, that the countrymen employed in the cultivation of rice are no more subject to illness than those of the Thebais, who do not cultivate it. I passed a whole year amongst the rice grounds, which I went to see them water every day, without suffering the slightest inconvenience. An old surgeon, a native of Nice, and who had practised physic thirty years at Damietta, has a hundred times confirmed to me, every thing I have advanced on the salubrity of the country. What torments the inhabitants the most are the gnats and innumerable swarms of musquetoës, which rising by millions from the morasses, fill the air and the houses. One must never be without a fly-flap in one's hand in the day time, which indeed is the first thing you are presented with on a visit; and at night you are obliged to sleep under musqueto nets.

Disorders of the eyes are the most common in Egypt. Persons blind of one eye or  
of



of both eyes, are met with here in great numbers. This calamity must not be wholly attributed to the reverberation of a burning sun, for the Arabs who live in the midst of sands, have in general strong eyes and a piercing sight. Nor must we give more credit to Mr. Hasselquest (*c*), who resided a short time in this country, when he says, that this disorder proceeds from the vapours which exhale from the stagnant waters, for the French merchants whose houses line the canal of Grand Cairo, which for six months of the year contains standing water of an insupportable odour, would be all blind, and for fifty years past not one of them has lost his sight (*d*). The custom the Egyptians have of sleeping in the open air in the summer, either on the terraces of their houses, or near their huts, is doubtless the origin of this infirmity. The nitre generally diffused throughout the air, and the

(*c*) Voyage d'Egypte.

(*d*) One only of these merchants lost his sight, but he lived within the city, and not on the banks of the canal. This fact therefore proves nothing in favour of Mr. Hasselquest's opinion.

heavy



heavy dews of the night, attack the delicate organ of sight, and deprives them either of one or both eyes. Eight thousand of these unhappy people are kept in the great mosque of Cairo, and they are provided with a decent subsistence.

The small pox and hernias are also very common, but without making any great ravages in Egypt. As to the phthific and fluxions of the breast, which in cold countries carry off so many persons in the flower of their age, they are strangers to this happy climate. Pains of the breast are never felt here. I am persuaded that persons attacked by those cruel maladies, would recover their health in a country where the air, dense, warm, and moist, impregnated with the perfume of plants and the oily quality of the earth, appears highly favourable to the lungs (*e*).

It

(*e*) Mr. Paw pretends that the Egyptians have been at all times afflicted by the leprosy. Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, who were well acquainted with this country, do not however mention this malady, a proof that it was unknown there, in their time. I have seen lepers in the islands of the Archipelago, sequestered from society,

as

It must be admitted, however, that there is an unhealthy season in Egypt. From February to the month of May, the southerly winds blow at intervals. They fill the atmosphere with a subtle dust which impedes respiration, and bring with them pernicious vapours. The heat becomes sometimes insupportable, and the thermometer rises suddenly twelve degrees. During this season, called *khamfin* or *fifty* by the inhabitants, from the period in which this wind is more peculiarly felt, from Easter to Whitsuntide, they feed on rice, vegetables, fresh fish, and fruits. They bathe frequently, and make great use of lemon juice and perfumes. With this regimen they guard themselves against the dangerous effects of the *khamfin*.

It must not be imagined that this wind, which corrupts in a few hours flesh meat, and all animal substance, lasts fifty days together; it would make Egypt a desert. But

as among the Jews: they inhabit cottages on the side of the highways, and beg alms of passengers. But in Egypt, where I have travelled a great deal, I never met with one of these unfortunate persons.



it rarely blows three days successively. Sometimes it appears only in the shape of an impetuous whirlwind, which passes rapidly, and is fatal only to the traveller surprized in the middle of the deserts. A hurricane of this sort suddenly arose whilst I was at Alexandria, in the month of May, rolling before it torrents of burning sand. The firmament was enveloped in a thick veil; the sun appeared of the colour of blood. The dust penetrated into the very apartments, and burnt the face and eyes. At the end of four hours the tempest calmed, and the sky resumed its serenity. Some wretched travellers who happened to be in the desert were suffocated. I saw several dead brought in, and some who were thought to be of the number, restored to life by bathing them in cold water. The inhabitants of Grand Cairo, situated farther up the country, suffer more from this calamity, and a French merchant who was very lusty, died there, suffocated by the heat. Similar phenomena have buried whole armies and caravans.

Several



Several modern authors, at the head of whom appears Mr. Paw, have asserted that the plague is of Egyptian origin. Were this a fact, it would certainly greatly diminish the advantages of this country, for no fertility or riches can ever balance the miseries inflicted by this scourge upon humanity. The information I have acquired, both from the natives of the country, and from foreign physicians who have resided here from twenty to thirty years, tends to prove the contrary. They have all assured me that this epidemical disease was brought there by the Turks, and that it afterwards committed great havock. The following circumstance has fallen within my own observation. In 1778, the Grand Signior's Caravelles arrived at Damietta, and landed, according to custom, the silks of Syria. The plague is almost always on board of these vessels. They put on shore without opposition their merchandize and the persons sick of the plague. This was in the month of August, and as the epidemic ceases in Egypt at that season, it did not communicate. The vessels set sail, and proceeded to poison other places.

places. The summer following, some ships from Constantinople infected with this disorder, arrived at the port of Alexandria. They landed their sick without doing any mischief to the inhabitants. Since that period some ships from Smyrna have brought this contagion at the beginning of winter. It has spread throughout the country, and has destroyed a number of the Egyptians.

The following is an observation made for ages past. During the months of June, July, and August, if merchandize infected with this poison be introduced into Egypt, it dies of itself, and the people are under no alarm. If it has been conveyed into the country at any other season, and has been communicated, it invariably ceases at that period. But what nearly amounts to a demonstration of its being a stranger to this country, is, that except in times of great famine, it never breaks out first in Grand Cairo, nor in the interior cities. It always begins in the sea-port towns, on the arrival of Turkish vessels, makes a gradual progress to the capital, from whence it ascends as far as Sienna. When it has attained its  
period



period at Grand Cairo, and is afterwards introduced anew by the inhabitants of the Thebais, it rages with redoubled fury, sometimes destroying two or three hundred thousand men; but it always ceases in the month of June, and those who then catch the infection, recover. Must its cessation then be attributed to its great heats, to the salubrious north winds which reign during the summer, or to the abundant dews which fall in that season? Perhaps all these different causes contribute towards it (*f*).

Another

(*f*) I must lay before you a fact, Sir, which was related to me by a captain worthy of credit, since it may furnish some light to physicians who are seeking for an antidote against this destructive scourge. “ I left Constantinople where the plague was raging. My sailors had contracted this epidemic disorder. Two of them died suddenly. In taking care of them, I caught the infection. I felt an excessive heat which made my blood boil. My head was very soon attacked, and I perceived that I had but a few moments to live. I employed the little judgment I had remaining to make an experiment. I stripped quite naked, and laid myself for the remainder of the night on the deck. The copious dew that fell, pierced me to the very bones. In a few hours it rendered my respiration freer, and my

“ head



Another remark deserving our particular attention, is, that the extremes of heat and cold are alike enemies to this terrible contagion. The winter puts an end to it at Constantinople; the summer destroys it in Egypt. It scarcely ever reaches to the polar circle, and never passes the tropic. The caravans of Grand Cairo, Damascus, and Isphahan, which are sometimes infected with it, never propagate the disorder at Mecca, and the yemen is wholly free from this calamity.

In reading history we seldom find the plague at Lacedæmon, Athens, or Byzantium. When it spread itself in Greece, the people soon put a stop to it by keeping great fires lighted in the public places, by cleaning the canals, by cutting the hills which intercepted the vapours, and by stopping the communication. There is no change in the

“ head more composed. The agitation of my blood was  
“ calmed, and after bathing myself in sea water in the  
“ morning, I was compleatly cured.” I do not know,  
Sir, whether this be an infallible remedy, but I am certain,  
that all infected substances that have passed through water,  
no longer communicate the poison.

air

air, the water, the sun of these beautiful countries; and the same salubrity would reign there, were they still inhabited by natives whose government was attentive to the public welfare, and the health of the citizens. In our days, Smyrna and Constantinople are the foci of this frightful malady. The cause of this must be attributed to the little value the Turkish government sets on the lives of men, and to their absurd ideas of predestination. What signifies it to the despot whether one half of his people perish, provided he can himself brave death, shut up in the recesses of his Seraglio? What matters it to the Mahometan to see thousands of his fellow creatures swept away from his side by the plague, since he can only cease to live when his hour is come? He will make no attempt therefore to retard it?

When the contagion reaches the houses of the Europeans and Greeks, they purify them by fumigations; they leave the windows open to give a free circulation to the air, and burn every thing that has belonged to infected persons. Not so with the Ar-



menians and Turks; they neither burn nor purify any thing. When the principal members of a family are extinguished, the Jews purchase at a low price the furniture and other effects belonging to them, and shut them up in their magazines. As soon as the calamity has ceased, they sell them very dear to such persons as stand in need of them, and with them communicate the pestilential poison (*g*). It soon breaks out afresh, and causes new ravages. It is thus that this nation covered with opprobrium, valuing gold beyond life, sells the plague to the musfulmen, who purchase it without fear, and go to sleep with it until the fatal moment, when resuming its activity, it precipitates them to the grave \*.

The spectacle this calamity presents, especially at Grand Cairo, chills an European with horror. This immense city, from the report of the Intendants of the custom-

(*g*) The last plague at Moscow, which carried off 200,000 inhabitants, was conveyed thither by pestiferous merchandize out of the warehouses of the Jews.

\* See De Tott's Memoirs, p. 75, vol. I. T.



houses, contains from eight to nine hundred thousand inhabitants. They are heaped together by thousands. Two hundred citizens there occupy less space than thirty at Paris §. The streets are very narrow, and always crowded with people. They press forward, they run against each other, and one is sometimes obliged to wait several minutes without being able to get through the crowd. A single infected person communicates the poison to a hundred wretches. The disorder makes a rapid progress, and spreads with the violence of a conflagration, aided by the wind. The Mahometans die in their houses, in the public squares, in the streets, without affording any useful example of terror to the survivors. *Ell moukaddar*, say they, *it is their destiny*; yet they have before their eyes the example of the Europeans, who alone escape the general disaster.

As soon as the epidemy is declared, the French shut up their quarter, and cut off

§ And thirty citizens of Paris occupy less space than ten in London. [Translator.]

all communication with the city. Arab servants who live without, bring them every day their necessary provisions. Except bread, which does not communicate the poison, they throw every thing else through a wicket in each gate, into a bucket of water. *This fluid purifies them*, and they are taken out without any danger. By means of these precautions, the French merchants preserve their health and their lives, environed as they are with all the horrors of death. The streets are continually filled with funeral processions, followed by mourning and by tears. When the Egyptians carry to the grave their relations and their friends, hired female mourners make the air resound with their groans (*b*); desolated mothers aban-

(*b*) In the time of Herodotus, the mourning was the same. He speaks of it as follows: "When a person of any importance dies, all the women of the family cover their faces with mud. They run through the city with their hair dishevelled, their bosoms exposed, their clothes tucked up, and, making loud cries, beat their breasts!" *Euterpe*.—The inhabitants of the South-Sea Islands carry still farther their filial piety, their maternal tenderness; for, at the death of their relations, they make deep scars upon their faces, and signalize their sorrow by shedding streams of blood



don themselves to lamentations, cover their faces with dust, tear their garments, and conduct to the very edge of the tomb the child they have been clasping in their arms, and whom they are to follow probably a few moments after ; for the Orientals, more pious than we are, never abandon their infected relations. They bestow their cares on them to the last moment, though morally certain that this act of tenderness will cost them their lives. These cries of despair, these funeral processions, spread universal consternation, and the French tremble in the bosom of their sanctuaries ; and who could without grief and horror behold humanity groaning under the rigour of so severe a scourge ? They do not all perish who are attacked with it ; several are cured, but I have been assured, that the plague carries off sometimes at Grand Cairo, three hundred thousand inhabitants. Can you conceive it possible that the example of the French, who come out of their houses after the contagion is at an end, safe and healthy, furnishes the Turks with not the smallest idea of making use of similar precautions ?



Can you imagine that, in the vast extent of the Ottoman empire, there is not a single port for performing quarantine? Does such a nation deserve to occupy the country of the ancient Greeks, and the Egyptians, their masters? It has destroyed the arts, liberty, and commerce. It leaves the wretches it has reduced to slavery to perish for want of Government. It perpetuates amongst them the most destructive of calamities, and converts kingdoms, celebrated islands, and flourishing cities, into desarts.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    X L V.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIFFERENT INHABITANTS OF EGYPT.

*The Coptis, descendants of the Egyptians, have lost the genius and knowledge of their ancestors. Next to them the Arabians, the most ancient inhabitants of the country. Their dominion twice extended over it. Those who, under the government of the Beys, cultivate the lands, have entirely lost the good faith natural to the nation, while those who live under their Scheiks have preserved their honesty and virtues. The Bedouins inhabit the desarts, and declare war against all the caravans; but they are generous, hospitable, and pay a sacred regard to their oaths. The Christians of Syria, the Greeks, and the Jews, practise the mechanical arts. Real Turks not numerous in Egypt.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** Have hitherto only spoken vaguely to you, Sir, of the different races of people who in-

habit Egypt. It is proper to make you more particularly acquainted with their character, their customs, and their arts. The Arabs, especially those who environ this kingdom, and who partly occupy it, merit a peculiar attention. The details I am now about to offer you will explain how possible it is for four millions of men to submit to the yoke of eight thousand foreigners, and in what manner a wandering nation has been able to preserve its liberties and laws, amidst the formidable powers that surround it.

The genuine natives of Egypt are the Cophts, or Coptis, who, according to some authors, derive their name from *Cophptos*, that once celebrated city of the Thebais, and, according to others, from *Cobtos*, *Cut*, because they have always preserved the custom of circumcision. These are the sole descendants of the Egyptians. Subjected for upwards of two thousand years to foreign Princes, they have lost the genius and the sciences of their ancestors; but they have preserved many of their customs, and the ancient vulgar language of the country. The knowledge transmitted to them from  
father



father to son, of all the cultivated lands, of their value and extent, makes them be selected as Secretaries to the Beys, and Intendants of all the Governors. In order to prevent these great men from becoming acquainted with their books of account, they write them in general in Coptic. They do not, however, perfectly understand the language they make use of; but as their mass-books, the Pentateuch, and many of the works they are possessed of, are accompanied with an Arabian translation, the ancient vulgar tongue of the Egyptians is not lost. It will furnish the learned possibly some day with the means of throwing a light on the darkness spread over the first ages of the monarchy of the Pharaohs, and of lifting up the veil which covers the hieroglyphic mysteries.

The Cophts embraced Christianity in its origin. After Amrou conquered Egypt, he permitted them the free exercise of the Christian religion. They have ever since had churches, Priests, Bishops, and a Patriarch, who fixed his seat of residence at Grand Cairo, when that city became the capital.

capital. Devoted to the errors of Monotheism, their ignorance will not allow them to discover the blindness into which they are plunged. They are enchained by obstinacy and the spirit of sect, and nothing can alter their belief. They mix in their worship a number of superstitious customs, which they have received from their ancestors. In other respects, the Cophts are gentle, humane, and hospitable. Paternal tenderness and filial love constitute the happiness of their families. They honour and cherish all the ties of blood. The internal commerce, the art of hatching chickens, and of bringing up bees, form almost their only science. They often acquire prodigious wealth in the management of the affairs entrusted to them, but they never enjoy the fruit of their labours in tranquillity. The Bey, who sees them in opulence, strips them of their riches without pity; too happy if they can purchase their lives by the loss of their fortune. These vexations never excite them to revolt. Their want of energy holds them chained down to servitude

vitute and misery, and they support them without murmuring.

After the Cophts, the Arabs are the most ancient people of Egypt. Twice have they reigned over that country. The first epocha of their dominion goes back to the remotest antiquity, and, according to grave writers, precedes the arrival of Joseph in the country. The second commences with the seventh century, and finishes with the twelfth. They still compose two thirds of the inhabitants. Their manners vary with their situation. Such as have become husbandmen, and live under the government of the foreigners who rule the country, afford to the philosopher a striking example of the influence of laws on men. In subjection to a tyrannical government, they have lost the good faith, the uprightness, which characterize their nation. They take part in the quarrels of their masters. Villages rise up in arms against villages, cities against cities. During the perpetual revolutions at Grand Cairo, the country presents a frightful scene of carnage and of horror. The harvests are devoured by the flames, and the blood



blood of the peasants bathes those fields from which they heretofore produced abundance. As hatreds are unextinguishable amongst these people, as the mother infuses the desire of vengeance with her milk, into her infant, men are only born to be mutual destroyers. These degenerate Arabs, known by the name of *Fellah*, render the navigation of the Nile very dangerous. They attack boats under cover of the darkness, murder the travellers, take possession of their merchandize, and commit all sorts of robberies.

Another part of the Arabs, who may be also called cultivators, live under the government of their *Scheiks*, who possess several principalities in the Thebais. This word, which signifies *old man*, is the most illustrious token of their power. They are still, as heretofore, the Judges, the Pontiffs, and the Sovereigns of their people. They govern more like fathers of families than Kings. These venerable patriarchs usually take their repasts at the doors of their houses, or their tents, and invite all who present themselves. On rising from table

2

they

they cry with a loud voice, *In the name of God, let him that is hungry come near, and eat*; nor is this invitation a barren compliment. Every man, whoever he be, has a right to seat himself, and to partake of the food he finds there. Permit me to quote the passage of Genesis (i), where Abraham receives the angels, that you may compare their present manners with those of the same people in such distant ages. “ And A bra-  
 “ ham sat in the tent door, in the plains of  
 “ Mamre, in the heat of day. And he lift  
 “ up his eyes, and looked, and lo, three  
 “ men stood by him; and when he saw  
 “ them, he ran to meet them from the tent  
 “ door, and bowed himself towards the  
 “ ground, and said, *My Lord\**, if now I  
 “ have found favour in thy sight, pass not  
 “ away, I pray thee, from thy servant. Let  
 “ a little water I pray you be fetched, and  
 “ wash your feet, and rest yourselves under  
 “ the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of

(i) Genesis, chap. 18.

\* The version of the Bible has it, *My Lords, Seigneurs*, which certainly appears most accurate—but this with humility.——*Translator.*

“ bread,

“ bread, and comfort ye your hearts ; after  
 “ that you shall pass on, for therefore are  
 “ ye come to your servant. And they said,  
 “ so do as thou hast said. And Abraham  
 “ hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and  
 “ said, make ready quickly three measures  
 “ of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes  
 “ upon the hearth. And Abraham ran in-  
 “ to the herd, and fetched a calf, tender and  
 “ good, and gave it unto a young man, and  
 “ he hastened to dress it ; and he took butter,  
 “ and milk, and the calf which he had  
 “ dressed, and set it before them, and he  
 “ stood by them under the tree.”

The Arabs give the same reception to  
 strangers and travellers who come near their  
 tents. Servants wash their feet. The wo-  
 men knead unleavened bread, which they  
 bake upon the ashes, and they are served with  
 roasted sheep, milk, and honey, and the  
 best of every thing they are possessed of.  
 The slight impositions levied by the Scheiks  
 through their territories, do not oppress their  
 subjects. They enjoy their affection. The  
 Arab comes and exposes his affairs at their  
 tribunal. They are not complicated, and  
 the



the light of natural reason, aided by the simple and clear laws of the Coran, suffice to terminate them on the spot. Their judgments are almost always dictated by equity. Under this paternal government, man possesses all his liberty, and is no further attached to his Prince than by the ties of respect and gratitude. He may speak freely to him, therefore, and censure or commend him according to the circumstances. I shall cite you a trait to prove how far the Arabs carry this spirit of frankness.

“ Elmanfor, the second Abassid Calif,  
“ laid the foundation of Bagdad in 769.  
“ He made himself famous by his victories,  
“ his power, and the art by which he knew  
“ how to govern immense states. His affa-  
“ bility was extreme: but so many good  
“ qualities were sullied by unbounded ava-  
“ rice. An Arab accosted him one day,  
“ and said to him, Health to the Father of  
“ Jasar! Health to thee, replied Elmanfor.  
“ Thou art the descendant of the generous  
“ race of Hascchem; grant me a small part  
“ of the treasures thou art master of.—It  
“ is not to me, it is to the Apostle of God  
“ thou

“ thou shouldst address thy wishes.—My  
 “ clothes are tatters; years have worn  
 “ out my strength.—Let us exchange;  
 “ take mine. He pulled his clothes off on  
 “ the spot, and gave them to him. The  
 “ Arab, perceiving that they were worn and  
 “ pieced, says to him, Prince, art thou ig-  
 “ norant of this sentence of the son of  
 “ Harima: *The rich who covers himself with*  
 “ *rags, is not less subject to death.*”

It is with this sort of liberty that the  
 Arabs speak to their Chiefs. Wholly de-  
 voted to their interests, on the least sign of  
 their will, they arm to repulse the oppres-  
 sion of the Turks, who have never been  
 to reduce them. If victory declares in their  
 favour, they remain in possession of their  
 territories. If conquered, they abandon  
 them, and, carrying with them their wives,  
 their children, and their flocks, they retire  
 into the depth of the deserts. There they  
 wait to avail themselves of the times of  
 trouble and confusion, when they return,  
 full armed, to attack the enemy, and re-  
 sume their possessions. Were these Chiefs  
 to unite their forces, and form a league a-  
 gainst

gainst the Turks, they would expel them without difficulty, and make themselves sovereigns of Egypt. The policy of the Beys prevents these alliances, by sowing dissensions amongst them, by aiding the weak against the strong, by confirming the authority of those only who appear favourable to their designs; and above all, by destroying, by stratagem, or poison, the Emirs, whose power, talents, and ambition, they greatly fear.

These Arabs are the best people in the world. They are ignorant of the vices of polished nations. Incapable of concealment, they are strangers to trick and falsehood. Lofty and generous, they openly repulse an insult with an armed hand, and never revenge themselves by treachery. Hospitality amongst them is sacred. Their houses and their tents are open to all travellers of every religion. They treat their guests with as much respect and affection as their own relations. This honourable virtue is carried so far amongst them, that if the enemy, whose death they have vowed, can submit to come and take coffee with them,



he has no longer any thing to fear for his life. This is the only circumstance wherein they forget their resentment, and renounce the pleasure of revenge. The following fact to which I was a witness, will give you some idea of their uprightness. An Arab Scheik has long paid an annual visit to the French quarter. He takes such goods as he wants of a merchant, without any other security than his word. The following year he returns at the same period with the price of his former purchase, and to buy new stuffs. One year he was prevented by illness from attending at the usual time, but he sent his son with the gold, and likewise to continue this commerce, a circumstance which does equal honour to the two nations.

The third species of Arabs is comprehended under the general denomination of *Bedaoui*, inhabitants of the desert. These pastoral people occupy those burning solitudes, which extend to the east and west of Egypt. Separated into tribes, they do not cultivate the earth, and feed on barley, the fruit of the date-tree, the flesh and milk of  
their

their herds. These they conduct into the vallies, where they find pasturage and water. When every thing is exhausted in one spot, they place their tents, their wives, and children, on camels, mount on horseback themselves, and the whole tribe sets off in search of another habitation. These sovereigns of the desarts, declared enemies of all the caravans, attack them wherever they fall in with them, and compel them either to pay a tribute, or to fight. If they meet with too sharp a resistance, they retire without apprehending the pursuit of their enemies. If they conquer, they strip every body, and divide the booty ; but they never kill any one unless to avenge the blood of their companions. The traveller who puts himself under their protection has nothing to fear either for his life or his riches, for their word is sacred. I have never read in history, I have never heard upon the spot, that an Arab ever violated his plighted faith. This is a trait which characterizes at once, and separates this from all other nations on the earth. Their eagerness for plunder has not made them renounce the laws of hospitality.



talities. This virtue is not less honoured amongst them than amongst the Arab cultivators. Mr. de St. Germain, after his misfortunes in passing the isthmus of Suez, arriving at the tent of a Bedouin, almost dead, owed his life to the generous attention of his host, who conducted him to Grand Cairo as soon as his health was restored. Mr. Pagès, flying across the sands of Desert Arabia, with seven Arabs, lost his water and his provisions. Falling from his camel, he was on the point of being sacrificed to the resentment of a tribe which had been insulted. One of his companions dismounted at the hazard of his life, made the Frenchman mount behind him, and carried him off to a place of safety. On the journey, the Arabs, who had only a small barley cake for their daily nourishment, divided it into eight shares, of which they always gave a double portion to the stranger.

Their excessive love of liberty makes them prefer these frightful deserts, where they live independent, to the rich plains of Egypt, which would enslave them. That Government has more than once offered them lands,  
which



which they have refused rather than submit to be governed by despots. This spirit of independence, so well painted in the scriptures, they have inviolably preserved from Ismael, their ancestor. Herodotus, the most ancient historian, thus represents them:

“ Cambyfes (*k*), desirous of leading an  
“ army into Egypt, sent Ambassadors to the  
“ King of the Arabs to demand a safe pas-  
“ sage of him. He obtained his demand,  
“ and the two nations pledged their mutual  
“ faith. The Arabs, of all people, preserve  
“ their oaths with the most fidelity. The  
“ following is their method of concluding  
“ treaties. One of them, standing up be-  
“ tween the contracting parties, cuts the  
“ palm of his hand with a sharp stone;  
“ he then takes the border of their robes,  
“ tinges them with blood, and rubs seven  
“ stones with it, which he places in the  
“ midst of them, invoking Bacchus and  
“ Urania. If he who has solicited the  
“ alliance be a stranger, he becomes after  
“ this ceremony their sacred guest, and if a

(*k*) Herodotus, *Thalia*.

“ native

“ native of the country, he is looked upon  
 “ as a citizen of the tribe with whom the  
 “ treaty is formed. This compact is invio-  
 “ lable for ever.” These ceremonies are  
 no longer observed amongst the Arabs. On  
 occasion of treaties, they content themselves  
 with mutually squeezing the hand, and  
 swearing by the head, that they will faith-  
 fully observe the conditions agreed upon,  
 and they are never perjured.

Diodorus Siculus, who wrote several ages  
 after Herodotus, paints them in the same  
 colours. I shall add this passage, because it  
 will demonstrate to you how little this peo-  
 ple are changed, and as it is perhaps the  
 only historical portrait which, at the end of  
 eighteen hundred years, will serve for the  
 same nation (1). “ The wandering Arabs  
 “ dwell in the open country, without any  
 “ roof. They themselves call their country  
 “ a solitude. They do not choose for their  
 “ abode places abounding in rivers and in  
 “ fountains, lest that allurements alone  
 “ should draw enemies into their neigh-

(1) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 19.

“ neighbourhood.



“bourhood. Their law or their custom  
“forbids them to sow corn, to plant fruit-  
“trees, to make use of wine, or to inhabit  
“houses. He who should violate these  
“usages would be punished infallibly with  
“death, because they are persuaded that  
“whoever is capable of subjecting him-  
“self to such conveniencies, would soon  
“submit to masters in order to preserve  
“them. Some lead their camels to graze,  
“some their sheep. The latter are the  
“wealthiest; for besides the advantages  
“they derive from their flocks, they go to  
“sell in the sea-ports, frankincense, myrrh,  
“and other precious aromatics, which they  
“have received in exchange from the inha-  
“bitants of Arabia Felix. Extremely  
“jealous of their liberty, at the news of  
“the approach of an army they take  
“refuge in the depth of the desarts,  
“the extent of which serves them as a  
“rampart. The enemy, in fact, per-  
“ceiving no water, could not dare to tra-  
“verse them, whilst the Arabs being fur-  
“nished with it, by means of vessels con-  
“cealed in the earth, with which they are



“ acquainted, are in no danger of this want.  
 “ The whole soil being composed of clayey  
 “ and soft earth, they find means to dig  
 “ deep and vast cisterns, of a square form,  
 “ each side of which is the length of an  
 “ acre. Having filled them with rain-  
 “ water, they close up the entrance, which  
 “ they make uniform with the neighbour-  
 “ ing ground, leaving some imperceptible  
 “ token, known only to themselves. They  
 “ accustom their flocks to drink only once  
 “ in three days (*m*), so that when they are  
 “ obliged to fly across these parched sands,  
 “ they may be habituated to support thirst.  
 “ As for themselves, they live on flesh and  
 “ milk, and common and ordinary fruits.  
 “ They have in their fields the tree which  
 “ bears pepper (*n*), and a great deal of  
 “ wild honey, which they drink with wa-  
 “ ter. There are other Arabs who culti-

(*m*) The Abyssinians, who set out from Girgé to their  
 own country, having a desert of seven days journey to  
 pass, accustom their camels to perform it without drink-  
 ing.

(*n*) I imagine Diodorus was deceived here, and that  
 the pepper was brought into Arabia by ships from India.

“ vate

“vate the earth. They are tributary like  
“the Syrians, and resemble them in other  
“respects, except that they do not dwell  
“in houses. Such are pretty nearly the  
“manners of this people.”

This picture, drawn by the hand of an enlightened historian, is of a very striking accuracy. We discover in it the Bedouins of our days. May I be permitted to extract from the same author a passage which wonderfully paints at once their uprightness of character, and the treachery of the Greeks. “The Nabathean Arabs  
“had quitted their desarts, to repair to a  
“place of commerce, where a celebrated  
“fair was held. Before their departure,  
“they had deposited in the caverns of a  
“mountain, their wives, their children, and  
“their riches. This rock situated at two  
“days journey from every habitation, and  
“protected both by its position, and by the  
“burning solitudes, appeared to them out  
“of the reach of the enemy; but the  
“Greeks, thirsting after gold, availed them-  
“selves of this moment to attack it. Athe-  
“naus, one of the captains of Antigonus,  
“set



“ set out from Idumea with a body of light  
“ armed troops, marched ninety-one leagues  
“ in three days and nights, and reached the  
“ asylum of the Nabatheans. He entered  
“ it by force, slew a part of the wretches  
“ shut up in it, made a great many pri-  
“ soners, carried off the frankincense, the  
“ myrrh, and four hundred talents of silver  
“ which were deposited there. He only  
“ remained there three hours, and fled across  
“ the desert with his booty. When he  
“ had got ten leagues from the rock, the  
“ heat and fatigue obliged him to repose.  
“ A camp was hastily prepared. The sol-  
“ diers, worn down with lassitude, and  
“ imagining they had nothing to fear, re-  
“ signed themselves to sleep. But the Na-  
“ batheans had been apprized by messengers  
“ of the invasion of the Greeks. Setting  
“ off immediately they repaired to their  
“ habitation. The blood of their old men;  
“ the lamentations of the wounded, filled  
“ them with horror. They flew to ven-  
“ geance; and in a few hours came up  
“ with their enemies. Some of the pri-  
“ soners, taking advantage of the negligence  
“ of



“ of the Greeks, broke their chains, and  
“ gave information of the state they were  
“ then in. On this intelligence, the Arabs  
“ attacked the camp on all sides, and en-  
“ tered under cover of the darkness. They  
“ put to death the soldiers that were asleep,  
“ and pierced with their darts those who  
“ were rising to take arms. The massacre  
“ was general. Fifty horsemen only es-  
“ caped, and they were mostly wounded.  
“ The Nabatheans, having recovered their  
“ prisoners and their treasure, conveyed  
“ them back to their habitation. After giv-  
“ ing this lesson to the Greeks, they wrote  
“ to Antigonus, to complain of Athenæus,  
“ and to justify their conduct. That prince  
“ disavowed the expedition of his general,  
“ declared that he had undertaken it with-  
“ out his participation, and that their de-  
“ fence was strictly just. He made use of  
“ this dissimulation to put them off their  
“ guard, by removing every cause of mis-  
“ trust, hoping to avail himself of some  
“ favourable moment to revenge the defeat  
“ of his troops; but the Arabs reckoning  
“ little on the good faith of the Greeks,  
“ kept

“ kept upon their guard, and placed cen-  
“ tinels on elevated situations to give notice  
“ of the appearance of an enemy. They  
“ soon discovered the wisdom of this pre-  
“ caution. After some months had elapsed,  
“ Antigonus sent eight thousand picked  
“ men against them, commanded by his son  
“ Demetrius. This corps marched by in-  
“ direct routes in order to surprize them.  
“ The Nabatheans apprized by their spies,  
“ withdrew their flocks towards the ex-  
“ tremity of the desert, and fortified them-  
“ selves in the mountain. Demetrius found  
“ it guarded by a body of brave youth,  
“ who made a vigorous resistance. After  
“ making a fruitless attack on it with  
“ all his forces, he retreated and pretended  
“ to take flight. The next day, he re-  
“ newed the attack with no greater success.  
“ Then an Arab cried to him with a  
“ loud voice: King Demetrius, what can  
“ induce you to make war against a people  
“ who dwell in a desert, without water,  
“ wine, and provisions; in a word, destitute  
“ of every thing which forms the object of  
“ your cupidity and your quarrels? The  
“ horror



“horror of slavery has conducted us into  
“this solitude, deprived of all the good  
“things so greedily sought after by men.  
“This it is which has reduced us to such  
“a solitary and savage life as disables  
“us from doing you any injury. We  
“supplicate you therefore, and the King  
“your father, to leave us in repose. We  
“will even make you presents to engage  
“you to withdraw your army, and to re-  
“ceive the Nabatheans amongst the num-  
“ber of your friends. If these reasons  
“cannot prevail upon you, necessity will  
“oblige you to quit a desert, where you  
“will soon want water and provisions.  
“Never will you subject us to other cus-  
“toms. What do you hope for then from  
“this expedition? It will terminate at the  
“worst by carrying off from us some slaves,  
“who will only serve you against their in-  
“clination, and whom you will not be able  
“to bend to your manners, and your usages.  
“Struck with this discourse, Demetrius  
“made peace with the Nabatheans.”

Such, Sir, were the Arabs before and  
after Alexander; such are they in our days.

The



The love of independance still glows in their hearts. Their aversion for all foreign dominion, makes them prefer the horror of these desarts to the most advantageous establishments. Liberty has so many charms for them, that supported by her they boldly brave hunger, thirst, and the consuming ardour of the sun. Humbled sometimes, but never subjected, they have bid defiance to all the powers of the earth, and have repulsed those chains which have alternately been borne by the other nations. The Romans, those masters of the world, lost whole armies which they sent to the conquest of this country. The Egyptians, the Persians, the Ottomans, have never been able to reduce them. This lofty people alone, therefore, have preserved that elevation of character, that generosity, that inviolable fidelity which do honour to humanity. Treachery and perjury are unknown amongst them. Ignorant, without despising the sciences, a sound reason, a rectitude of understanding, an elevated mind, distinguish them from all the Orientals. Before strangers, as in the presence of their princes, they invariably

maintain the dignity of man, and never descend to low flatteries. Serious without moroseness, witty without ostentation, frank without imprudence, they are well acquainted with the charms of a conversation intermixed with gaiety and wisdom. Friendship is sacred amongst them, and friends are brothers. Nor are they strangers to delicacy of sentiment. Their poems afford a description of that burning love which they respire with the ardour of the sun, and not unfrequently of that gallantry, which seems peculiar to polished nations. Such, Sir, are these Arabs whom the powerful genius of one man knew how to unite in overthrowing the neighbouring thrones, in conquering kingdoms, and giving laws to two thirds of the habitable globe. They have lost their conquests, but they have retained their character, their religion, and their manners. Could another Mahomet be found in the east capable of collecting their different tribes under one banner, he might once more subject Asia and Africa to their dominion. It is amongst the Arabs the philosopher should go to study primitive man,

and



and not amongst nations, whose minds and hearts, and affections, are corrupted by despotism and servitude.

After the Coptis and the Arabs, the Mo-grabians, or Western Mahometans, are the most numerous inhabitants of Egypt. Some dedicate themselves to commerce, others serve in the armies. Their nation must not be judged from the specimen of those individuals we see at Grand Cairo. Such as embrace the military line are almost all adventurers, guilty of great crimes, and whom the dread of justice has banished from their country. These mercenary soldiers, lawless, and without faith, abandon themselves to every excess, and invariably sell themselves to the Bey who promises them the highest pay.

The real Turks are by no means numerous in this country. The corps of Janizaries and of Azabs are composed of them. They abuse their power, to pillage the Egyptians, and strangers, and employ every method to amass great wealth. Sometimes they make themselves formidable to the Pacha and the Beys, and sell their suffrages  
for



for gold. These troops, as well as the Mograbians, have no discipline, and are totally ignorant of the use of artillery. It would be impossible for them to resist European tactics.

The Christians of Syria, the Greeks, and the Jews, devote themselves wholly to commerce, to the exchange, and to the arts. The subtlety of their understanding has rendered them alternately Directors of the Custom-Houses, and Intendants of the revenues of Egypt. There is no depending on their integrity. One should be always on one's guard against their artifices. When they get into credit, they make use of every stratagem to oppress the European merchant, to stir up injuries against him, and to put shackles on his trade. The principal part of them are goldsmiths, and work in gold, silver, and precious stones, with a tolerable degree of perfection. Their works in filagree merit the approbation of connoisseurs. Several of them have established manufactures of light stuffs, which they fabricate with Bengal cotton, and Syrian silk. The natives purchase it for their use. These

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stuffs, though well woven, are but of an indifferent dye. Their colours have neither the brilliancy nor the duration of those of India. This is entirely owing to the ignorance of the artists, for Egypt produces excellent indigo, carthamum, and various substances for colours. It is the same with their linens. The Egyptian flax, heretofore so celebrated, has lost nothing of its quality. It is long, soft, and silky, and would make sumptuous linen; but from the fault of the spinners, who know not how to employ it, coarse linens only are manufactured from it.

All these inhabitants, Sir, of different manners, nations, and religions, amount to near four millions. They are governed by eight thousand Mamalukes. If you are surprized that so small a number of foreigners can keep this vast herd under the yoke, you will cease your astonishment on being informed, that in the time of Augustus, three cohorts were sufficient to guard the Thebais. Strabo, an ocular witness, and one of the wisest historians of antiquity, relates the following interesting facts.



“ The Egyptian nation is extremely numerous, but it is by no means warlike, nor are the neighbouring people more so. Cornelius Gallus, the first Roman governor sent into Egypt, marched against the inhabitants of Hieropolis (*o*), who had revolted, and made them return to their duty with a small body of soldiers. The rigour of the impositions having caused a general revolt in the Thebais, he appeared, and the rebellion was immediately calmed. After him, Petronius, at the head of some cohorts, stopped the impetuosity of many thousand Alexandrians who had attacked him, and left a great number of them dead on the field of battle. Elius Gallus, having entered Arabia with a part of the troops which guarded Egypt, proved by his victories how unwarlike these people are, and would have conquered Yemen but for the treachery of Syllæus. The Ethiopians, taking advantage of his absence, made an

(*o*) This city is totally destroyed. Its ruins are buried under the sands of the Isthmus of Suez.



“ irruption into the Thebais, overturned  
“ the statues of Cæsar, carried off a rich  
“ booty, and led away prisoners the feeble  
“ garrisons of Philé and Elephantinos.  
“ Petronius pursued them with ten thou-  
“ sand infantry and eight thousand horse;  
“ and though their army was composed of  
“ thirty thousand soldiers, he forced it to  
“ retire to *Pselcha*, a city of Ethiopia.  
“ Unable to obtain by his ambassadors the  
“ restitution of the captives, he penetrated  
“ into the country and gave them battle.  
“ These troops, badly armed and without  
“ discipline, could not stand against the  
“ valour of the Romans. Some fled into  
“ the deserts, others took shelter within the  
“ walls of the capital, and the greatest  
“ number escaped by swimming to an island  
“ in the river. Amongst the latter were  
“ several generals of Candace, a warlike  
“ woman, then Queen of Ethiopia. Pe-  
“ tronius crossed the Nile in boats, made  
“ them all prisoners, and sent them to the  
“ city of Alexandria. He then laid siege  
“ to *Pselcha* and took it. A part of the  
“ inhabitants perished in this attack.

“ After

“ After this conquest, he marched towards  
 “ Premnin, a town fortified by nature, and  
 “ to arrive at it, crossed those vast sandy  
 “ deserts, where the army of Cambyfes was  
 “ suffocated by the winds (*p*). Having  
 “ carried it by storm, he went to lay siege  
 “ to Napata, where was the palace of Can-  
 “ dace with her son. The queen, shut up  
 “ in a neighbouring fortress, sent ambassa-  
 “ dors to the Roman general to treat of  
 “ peace, and to offer restitution of the cap-  
 “ tives, and the statues carried off. With-  
 “ out hearkening to these propositions, he  
 “ attacked the place and became master of  
 “ it, but the young prince saved himself  
 “ by flight. Imagining that it would be  
 “ difficult to penetrate any farther, he re-  
 “ turned by the same route, carrying back  
 “ with him vast riches. He left four hun-  
 “ dred men in garrison at Premnin with  
 “ provisions and ammunition for two years,  
 “ and returned into Egypt.”

This passage, Sir, compleatly exposes the

(*p*) This passage confirms what I have told you of this disaster, on the credit of Herodotus.

weakness of the Egyptians and Ethiopians in the time of the Romans. They have not since changed. A long slavery has served to extinguish the little energy they then displayed. Their ignorance in the profession of arms still surpasses their cowardice. During those calamitous days when war raged in Grand Cairo, we heard the six pieces of cannon belonging to the castle fire against the town. We observed that it took the artillery men half an hour to charge them, for there was that interval between every volley. Judge, Sir, if such troops could stand an instant against a few European regiments. Any warlike nation which should attack Egypt, would take it without an obstacle; she might also easily conquer Ethiopia, get possession of the gold of those countries; and mistress of the waters of the Nile, divert them at pleasure throughout Egypt, and preserve an inexhaustible abundance.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R XLVI.

OBSERVATIONS ON MARRIAGE AMONG  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Dignified with the title of sacrament, marriage among the Christians indissoluble. The Legislator of Arabia, copying the authority of the patriarchs, and influenced by the force of custom, has permitted repudiation, but at the same time endeavoured to restrain the caprice of the men. The nuptial ceremonies practised by the Mahometans and Coptis.*

To Mr. L. M:

Grand Cairo.

**A**MONGST Christians, Sir, marriage, raised to the dignity of a sacrament, becomes an indissoluble engagement. The laws in certain cases suspend its effect, but they never totally destroy it. (This holds good only amongst Catholics). It behoves the contracting parties, therefore, to be perfectly acquainted with each other, that their inclinations

clinations may be free, since their happiness and that of their children depend on that knowledge and that freedom. The Oriental manners, so different from those of Europe, have compelled their Legislators not to make an inviolable contract of that act. Amongst these people, the two sexes live separate, and do not converse together. How can the young man and the virgin who have never beheld each other, vow eternal love and inviolable fidelity? Such an oath, by exposing them to perjury, would prove the source of the greatest disorder. Mahomet, who knew men well, and who was authorized by the example of Abraham, and the other patriarchs, has permitted repudiation. After endeavouring to prevent it by prescribing to the married persons those attentions, that tenderness, which ought to constitute the delight of their lives, he has said, *Such as shall have sworn to have no further commerce with their wives, shall be allowed a delay of four months (q);*  
if

(q) "When a Mahometan has made an oath to have  
no

*if during that time they should return to themselves, the Lord is indulgent and merciful.*

*If the divorce be firmly resolved, God sees, and knows every thing.*

This precept, Sir, authorizes repudiation, but it leaves God to judge of the legitimacy of the action. In the remainder of that chapter, which is the summary of all the laws of the Mahometans, the Legislator strives to fix some limits to the capriciousness of man. A Mahometan cannot espouse a woman without assigning her a dowry in proportion to his ability. If he wishes to separate from her, he sends for the Judge, and declares in his presence that he repudiates her, and, at the expiration of his four months grace, he bestows on her the portion stipulated in the contract of marriage, and whatever effects he has received from her. If they have any children, the husband re-

“no further commerce with his wife, he has four months  
 “delay, during which he may reconcile himself with  
 “her. If he lets that time elapse, he is obliged to re-  
 “pudiate her, she becomes free, and may contract new  
 “engagements.” *Coran, chap. 2.*

tains



tains the boys, the wife takes away the girls. From that moment they are free to contract fresh engagements. The women are not, as it is believed in Europe, subject to a perpetual slavery. When they have serious causes for separation they implore the protection of the laws, and break their chains. But in this case, they lose their dowry, and the wealth they may have brought into their husband's family; but they regain their liberty.

Sometimes a Mahometan vows, without just cause, that he will have no further commerce with his wife. Should he repent, he may be reconciled to her, without the intervention of the Cadi. The Legislator has fixed a period for this caprice, in the following verse: *He who shall repudiate his wife three times, shall not be allowed to take her back, until she shall have lain with another husband, who shall have repudiated her. They shall then be permitted to re-unite, if they believe themselves capable of observing the commandments of God (r).*

(r) Coran, chap. 7.

The guilty husband who finds himself thus circumstanced, and who dreads that separation, the sentence of which he has himself rashly pronounced, endeavours to evade the precept. He seeks for a friend on whose discretion he thinks he can depend, shuts him up with his wife, in the presence of witnesses, and waits at the door the event of this singular scene. The proof is delicate, and does not always succeed according to his wishes. If the officious friend, on coming out, says, *Behold my wife, and I repudiate her*, the first husband has the right to take her back; but if, forgetful of his friendship in the arms of love, he declares that he acknowledges her for his wife, he carries her off without any opposition. Such are the laws by which Mahomet has strove to secure the peace and happiness of marriages. He has made that state a state of society, the mutual attentions of which, and the birth of children, must incessantly bind them more closely to each other. Parties once contracted, do not often avail themselves of the liberty he gives them. Divorces are much less frequent



quent amongst them than is generally believed. Many of them are contented even with one wife, and do not profit by the privilege the law allows them of having four at a time. This moderation must be attributed to the separation of the sexes, to their mode of private life, to the charms of which they are highly sensible, and, above all, to that tenderness which attaches them both to their children, who, brought up in the paternal mansion, become at once the support and consolation of the authors of their being.

The female relations of a young man are the persons who take upon them his establishment. They have had the opportunity of seeing *naked* at the baths the principal part of the young women of the city. They paint to him the portrait of them *after life*. When his choice is fixed, they propose the alliance to the father of the young woman, the dowry is specified, and if he agrees to it, they make him presents. As soon as the parties are agreed, the female relations, the friends and acquaintances of the young virgin, conduct her to the bath. They strip her

her



her with great solemnity. She is bathed, shampoed, and perfumed. They tinge the nails of their toes and fingers of a gold colour, by means of the *henné*. They black her eye-lashes with *cobel*. They mix precious essences in her hair, and wash her whole body with rose-water. The women, naked, without any other ornament than the flowing locks of their beautiful long hair, lead the young novice round the apartment, and initiate her in the mysteries of Hymen. They appease the alarms of her timid heart, by telling her of the pleasures she is going to enjoy, and by celebrating the beauty and riches of her young spouse. The remainder of the day is spent in entertainments, in dances, and songs, suitable to the occasion. The next day, the same persons repair to the house of the betrothed girl, and tear her, as if by violence, from the arms of her disconsolate mother. They conduct her in triumph to the husband's house. The procession usually commences in the evening, which is preceded by hired dancers, with their feet fastened on long sticks, and balance-poles in their hands. A number of  
slaves

slaves display to the sight of the people the effects, the furniture, the trinkets, destined for the use of the bride. Troops of dancing girls advance, keeping time to the sound of instruments. Next to them, matrons, richly clad, march gravely in the procession. Then appears the young victim under a magnificent canopy, borne by four slaves. She is supported by her mother and her sisters. A veil of gold, enriched with pearls and diamonds, covers her entirely. A long train of flambeaux lights the whole, and from time to time chorusses of *Almé* sing couplets in praise of the new-married pair. I have seen the pomp I am now describing pass twenty times through the streets of Cairo. They always take the longest road, for they are very proud of shewing to the people all the magnificence they are capable of displaying on such occasions.

When they arrive at the husband's house, the women mount to the first story, from whence they perceive through the blinds of a gallery, every thing that passes below. The men, assembled in the saloon, do not mix with them. They pass a part of the  
night



night in banqueting, drinking coffee and sherbet, and in listening to music. The dancing girls descend amongst them, take off their veils, and display their wonderful activity and skill. They play *mute scenes* to the sound of the tabor, the cymbals, and the castanets, in which they represent the combats of Hymen, the resistance of the young bride, and the stratagems of love to gain the point. Nothing can equal the voluptuousness of their motions, and the licentiousness of their postures. There is no occasion for words to understand their pantomimes. Every thing is painted by them in so natural a manner, that it is impossible to mistake them. I have assisted several times at these representations, and never without being surprized how a people, who preserve in public so much respect for the women, can be so passionately fond of these lascivious dances. When they are finished, a chorus of *Almé* sing the epithalamium, so celebrated amongst the Greeks, extolling the incitements of the young bride, more beautiful than the moon, fresher than the rose, more odoriferous than  
the



the jessamine, and the felicity of the mortal who is about to enjoy so many charms. During the ceremony, she passes frequently before her husband, always in new dresses, to display her gracefulness and riches. When the assembly are at length retired, the husband enters into the nuptial chamber, the veil is taken off, and he sees his wife for the first time. When she is a girl, the tokens of her virginity must appear, otherwise he has a right to send her back the next day to her parents; and this is the greatest dishonour that can happen to a family. Accordingly there is no country upon earth where young girls are watched with more care, nor where one is more certain of marrying a virgin.

Such are the marriage laws and ceremonies amongst the Egyptians. The poor, as well as the rich, observe them scrupulously. The daughter of the mechanic is conducted in the same manner to her husband. All the difference consists in the spectacle that surrounds her. Instead of flambeaux, the procession takes place by the light of pine-wood carried in iron chafing-dishes, on the

end of long poles. Instead of dancing girls, and musicians, she is preceded by tabors, and hired men-dancers. The daughter of the poor man, in short, who can have neither canopy, nor retinue, borrows a veil, marches to the sound of cymbals, or pieces of metal agitated in cadence by a set of low fellows.

The Coptis observe nearly the same ceremonies; but they have the custom of betrothing young girls at six or seven years old. A ring which they put upon the finger is the symbol of this alliance. They frequently obtain from their relations the permission to bring them up at their houses, until they are marriageable. Repudiation, the baths, the pompous escort of the bride, are also in use amongst these schismatic Christians, only they are allowed but one wife at a time. You will find, Sir, in the *Arabian Tales*, descriptions which resemble very much that I have been giving you, because the author of that agreeable work, being perfectly well acquainted with the manners and usages of his country, has described them like a skilful painter. Those faithful pictures it

is which render his book of infinite value. It is in this point also that those romance writers err, who, never having travelled in the east, gives us, under the name of Oriental Tales, the foolish dreams of their own imagination. You there see the Turks, the Arabs, and the Persians, metamorphosed into French and Englishmen, and the most grotesque portraits instead of nature.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R XLVII.

THE REVOLUTIONS IN THE COMMERCE  
OF EGYPT, FROM THE MOST REMOTE  
ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

*State of the Egyptian commerce under the Pharaohs, the Persians, and the Ptolemies, who created a powerful marine; and under the Romans, who, guided by the Egyptians, penetrated as far as Bengal. Declension of this extensive commerce under the Princes of the lower empire. Almost annihilated during the government of the Arabs. Re-established by the Venetians, who opened to themselves the ports of Egypt. The Portuguese deprive them of this trade; in consequence of which the Venetians lose both their marine and their distant provinces. Actual state of the present commerce of this country.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE preceding Letters, Sir, present you with some particular details on the traffic of the principal towns in Egypt. These

scattered notions would be insufficient in an age when every Court of Europe looks on commerce as an inexhaustible source of riches and of power. I shall attempt to trace out to you a rapid picture of the revolutions it has undergone, from the most remote antiquity to the present day. However difficult the undertaking, its *eventual utility* to my country encourages me to proceed.

The Egyptian Pharaohs were acquainted with the advantages of trade. The numerous canals they formed had a double object, that of diffusing fertility with the waters of the Nile, and of transporting with facility the produce of the country from one end of the empire to the other. The fairs they established in the Delta and the Thebais united the inhabitants of the most distant provinces. Each man brought with him the fruit of his industry, and the whole nation, by means of mutual exchange enjoyed the inventions of the arts, and the productions of all the kingdom. The charms of these water-voyages, the cool air they breathed in them, the beauty of the banks of the river, the necessity of navigating during



during the inundation, rendered the Egyptians mariners; and one may be led to think, that the first vessels on which men dared to trust themselves to the inconstancy of the waves, were built in Egypt. Pleasure, interest, and religion, those powerful springs of human action, induced them to travel from one temple to another. Throughout the country there was nothing but festivals, illuminations, and assemblies, wherein the merchant as well as the rich man found his private advantage. The Egyptians must be regarded as one of the most ancient nations of navigators. They made voyages on the Red Sea long before the famous expedition of the Argonauts. Danaus<sup>(s)</sup> carried into Greece, then in a state of barbarism, the art of navigation and of commerce. His brother, Sesostris, soon after set out with two armies, one by land, the other by sea, to conquer Asia. Whilst he reduced the interior kingdoms, a fleet of four hundred sail took possession of the ports of the Arabic Gulph, sailed through the straits of

(s) Herodotus.



*Bab Elmandel* (*t*), and penetrated into the Indian Ocean, which had never beheld vessels of such a size. It is from this æra that we must date the commerce of Egypt with Asia, which has never been interrupted since that remote period.

Sesostris founded several colonies in the course of his conquests; one of them fortified itself on the coast of Phœnicia. Tyre erected her ramparts, cut down the cedars of Libanon, to build vessels, and prepared to dispute the glory of navigation with the mother country. She sent her ships as far as the pillars of Hercules, and spread the arts every where with her commerce (*u*). The Egyptians on their side, mounting the Bosphorus, entered the Black sea, exchang-

(*t*) *Bab Elmandel* signifies *the Gate of the Handkerchiefs*, because it was by this streight that Egypt has at all times received the cottons, of which their *handkerchiefs* are formed, which are still called *Mandel*.

(*u*) Clement, of Alexandria, says, "The Phœnicians received letters from Egypt, and transmitted them to the Greeks." He adds in another place, "Cadmus, the Phœnician, carried them into Greece, on which account Herodotus gives the name of Phœnician to the Greek characters."

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ing with their brethren (\*) settled in Colchis, the productions of their country with those of the Northerns; whilst the fleets of the Red Sea went in search of the pearls, the diamonds, the perfumes, and the precious stuffs of the eastern world.

Commercial Egypt soon attained a high degree of power. She raised in every part those colossal statues, those temples, those obelisks, which cannot be contemplated without admiration. The colleges of priests continually applied to the study of the heavens, taught navigators that astronomy which served them as a guide through the immensity of the seas. Powerful without, rich in her own productions, Egypt with her trade propagated the light of the sciences. Having spread amongst the savage nations of Greece, the art of cultivating grain, she disposed them to civilization. It is thus that the hardy mariners of Europe, sent by Kings, friends to humanity, will reclaim from barbarism the islanders of the South

(\*) Herodotus asserts that Sesostris also left a colony in Colchis, and that the Egyptians traded with them.



Sea, by communicating our productions and our arts. The savage cannibal of New Zealand will cease, doubtless, to devour his fellow-creature, when our sheep, our cows, and our seeds, shall have procured him abundant and certain food. Agriculture will establish amongst them society and laws. They will one day enjoy the advantages of civilized nations. As their islands do not appear to contain any of the precious metals, they will not be reduced to that slavery which would nip their virtues in the bud. After the example of the Greeks, who deified their first benefactors, they will erect monuments to *George the Third* and *Louis the Sixteenth*. These, indeed, are actions which immortalize Sovereigns, and the remembrance of which is for ever sacred to posterity.

Greece, enlightened by the great men who were taught in the schools of Memphis and Heliopolis, was divided into several republics. Each of these petty states wished to have commerce and a navy. Tyre continued to send forth her vessels into the whole extent of the Mediterranean, and

Kings



Kings were decorated with purple. Psammeticus (y), a friend to the Greeks, opened to them the ports of Egypt. Necos, his son, attempted to make a communication between the Nile and the Red Sea. The great obstacles he met with, and the loss of a multitude of workmen, made him abandon his project. He then formed another enterprize, which proves to what a degree the maritime art was then carried (z). He fitted out some ships at Suez, the command of which he entrusted to Phœnician Captains, and ordered them to make the tour of Africa. These skilful navigators sailed out of the Arabic Gulph, *doubled the Cape of Good Hope*, ascended to the northward, and after three years navigation, arrived at the Pillars of Hercules, from whence they returned to Egypt. This was the first time of circumnavigating this great continent. The difficulties of so long a voyage, at a time when vessels were obliged never to lose sight of the coast, made them abandon this route. They contented themselves with na-

(y) Herodotus.

(z) Herodotus, lib. 4.

vigating in the Mediterranean and the Indian ocean. The marine of Egypt was then the most powerful, and that country the richest upon earth.

Apriès, the son of Necos, defeated in a naval combat the combined fleets of the Cypriots and the Tyrians, the two most renowned people in the art of navigation. Emboldened by these successes, Amasis sent a fleet to the conquest of Cyprus, and took it. He found there wood and every proper material for ship-building in abundance. This Pharaoh became the master of the Mediterranean. To give more activity to commerce, he called in the Greeks to his states, and permitted them to build Naucrates, almost at the entrance of the Canopic branch. In order to prevent these new allies from extending themselves too far into the country, he restricted their vessels from landing any merchandize but in the harbour of that town (*a*). The fairs established there, and the continual arrival of ships, rendered it very commercial. The Ionians, the Dori-

(*a*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

ans, the Eolians, built temples there at their joint expence. Whatever their magnificence might have been, they had not the solidity of the Egyptian edifices, and the traveller at this day seeks in vain for their ruins.

The prosperity of this kingdom was at its height. The arts were nearly brought to perfection. Astronomy predicted the eclipses with accuracy. The sculptor engraved fine stones, and fashioned at his pleasure the hardest marbles. Mechanism elevated in the air masses of an astonishing size. Chymistry stained glass, gave more brilliancy to precious stones (*b*), and printed indelible colours on stuffs by the means of corrosives. Agriculture had enriched this country with the productions of India, a present which it has subsequently made to Greece, to Italy, and all Europe. Yes, Sir, every time we see bread white as snow, rice, peas, beans, and several other vegetables, we ought to return thanks to the Egyptians, who first communicated these precious gifts to the

(*b*) Pliny.

Greeks,



Greeks, from whence they passed to the Romans, and were by them transmitted to the Gauls.

When famine was exercising its ravages amongst the neighbouring nations, like the children of Jacob they came to Memphis in search of their subsistence. These great advantages were partly owing to the commerce of the Pharaohs, who sent forth their fleets to trade from the Isle of Tatrobane, now called Ceylon, to the distant ports of Spain. The polished nations of Africa and Europe received from them the objects of utility, of luxury, and comfort. It is partly to the prodigious benefits of their trade that one must attribute their admirable works. Never did a nation collect so many treasures, nor cultivate the arts and sciences with more ardour. Never did a nation construct such noble monuments. The gold dust rolled down by the torrents of Ethiopia, the pearls of Ormuz, the perfumes of Arabia, the stuffs of Bengal arrived at Memphis, become the most commercial city upon earth.

Egypt enjoyed this flourishing condition,  
when

when Cambyfes attacked it with innumerable armies. Amafis had the imprudence to give caufe of difcontent to the militia of the country, by giving the preference to the Grecian troops, and one hundred and fifty thoufand men abandoned their country. The defection threw this beautiful kingdom into the hands of the Perfian Monarch, who ravaged it with fword and fire. Intoxicated with his victory, this favage conqueror destroyed the academies, and left on thofe monuments he was unable to overthrow, the barbarous marks which are ftill vifible. After facrificing thoufands of foldiers in the mad expedition he undertook againft the temple of Jupiter Ammon, and the Ethiopians, he left a detachment of his army in Egypt and returned into Perfia. Commerce fuffered from his exceffes, but its eftablifhment had taken deep root, and in fpite of the shackles put upon it, it ftill followed its courfe. Darius, the fon of Hyftafpes, who knew its utility, reftored it to its priftine vigour, and favoured it in the whole extent of his empire. He was defirous even of continuing the canal begun  
by

by Necos, and only relinquished the enterprize on the false intelligence of his engineer, who informed him that the Red Sea was higher than the Mediterranean, and would consequently overflow Egypt. Seylax having descended the river Indus, by his order, discovered the coasts of a part of Asia, from east to west, and after two years navigation, he returned to the Isthmus of Suez. The discoveries he made for the King of the Persians, determined him to carry his armies into India, where he made great conquests. The Egyptians availed themselves of this opportunity to extend their trade, to repair their losses, and to restore their marine. They served the ambition of this prince against the Greeks (*c*), furnished his armies with provisions, and assisted him in building that memorable bridge which joined the two banks of the Bosphorus, and in the sea-fight near the Isle of Eubœa, they took five ships from the enemy. Their valour and maritime skill shone in the engagements of Salamin, and of Mycale; but

(*c*) Herodotus, lib. 4.



the Republics of Sparta and of Athens were then enflamed by the love of liberty, the first and noblest of motives, and the great men they produced, withstood the efforts of Asia and Africa, conspired together for their ruin.

In the following century, a prince born with an impetuous character, an elevated genius, and an undaunted courage, by fighting against Greece learnt the art of conquering all the nations of the world. Having attained the throne, he put himself at the head of forty thousand men, overthrew the Satraps of Asia Minor, destroyed haughty Tyre, which refused to acknowledge any master, and turned his arms against Egypt. That nation supported with impatience the Persian yoke. She submitted willingly to Alexander, and the country was conquered without battle. Charmed with his reception amongst the Egyptians, and intoxicated with the flattering promises of the Oracle of Ammon (*d*), he left them the same form of government and the same religion.

(*d*) Quintus Curtius.

This great prince, whose mind had been cultivated by a philosopher, and whose ambitious views embraced the empire of the world, did not wish to conquer, in order to destroy. To secure Egypt, whose importance he felt, he founded there a large city, encompassed by three harbours, fit to receive the fleets of Greece, and the merchandize of all nations. He traced out himself the commercial plan which was to unite together the dispersed members of his vast dominions; but he was carried off in the flower of his age, and passed like a torrent on the earth. His generals divided his spoils, and became powerful monarchs. Ptolemy, son of Lagus, having received Egypt for his share, endeavoured to carry into execution the great projects of his master. He called the merchants of Syria and Greece into the city of Alexandria. The unremitting favour he shewed them, rendered his kingdom flourishing, and furnished him the means of engaging his enemies with advantage, and of conquering the Isle of Cyprus. The Rhodians, his faithful allies, having refused to join their fleets with



with those of Antigonus to make war against him, were besieged by Demetrius Poliercetes. The powerful succours of corn and naval stores sent them by Ptolemy, aided them greatly in triumphing over that renowned warrior. Gratitude induced them to bestow the name of *Soter* or Saviour on their defender.

Amidst the tumult of arms, the first of the Ptolemies occupied himself with zeal in the prosperity of his new government. The approach to Egypt was extremely dangerous from the lowness of its coast. Vessels were frequently dashed on shore by tempests, before they were able to discover it. He built on the Isle of Pharos, that superb tower which overtopped the seas, and on which was written in large characters: *To the Saviour Gods, for the utility of navigation.* The white marble it was composed of, made it distinguishable from a great distance in the day time. At night, a lantern was lighted on it to direct the vessels in their course. All antiquity has celebrated this magnificent work. It is thus too that the French will bless the memory of a protecting king, who

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is constructing a noble harbour in the middle of the waves. Posterity will one day say, on beholding *whole squadrons* in safety, behind piers miraculously formed at Cherbourg, by a skilful engineer; *Here Louis XVI. enchained the waves of the ocean.*

Alexandria, by her ports situated to the west, the north, and south, received the merchandize of the whole universe. She was, as Strabo calls her, the greatest market in the world. Not content with these attentions, Ptolemy erected an academy, the learned men of which, by his order, went to visit the different countries of the earth, to examine their riches and their productions. The monarchs of France have in our days imitated this brilliant example, by sending academicians from the Pole to the Equator, to measure degrees of the globe, and acquire useful knowledge for geography and navigation. Notwithstanding the wars in which the son of Lagos was engaged against Syria, he collected manuscripts from all parts to compose that famous library, the deplorable fate of which still excites our regret. The monuments of  
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this prince have perished, but his glory is immortal, since at the same time that he was chasing the enemy from the frontiers of his dominions, he was indefatigable in securing the happiness of his people.

Ptolemy Philadelphus marched in the foot-steps of his father, and rendered Egypt fruitful and happy. The pomp he displayed on his accession to the throne, proves the extent of the commerce of this kingdom. Athenæus describes it at length. I shall only select the leading traits. The productions of every climate were there seen collected together. The procession was opened by women slaves of Asia and Africa, dressed after the manner of their respective countries. They were followed by camels laden with frankincense, saffron, cinnamon, and precious aromatics. A band of Ethiopians carried four hundred elephants teeth and a great quantity of ebony. The Abyssinians were loaded with the gold dust which they gather on the sides of their torrents. The Indians displayed to the eyes of the people the pearls, the diamonds, and the varied riches of their climate. A number



of rare animals was led in procession by their keepers. The most beautiful birds of Africa, the sheep of Abyssinia, of the Yemen, and of Greece; the oxen of India, of the most brilliant whiteness; bears from the north; leopards, panthers, the lynx, the giraffe, the rhinoceros, decorated the cavalcade. These different objects can only be met with in a country which traffics with all the nations of the world.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, either better acquainted with the level of the sea, or more fortunate than Necos and Darius, continued the canal which was to join the Nile to the Red Sea, and had the glory of completing it. He began at the Pelusiac branch, and extended it as far as Arsinoé, now called *Aggerout* (e). The waters were prevented from rushing into it too violently, by sluices placed at the entrance. It was made to pass by lakes which fed it, and served as resting places for the boats. History does not inform us whether this canal was of any great

(e) Aggerout is at this day two leagues from the port of Suez. This is the space the Arabic Gulph has retired since the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus.



Benefit to commerce; but as it was necessary to arrive there, to run along the whole length of the Arabic gulph, the extremity of which is very narrow and extremely dangerous, Ptolemy opened another route for the merchants. He founded a city in the latitude of Sienna, and on the coast of the Red Sea, to which he gave the name of Berenice his mother. From that city to Cophtis, he constructed reservoirs, and places where the caravans found refreshment in the middle of the deserts. It was twelve days journey across burning sands, and Berenice presented nothing but an open shore exposed to every wind. These inconveniencies determined navigators in the end to repair to the port of Rat, now *Coffeir*, where they found good anchorage. From that period, the trade with India has been carried on by the way I have already described to you.

To protect the Egyptian merchants, the Ptolemies kept up a formidable navy in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. Theocritus (*f*) assures us that they had ninety-

(*f*) Theocritus, Idyll. 17.

seven ships of the first size, several of which were two hundred feet long, beside a multitude of small vessels, and four thousand barks, destined to convey their orders through the whole extent of their empire. It was by such means that Ptolemy Philadelphus extended his conquests very far into Ethiopia and the Yemen, and that he saw thirty-three thousand cities submitted to his sway. These facts would appear incredible, were they not attested by writers worthy of belief, and did we not know to what a degree of splendor commerce can raise a state, or were we unacquainted with the infinite resources an enlightened Emperor might derive from the situation of Egypt, communicating with two seas, and possessed of the treasures of an inexhaustible soil.

Ptolemy Evergetes imitated the example of his predecessors, and founded his power on trade. He encouraged it with all his might, maintained fleets on the Red Sea, subjugated several of the Homerite Kings who reigned in Arabia Felix, enjoined them to look after the security of the highways, and powerfully protected the caravans against  
the



the Arabs. During his reign the wealth of the Egyptians was at its height. This abundance of gold, and goods of every kind, produced at Alexandria prodigious luxury, and corrupted the Court of the Kings. Men in general preserve their virtue best in mediocrity. Misfortune elevates their minds, and gives full scope for energy; but the excess of prosperity enervates, and by opening to them the door of the vices, closes on them that of happiness. The Ptolemies, at the pinnacle of power, resigned themselves to effeminacy and cowardice, and to a general relaxation, which influenced the manners of their subjects; for the corruption of states takes its rise invariably with the great; the fourth of these Princes, however, performed some meritorious actions. At the request of the Rhodians, he restored to liberty Andromachus, father of Achæus, Sovereign of part of Asia Minor, who had entered into a league with the Byzantines, to exact a duty on all vessels which should pass the Dardanelles. Achæus, from gratitude for this bounty, detached himself from his allies, who renounced their pretensions, and commerce,



commerce, freed from this impediment, resumed its usual course. He maintained also the navy erected by his ancestors, and augmented it. Under his empire were vessels constructed of a prodigious size, and which have never since been equalled. Plutarch (g) describes one of his gallies which had forty rows of oars, was three hundred and seventy feet long, and sixty-four in elevation at the stern. This enormous vessel, by the side of which our three-decked ships of war would appear only as small frigates, contained four hundred sailors to hand the sails and rigging, four thousand rowers, and about three thousand soldiers destined for battle. The art of ship-building and navigation must have been brought to great perfection amongst the Egyptians, to form and put in motion such immense ships which must have resembled floating cities.

The reigns of the remainder of the Ptolemies present nothing but a scene of unbridled luxury in the capital, and Princes abandoned to every excess; but even these

(g) Plutarch's Life of Demetrius.

facts demonstrate the treasures they must have drawn from commerce, since, in the midst of their prodigious expences, the country was rich and flourishing. From the bosom of the pleasures they were plunged in, they still at intervals bestowed some attention on its advantages. Ptolemy Physcon sent Eudoxus, the Cysicenean, on an embassy to several of the Potentates of India. The reports of this celebrated navigator added to the knowledge they already had of those countries, and gave a new spur to the avidity of the merchants. They made fresh expeditions to the east, and penetrated by the Ganges even into Bengal. After the King's death, his widow, Cleopatra, ordered Eudoxus to visit the nations at the extremity of Africa. He embarked on the Red Sea, and visited the inhabitants of the coast of Sofala. Having found on the beach the prow of a vessel which was known to be of Cadiz, he formed the project of coasting along the shores of this great continent. On his return to Egypt he found on the throne Ptolemy Lathyrus, by whom he was not liked, and he attempted therefore an enterprize which



which he had meditated. He sailed out of the straits of Babel-mandel, doubled the point of Africa, and returned to the Pillars of Hercules. This was the second time of performing this hardy voyage. In those ages when there was no compass to direct the mariner's course, we may easily conceive how difficult such an undertaking must have been, and what talents and intrepidity were necessary to surmount the obstacles and perils to which he was exposed. This voyage was then less easy of execution than the circumnavigation of the globe is at the present day.

Under Ptolemy IX. the merchants of Alexandria continued to navigate the Black Sea to Spain, in the Persian Gulph, and even to the extremities of India. It was no longer to the wise administration of these Kings that Egypt owed her extensive commerce; but it had been established on such solid foundations, that when they did not straighten it excessively, it followed the regular routine.

During the war of Alexandria, carried on for some time by Ptolemy XII. against  
Julius



Julius Cæsar, that General burnt one hundred and ten large vessels, yet the Egyptians still had resources to equip a fleet capable of making head against the enemy; but who could resist the sublime talents of Cæsar? The Alexandrians made but a feeble stand against the conqueror of the Gauls. It was reserved to a woman to triumph over this great man. The famous Cleopatra overcame the victor, and entangled him in her net by irresistible charms. This Queen displayed during her whole life a magnificence and a prodigality, of which history does not afford us a second example (*b*). Summoned by Anthony, then at Tarsus, in Cilicia, to render an account of her conduct, she set out to wait on the Roman General. Having traversed the Mediterranean, she ascended the river Cydnus in a vessel, the brilliant description of which resembles what the poets tell us of the shell of Venus. The sails were of purple, the head and the sides sparkled with gold. Plates of silver covered the oar, which were moved

(*b*) Plutarch's Life of Anthony.

in cadence to the sound of instruments. The Queen, carelessly reclined under a canopy enriched with gold and jewels of an inestimable value, had adapted her dress to the richness of the vessel. Pearls, diamonds, and the richest habits, veiled her charms, without hiding them. Like the Goddess of Cytherea, she was surrounded by a crowd of children, dressed in the manner of Cupids. With their fans they cooled the air, breathed by this new Divinity, whilst clouds of perfumes, which were perpetually burning, embalmed both the banks of the river. Anthony, who wished to punish Cleopatra, soon experienced the power of her charms. He forgot that he was her Judge, to become her lover. Nor did the Queen of Egypt owe her victory only to her beauty; she had a great deal of understanding, and of the most ornamental kind. She knew all the languages of the eastern world. Speaking perfectly the Greek, Ethiopian, Hebrew, Parthian, Syriac, and Persian, she used to converse with the foreigners who were perpetually arriving at Alexandria, each of them in his native language. That city, since the fall  
of



of Carthage and of Corinth, was become the centre of the commerce of the world (*i*). There were reckoned in it three hundred thousand free persons, and at least double the number of slaves.

Cleopatra had chained Cæsar and Anthony to her car; but having made the same attempt in vain on Augustus, a cold and artful man, and dreading to adorn the triumphal pomp of this fastidious conqueror, she killed herself. Egypt passed under the dominion of the Romans. This conquest was for Rome, what Peru has been for Spain, and what Bengal is now for England. It diffused gold and silver there in such abundance, that lands, merchandize, and every article, doubled their prices. It hastened the downfall of that empire.

Deprived of their monarchs, and subjected to the Romans, the Egyptians became their factors. The people of Italy entered with ardour into the trade with India, which, according to Pliny, rendered *one*

(*i*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.



*hundred fold.* Their voyages were conducted by their guides. Some entering the Indus, penetrated into the interior of the country; others traded to the ports of the isle of Ceylon; and others again, doubling Cape Comorin, ascended the Ganges as far as Palibotra (*k*), a powerful city with which the Egyptians had long carried on a great commerce, and where there was a general concourse of all the nations of the eastern world. They brought back with them cotton, and silk stuffs, of which Augustus wore the first dresses. After his example, the Romans became much addicted to the luxury of dress; and pearls, diamonds, and perfumes, became objects of necessity. Now that the mulberry-tree and the silk-worm are transplanted to Europe, precious stuffs unknown to the Roman Consuls, decorate men of every condition; we have not, however, yet attained the quality of those of Bengal, nor the unalterable permanency of their colours. Perhaps the little Indian colony, which an Admiral (*Mr. de Suffrein*) whose virtues,

(*k*) Strabo, lib. 15.

whose talents, and whose victories, do honour to France, has transported into our country, may reveal to our artists the secrets of the Oriental countries.

In proportion as the Romans extended the limits of their empire, they adopted the usages and the vices of the conquered people. Egypt, of all the kingdoms forcircumstanced, was that which influenced the most their manners, because it procured them the greatest riches. The beautiful linen and cotton manufactured at Alexandria, her magnificent tapestry, her chrystals of various colours, were conveyed to Rome. The grain of the Thebais, and her abundant productions, fed the capital of Italy. From that period she no longer stood in need of manufactures; from that period she ceased to encourage the labours of the husbandman. In a few years she was environed with immense parks and superb gardens. In those places where the Dictators had not disdained to conduct the plough; on those spots where they had dwelt under rustic roofs, sprang up palaces ornamented with flowery lawns, cascades, and delightful



lightful groves. Asiatic effeminacy enervated the vigour of these fierce Republicans. In vain did wise Emperors strive to stem the torrent. The masters of the world had tasted the charms of inactive life; the different nations payed them tributes; the corn of Egypt rendered it unnecessary for them to cultivate their lands. They fondly imagined that they had nothing to do but to enjoy the homage of the world, and the labours of the conquered nations. Liberty, the last ray of which was stifled by Augustus, gave place to slavery. All the vices that follow in her train boldly reared their heads, and the Romans became less jealous of commanding, than eager after feasts and spectacles. The thirst of gold completed their corruption. Every thing at Rome was venal; soldiers and armies must be bought, and even the empire was exposed to sale by the Pretorians.

Constantine transported the seat of it from Rome, and it was not long in being divided. The partition of this great dominion was followed by its destruction; that of the west fell first, because it wanted the essentials which  
form



form the permanence of states, agriculture, and manners. Italy was nothing but a garden. Its inhabitants, enfeebled by luxury, were unable to resist the efforts of the Barbarians, who attacked it on all sides. Egypt long supported the tottering throne of the Emperors of Byzantium. In spite of the severities exercised by several of them upon her; in spite of the contractors who established a destructive monopoly in that country, such as is renewed in our days in great cities, where fortunes are infinitely disproportioned; commerce still continued to enrich her. She furnished her Sovereigns with great resources against the different people who were contending for their destruction. Cous, in possession of the trade of India, flourished for several ages, and became the rival of Alexandria; her fleets had not lost the route of Bengal; they still went thither to load the merchandize in request throughout the rest of the empire: but the time was at hand when the glory of this country must fall with commerce, agriculture, and the arts.

Mahomet, born with a genius calculated

to change the face of the earth, created for the people of Arabia a religion which was to unite their tribes dispersed throughout the desarts, and arm them against the rest of the world. Emboldened by his successes, he sent Ambassadors to the Emperors of Persia, of Constantinople, of Abyssinia, and the Governor of Memphis, to invite them to embrace Islamism, or to pay him a tribute. There is not in the annals of history the example of so bold a mission. He must have been regarded as a madman, had he not possessed resources in his own mind capable of supporting this audacious enterprize. But his travels had taught him the weakness of the neighbouring nations, and he knew that the warriors elevated in his school could undertake and execute every thing. The Greeks having slain one of his Envoys, he armed three thousand men. After this handful of men had traversed the solitudes of desert Arabia, Khaled seeing the three Generals, named by the Prophet, perish, put himself at the head of the Arabs, and by prodigies of valour overthrew one hundred thousand Greeks. Encouraged



couraged by this expedition, Mahomet set out with thirty thousand men, and reduced the whole country as far as the frontiers of Syria. Death terminated the course of his exploits; but his successors, animated by his example, and burning with the enthusiastic fire he had communicated to them, overset the neighbouring thrones, and conquered Egypt and a part of the East.

Egypt, become a province of the empire of the Caliphs, gradually lost her commerce and the arts. The learned men escaped to Constantinople, and into the Grecian Islands. The fervour of the first Mahometans not permitting them to form any connections with the Christian Princes, they neglected the commerce of the Mediterranean, and confined themselves to that of the Red Sea, and the interior of the country. Agriculture, however, still flourished, and some of the Arab Princes encouraged the sciences. At length the Venetians found means to open for themselves the ports of this country, and to keep Consuls there. They even obtained permission to establish in the internal cities, and carried on the

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trade



trade with India under the protection of the Egyptians. They derived very great advantages from it, and became the first navigators of Enrope, which they furnished with all the productions of Asia and Africa. The Genoese partook with them for some time of these advantages ; but the marine of the Venetians having rapidly encreased, reigned triumphant in the Mediterranean. Inspired by their success, they took advantage of the ruins of the Greeks to despoil the Ottoman Porte of some fragments of their empire. Having taken the Morea, Candia, and several islands of the Archipelago, they sent their squadrons to the very streight of the Dardanelles, and humbled the pride of the Crescent. At the battle of Lepantum, they fought, with their allies, the whole naval forces of the Turks. This Republic, enriched by the commerce of the Red Sea and India, saved Italy, and was for two centuries the bulwark of Christendom.

Commercial Venice had nearly attained the summit of her prosperity, whilst a courageous nation, excited by a Prince versed in geography and astronomy, was endeavour-

ing to open a new route to India. Henry, brother of the King of Portugal, knew, from history, that it was impossible to sail round Africa. He fitted out several vessels which, by the aid of the compass, discovered the western Isles and the Canaries. One of his Captains advanced as far as the Cape which terminates Africa; he was there assailed by furious winds, called it the *Cape of the Tempest*, and returned home. The Prince changed this name into that of *Good Hope*. These attempts, so long fruitless, must give us a high idea of the art of navigation amongst the Egyptians, since they had twice executed that enterprize without any other guide than the stars and their own genius. The glory of doubling this famous Cape was at length reserved for Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese Gentleman, who arrived on the coast of Malabar, and returned in triumph to Lisbon. The precious stones he brought back from his expedition, the pompous description he gave of the treasures of the Indian Kings, inflamed the Portuguese, and in a few years they conquered Cochin, Goa, and



several other cities, from whence they drew immense riches.

The Ottomans had taken Egypt from the Arabs. Excited by the Venetians, who furnished them with wood for ship-building, and other materials, with which they equipped a fleet on the Red Sea, they tried to put a stop to the conquests of the Portuguese, and to drive them from their new settlements. Albuquerque, who then governed them, fought gloriously the Ottoman fleet, penetrated into the Arabian Gulph, and determined to destroy Egypt. Having concluded a treaty with the Emperor of Abyssinia, he engaged him to turn the waters of the Nile into the Red Sea. To what horrors does ambition lead men! To secure to his nation the exclusive commerce of India, this Admiral did not hesitate to make four millions of inhabitants perish, by converting their country into a frightful desert. After what we have seen in these letters on the possibility of diverting the course of the Nile, we have a right to presume that the enterprize was practicable. Fortunately for Egypt, death carried off the impetuous Albuquerque,



Albuquerque, and the Emperor of Abyssinia did not carry his infamous project into execution.

Whilst the Portuguese were disputing with the Venetians and the Egyptians the riches of the western world, the Spaniards, led by the genius of Columbus, had discovered America. But their ambitious views were not to be limited by the possession of the new world. The Lisbon mariners, following the path of Vasco de Gama, touched on the coast of Malabar, and penetrated into the Indian Archipelago. The navigators from Cadiz made the Moluccas. These two rival nations setting out at nearly the same time from the same country, and each of them traversing half the circumference of the globe, arriving from opposite quarters, met together at the extremity of the world. They jointly partook of the treasures of these climates, not without bedewing them with their blood and that of the wretched inhabitants of the Celebes, whom, after reducing them to slavery, they rivalled each other in plundering. The aromatics, the spices, the gold and diamonds, with

which they returned laden, awakened from their stupor the other Courts of Europe, which had rejected, as a dream, the glorious projects of the immortal Columbus. England and France formed a marine, and were desirous of participating in the new discoveries. This was the æra of the fall of Venice. The trade of Egypt and of India was the foundation of her power. The loss of this source of wealth plunged her into that insignificance from whence she had originally sprung. The ruin of her marine followed that of her commerce, and disabled her from defending her distant provinces. The Turks wrested from her the Morea, Candia, and the isles she held in the Archipelago. At present no more remains to her than one or two rocks, which the Porte leaves her, because they are of no utility.

At this day that the maritime powers of Europe found the prosperity of their states on the basis of commerce, each of them strives to incline the balance in her own favour. Russia, too high to the northward to send her fleets to India, by the Cape of Good Hope, and so enter into competition  
with



with the nations more favourably situated, is opening herself a route known to the Romans and the Genoese. She makes her ships descend by the Volga to the Caspian Sea, and her merchants endeavour to draw towards them the merchandize of Persia, and the northern provinces of the Mogul empire. The beautiful silks of the Guilan have already become objects of their speculations, and Catherine II. will, doubtless, on the first revolution, become mistress of those rich countries. On the other side, England, France, and Holland, provide Europe with the productions of the east. The English, above all, having formed in Bengal a kingdom of a vast extent, are become, so to speak, the masters of this commerce, and dispute with all the other nations the glory of navigation.

In this state of things, Egypt, without arts, without a marine, and groaning under the tyranny of four and twenty Beys, is unable to derive any advantage from her situation, or to enter into competition with the Europeans. Her ignorant mariners no longer navigate to India ; scarcely do they dare  
to



to make the circuit of the Red Sea. Their most distant expeditions are an annual voyage to Moka. Their Saiks ill equipped, and incapable of defence, load there the coffee of Yemen, the perfumes of Arabia, the pearls of the Baharem Isles, the muslins, and the linens of Bengal, which are brought them by the Banicans. Even this limited commerce procures them great advantages. The coffee which they buy at eight sols (or four-pence English) a pound at Moka, they sell at Cairo for thirty. This article alone is an annual object of eleven millions of livres. They export the principal part of it to Constantinople, into Greece, to Marseilles, and to the coast of Syria. The remainder is consumed in the country.

The English have already attempted to deprive them of this branch of commerce; but the Egyptians complained to the Government, and strenuously opposed them. When Ali Bey had established the safety of the caravans, and laid open Egypt to foreign merchants, some English ships touched at Suez, laden with Bengal stuffs, of which they made a very advantageous sale. *Political*

*tical views* have again prohibited them from carrying on this traffic, and the Egyptians have retained possession of it. But, without a marine, what can a people do against the European squadrons? They must inevitably, sooner or later, submit to receive from foreigners those precious effects, which they import at such heavy expence from Moka, and which can be furnished them much cheaper. Besides, means might be found to obtain from them the permission of undertaking this lucrative conveyance.

Egypt, however, notwithstanding her decline, may again appear with splendor amidst the powerful nations, because she contains within herself the source of genuine riches. Her abundance of grain, with which she feeds Arabia, Syria, and a part of the Archipelago; her rice, which she sends throughout the Mediterranean, and even to Marseilles; the flower of the Chartame, with which the inhabitants of Provence yearly load several vessels; her sal-ammoniac, which is conveyed throughout Europe; the kali produced there in abundance, her beautiful flax in such request in Italy;



Italy; her linens, dyed blue, which serve a part of her neighbours for cloathing; all these objects, the produce of her own territory, still procure her money from the principal part of the nations which trade with her. The Abyssinians bring her gold-dust, elephants teeth, and other precious substances, which they barter for her produce. The clothes, the lead, the arms, and some gold and silver lace of Lyons, exported thither by France, are by no means sufficient to pay the various articles she receives in exchange. She pays the rest with piastres of Constantinople. The copper vessels, and the furs landed by the Turks in the port of Alexandria, do not balance the corn, the rice, the lentils, the coffee, the perfumes, they load there, which are chiefly paid for in specie. In a word, excepting at Moka, and at Mecca, where the Egyptians leave every year a great quantity of sequins, all those who carry on a trade with them bring them gold and silver. These precious metals are still in such abundance in the country, that Ali Bey, on flying into Spain, carried with him twenty-four millions of livres  
(a million



(a million sterling) and Ismael Bey, who a few years after escaped in the same way, loaded 50 camels with sequins, pataques (*k*), pearls, and precious stones.

If Egypt, destitute of a marine and manufactures, and nearly reduced to the mere advantages of her soil, still possesses such great riches, judge, Sir, what she is capable of becoming in the hands of an enlightened people. What cloths might be manufactured with the beautiful wool of her sheep! What linen with her delicate flax! What muslins with the two different sorts of cotton which grow there, one annual, the other perennial! What stuffs, with the silks which it would be so easy to introduce into a country, where the silk-worms could not but thrive, under a sky free from rain and tempests! What an affluence of benefits might there not be procured by clearing the canals, repairing the dykes, and by restoring to agriculture the third part of her lands now buried under the sands? With what success might not her mines of emeralds be

(*k*) A piece of money worth five shillings.

explored, so famous for their hardness, equalling almost that of the diamond? The granite, the porphyry, and the alabaster, which are found in several of her mountains, would also form a valuable branch of commerce. With what utility the manufacturer might employ her indigo, her chartame, and other materials for dying, spread over her deserts! These advantages, Sir, are not chimerical. Egypt has possessed them for many ages. A wise Administration would restore to her all the treasures that nature has lavished on her. Such, Sir, are the vicissitudes which the commerce of this country has experienced from the most remote antiquity down to the present day. Its former brilliant state cannot fail of leaving on your mind a forcible impression of what it still is capable of becoming.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XLVIII.

OF THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF THE  
EGYPTIANS, AND PARTICULARLY OF  
ATHOR, ONE OF THEIR DEITIES.

*Athor, or the night, in the opinion of the Egyptian priests, represented the darkness which enveloped the chaos before the creation, which the creative spirit animated with its breath, and of which it formed the universe. The moon regarded as a symbol of this original darkness, and recommended to the veneration of the people. This idea extended to that period of time when the sun, during his progress through the signs of the southern hemisphere, renders the days shorter and the nights more long.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**R**ELIGION, Sir, is born with man. She is the daughter of necessity and gratitude. Placed on a globe where experience makes him feel his weakness every moment, he seeks



seeks for protectors who are able to defend his life from the dangers that surround him. When he has not been favoured with revelation, those objects which forcibly strike his attention, from which he receives great benefits, and which he dreads the most, alternately attract his veneration. He addresses his prayers to the sun, to the sea, to tempests, to rivers, and erects altars to them. The less he is acquainted with the phenomena of nature, the more readily does he attribute them to superior beings. All the people of the earth have, under different names, adopted these invisible spirits; either to obtain their protection, or to divert their wrath; for it belongs only to man, enlightened by a sublime philosophy, to acknowledge one only first cause in the universe, and to regard the plurality of gods as absurd and contradictory. I am persuaded however, that prejudiced or superficial writers have frequently calumniated the worship of nations, by making them adore an insensible stone or vile animals. The marble sculptured by their hands, the ox consecrated by religion, were emblems  
only

only of the divinity to whom they addressed their vows, similar to the statues and images which fill our temples, which are no more than representations of the saints, or of the god for whom our incense burns. If the islanders of Otaheiti, scarcely in any degree civilized, esteem their Bananas, and the animals deposited within their *Morais*, as offerings only to their *Eatoas* (*l*), what should make us imagine that the Egyptians worshipped as gods the onion and the crocodile (*m*)? This opinion destitute of foundation, can never be entertained for a moment by a sensible people. Is it possible that this people who were styled wise, *per excellentiam*, who cultivated the sciences with such success, amongst whom Solon resided to collect the beautiful code of laws he gave to the Athenians, where Plato

(*l*) Invisible gods of the inhabitants of the South Sea.  
See Cook.

(*m*) Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Ælian, all speak of the sacred animals of Egypt. None of them bestow the name of gods on them. On the contrary, they expressly regard them as living images which remind the people of the deities to whom they are consecrated.



learnt to acknowledge the immortality of the soul, could never adopt so barbarous a theology? No, Sir, the philosophers of Egypt have never deified animals; they have not even, like the Greeks, raised their heroes to the rank of Gods. Their religion was founded on astronomy, and the phenomena of nature. But they placed above the stars an invisible being, to whom they attributed the wonderful harmony which pervades the universe. It is true that the vulgar, whose feeble sight cannot raise itself beyond sensible objects, frequently adored the symbol instead of the divinity. I shall attempt to unveil their religious opinions. The learned Jablonski has done this before me with great success. I shall tread in his foot-steps, and shall bring in testimony passages from the gravest historians of antiquity; for in a matter of such importance, as little scope should be given as possible to imagination, to hazard, and conjecture.

One of the most ancient divinities of Egypt is *Athor*, which in the Coptic language signifies



signifies night (*n*). The priests did not originally indicate by this name the obscurity which reigns on the setting of the sun, but that darkness spread over chaos previous to the creation, which the eternal Being animated with his breath, and from which he drew forth every being. This mysterious night was in their opinion the origin of things (*o*). Damascius, in speaking of the theology of the ancient Egyptians, says: “ They established as the first principle, “ that darkness which the human understanding is unable to comprehend, and “ which they celebrate three times in their “ sacred hymns.” Sanchoniathon, impressed with this doctrine, says: “ Mortals “ were created from the wind *Kolpia* and “ his spouse *Baaou* (*p*).” *Kolpia*, a Hebrew word, signifies the breath of God, and *Baaou*, the void\*. Thus it is the voice of

(*n*) Jablonski, *Pantheon Ægyptiacum*, tome premier.

(*o*) Damascius, quoted by Cudworth.

(*p*) Jablonski, tome premier.

\* Blackerel translated from Sanchoniathon—*Colpiat*, the voice of the mouth of God, and his spouse *Bau* or *Bahou*, darkness or night.

Translator.

the Creator which brings beings into existence. This theology differs little from that of Genesis, where the prophet thus expresses himself (*q*): “And the earth was  
 “ without form, and void; and darkness  
 “ was upon the face of the deep, and the  
 “ spirit, (*or breath*) of God was upon the  
 “ waters.” Simplicius (*r*) accordingly pretends, that these words, *The Creator called the light, day, and the darkness, night*, were borrowed from the Egyptians; but should Moses even have adopted this doctrine from the priests of Memphis, as he has disengaged it from all the absurdities which enveloped it, it would be the less divine \*. This ancient people, descended from Misraim, the grandson of Noah, might, as well as the Hebrews, have received the light of revelation from their common father. If they had obscured its purity, the chief of

(*q*) Genesis, chap. i.

(*r*) Aristotle's Physics, book 8.

\* A learned prelate well observes: “That the fables  
 “ which were profane in other nations, were *sanctified* in  
 “ Syria, and confirmed by God himself!” *Translator.*



the Israelites has restored it to its proper lustre.

Orpheus, initiated in the mysteries of the Egyptians, first conveyed into Greece their religious opinions, and sung them in harmonious verses. “ At the beginning of the world,” said he, “ appeared Æther, created by God; from her bosom proceeded Chaos and the dark night. She covered every thing that was below Æther.” In the dialogue between Jupiter and the night, the poet availing himself of his privilege personifies her, and makes the Creator say (*f*):

“ Nurse of the gods, immortal night----  
 “ How shall I proceed with wisdom to the  
 “ creation of the immortal gods? How  
 “ shall I contrive to make the universe one  
 “ great whole, and each thing exist separately? *Night*. Surround the creation  
 “ with an immense æther, place the heavens  
 “ in the middle, and in the heavens the  
 “ earth encompassed by the sea, and stars to  
 “ compose its crown.”

The Greeks eagerly received the religion

(*f*) See Eschenbach.



fung by Orpheus. It flowed from the primitive ideas which the ancient Egyptians had of the origin of the world. The natural philosophers covered it with a veil impenetrable to the people, and the poets having personified the elements, composed of them a fabulous Theogony, through which it was difficult to discover the truth, concealed under so many veils. The religious opinions of Egypt, however, long prevailed in the temples of Greece. Pausanias, visiting that country, saw at Megara *The Oracle of the Night*, where they taught probably every thing respecting *Athor*.

This symbolical deity, by which the Egyptians characterized the possible principal of things, became in the language of the Greek philosophers, Venus, or the mother of the world. It was still Orpheus who taught them this comparison (*t*): “ I  
 “ shall sing the Night, Mother of Gods  
 “ and Men, Night the origin of all created  
 “ things, and we shall call her Venus.”  
 The poets soon got possession of this meta-

(*t*) Jablonski, tome premier.

physical idea, and as they must have a deity fit to embellish their poems, they made her spring from the froth of the sea, excelling in beauty, and created her goddess of Pleasures. She animated the world; she gave life to every thing that breathed, and Ovid celebrated her power in the following allegorical verses :

(u) Venus rules the universe with her glorious sceptre.

No divinity equals her power.

She gives laws to heaven, to the earth, and to the teeming waters.

She preserves all beings by uniting the sexes.

All the gods owe their existence to her.

She makes the trees to grow, and matures the harvests.

See also *Lucretius*.

Alma VENUS cœli subter labentia signa

Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugiferenteis

Concelebras ; per TE quoniam genus omne animantum

Concipitur, visitque extortum lumina SOLIS :

Nam simul ac SPECIES patefacta est verna diei,

Et referata viget *genitalis*, aura favoni

Aëreæ primum volucres, te DIVA, tuumque

Significant *initum*, percussæ corda tuâ vi —

Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem

Efficis ut cupide generatim sæcla propagent.

LUCRET.

Translator.

(u) Ovid, De fastibus, lib. 4.

A a 4

The

The Egyptian priests who had painted Night as a divinity, from whose bosom the Eternal had drawn forth all his creatures, aware that the minds of the vulgar required sensible objects, proposed to their veneration the moon in the midst of darkness. Doubtless they at first taught that this planet was only the emblem of the night and a sign of the divine power; but as it often happens that the image effaces the divinity, the people addressed their prayers to the moon and erected altars to her.

The philosophers still farther extended this doctrine. They bestowed the name of Night, of Athor, of Venus, on the period when the Sun having passed the Equator, remains in the Southern Hemisphere, because then the days are the shortest, and the nights the longest. “The natural philosophers (x),” says Macrobius, “have  
 “honoured with the name of Venus, the  
 “upper, and with the name of Proserpine,  
 “the lower Hemisphere. The Phœnicians and the Assyrians represent the

(x) Lib. i. chap. 21.

“former



“ former goddess in tears, when the sun,  
 “ passing through the twelve signs of the  
 “ Zodiac, enters the Southern Hemi-  
 “ sphere. All the time he remains there,  
 “ and renders the days shorter, they pretend  
 “ that Venus weeps the absence of the  
 “ god carried off by a temporary death,  
 “ and detained by Proserpine. We see her  
 “ statue on Mount Lebanon; (it is the  
 “ celebrated Venus of Aphacitis) she has  
 “ her head veiled, and her countenance for-  
 “ rowful. Besides that this statue repre-  
 “ sents the afflicted goddess, it is also the  
 “ symbol of winter.”

The following passage proves that this  
 opinion came from Egypt(y): “ In the  
 “ month of Athyr (z), the Egyptians say,  
 “ that Osiris (the sun) is dead. Then the  
 “ nights become longer, the darkness en-  
 “ creases, and the force of the light dimi-  
 “ nishes. The priests on this occasion per-

(y) Plutarch, Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(z) Athyr is the name of a month. The Egyptians call Venus, *Athor*, and from this name they have formed that of the third month of their year. *Orion the grammarian*.

“ form

“ form mournful ceremonies. They ex-  
 “ pose to the people a gilded ox covered  
 “ with a black veil, in token of the grief  
 “ of the goddess, (Isis or the Moon). For  
 “ in Egypt the ox is the symbol of Osiris,  
 “ and of the earth.”

You have seen the Egyptian *Athor*, Sir, at first signifying that mysterious night which covered Chaos before the creation, afterwards become the planet of the night, and at length marking the period when the sun is distant from us. You have observed, by what analogy the Orientals, the Greeks, and the Romans have called Venus the Queen of the World, and the Mother of Pleasures. It is invariably the same doctrine; but changes forms, in passing amongst different nations, and in the mouths of poets and philosophers.

*Athor* had temples in Egypt. Herodotus, who gives us the Egyptian name of several remarkable places in that country, makes mention of *Athar*, *Beki*, the city of Athor, which Strabo (*a*), and Diodorus Siculus (*b*)

(*a*) Strabo, l. 17.

(*b*) Diodorus, l. 1.

render by the name of *Aphroditopolis*, the city of Venus. Ælian (c) in speaking of a town situated in the Hermopolitan Nome, says: "In this town they worship Venus. "A peculiar worship is also paid here to "the cow." The same author informs us that Isis, or the moon, was represented with the horns of a cow. Thus was this animal, or the ox, the emblem of the planet of the night; and the black veil with which they covered it, whilst the summer was visiting the signs of the winter, could only express to the eyes of the people, the diminution of the days, and the grief of Isis; but certainly it reminded the priests of the darkness spread over chaos before the creation. On casting your eyes on the map of Egypt, you will perceive three towns called *Aphroditopolis* by the Grecian geographers, but which the natives call *Atharbeki*.

Such, Sir, are the feeble lights we are obliged to extract from the fragments left us by the ancients, on the subject of the religious opinions of the Egyptians, respec-

(c) Ælian, Treatise on Animals, lib. II.



ting *Author*. Had not their books perished in the conflagration of the Ptolemean library; did not their hieroglyphics hide from us the information they meant to transmit to posterity, we should have discovered amongst a people so learned, and situated near the common source of human nature, clearer and more satisfactory ideas. Let us enjoy however what still remains to us, and endeavour gradually to penetrate into the mysteries of their religion.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R   X L I X.

OF PHTHA, NEITH, AND CNEPH, NAMES  
UNDER WHICH THE SUPREME BEING  
WAS ADORED IN EGYPT.

*The Supreme Being adored by the Egyptians, under the Names of Ptha, Neith, and Cneph. By these Appellations were denoted the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of that infinite spirit which created the world. The Temple of Ptha was at Memphis, that of Neith at Saïs, and that of Cneph in the island of Elephantine. Purity of religion only among the Priests, and those who were initiated in the sacred mysteries. The people neglect the Creator, while they adored his works.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** HAVE said, Sir, that the ancient Egyptians revered, under the name of *Athor*, or of Night, the darkness spread over the abyss before the creation. This Chaos, sung

fung by the poets of Greece and Rome, could produce nothing of itself. The philosophers of Egypt acknowledged a mind which drew forth from it the universe, and established that admirable order which reigns in it without alteration. They gave it the name of *Ptha*, Disposer (*d*). Jamblichus(*e*) gives us this information in the following words: “The Egyptians call *Ptha* the  
 “creating spirit, which does every thing  
 “with truth and wisdom. The Greeks  
 “have called it Vulcan, considering no-  
 “thing but the art with which he pro-  
 “duces.” They placed their spirit before every thing, taught that he first gave to Chaos the *form of an egg* §, and that he afterwards created all beings. Thales, the Milesian, instructed in the school of the Priests of Memphis, said (*f*), “Water is

(*d*) La Croix, tresor epistolaire, liv. 3. Jablonski, liv. premier, says, *Ptha*, in Coptic, signifies, *Disposer of things*.

(*e*) Mysteres Egyptiens, section 8.

§ The discovery of the oviformity of the earth was brought from Egypt into Greece by Orpheus, from whence it was called the Orpic Egg.—Translator.

(*f*) Cicero, lib. 4. de natura deorum.



“ the principle of things, and God is that  
 “ spirit which has formed the universe out  
 “ of the humid principle.” This passage of  
 Genesis has great similitude with the doc-  
 trine of the Egyptians on the creation (g).  
*The spirit (or breath) of God moved upon the  
 face of the waters.* It is natural to imagine,  
 that Moses, brought up in the court of the  
 Pharaohs, acquired there part of his know-  
 ledge, and that he afterwards extricated the  
 true light from the mysteries and fables  
 which enveloped it\*. To paint the Creator  
 in a manner adapted to the senses, the  
 Egyptians attributed to him both sexes, that  
 is to say, they acknowledged in him the  
 power of producing without the aid of any  
 other being. Accordingly Synesius, who  
 was tainted with this ancient theology, has  
 said of the infinite mind, *Thou art the fa-*

(g) Chap. I.

\* Blackerell, in his Letters concerning mythology,  
 says, “ ’Tis quite enough, if by comparing the Egyptian  
 “ tradition of the rise of things from *Sanconiathon*, or  
 “ *Jaut*, we find some traces of that assertion, That the  
 “ Hebrew lawyers were instructed in all the wisdom of  
 “ the Egyptians.” Prax. Apost.—Translator.

*ther,*

*ther, thou art the mother, thou art the male, thou art the female (b).*

On the obelisk of granite, transported from Egypt to Rome, amongst the hieroglyphics, of which Hermaphion has given the interpretation, is the following remarkable passage on the subject of Ramestes, King of Heliopolis (*i*): *This is he whom Pttha, the father of the Gods, has elected.* These words, father of the Gods, point out the stars which the Egyptian sages regarded as the most striking emblems of the divinity, and which the people really adored. From the time of Herodotus (*k*) fire, water, earth, the heavens, the moon, the sun, the day, and night, received divine honours in this country; but these were the deities of the vulgar. Persons initiated in the mysteries, had another belief. They acknowledged only the Author of Nature, who had drawn forth every being from non-entity.

The first dynasty of Manethon compre-

(*b*) Synesius, hymn 3.

(*i*) Ammian Marcellin, lib. 17.

(*k*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

hends the reign of the Gods in Egypt (*l*). He places *Phtha* or Vulcan at their head, and after him, his son—the Sun. This passage, taken in an allegorical sense, is by no means contrary to sound theology. The sun being the work of the Creator, may be considered as his son; and the Egyptians, to ennoble their origin, adored the Creator as the first of their Kings. Manethon assigns to each of these material Gods the years of their reign, which must be understood by the various Solar and Lunar Cycles, inverted by astronomers (*m*). This dynasty proves that *Phtha* precedes time and those visible deities, whose constant order suggested the regulation of their course when men studied the heavens. The Egyptian Priest positively declares it (*n*): “No determined period can be assigned to *Phtha*, because he always shines in the midst of darkness, as in the day.” The stars of the firmament, in fact, appear and disappear alternately. Their empire is not eternal, because it had

(*l*) Manethon, according to Syncellius.

(*m*) See Vignoles, tome 1.

(*n*) Manethon, according to Syncellius.



a beginning ; but the invisible mind existed before time. His power shines forth perpetually in his works, and his reign is immutable.

The Egyptian Priests confined within the sanctuaries of their temples this sublime doctrine, either transmitted to them by the first men, or to which they had, like Abraham (*o*), elevated themselves by the efforts of their reason, and by the study of astronomy. Having cloathed it in allegories, of which they only possessed the explanation, they left the people plunged in ignorance, and favoured their idolatry by pronouncing,

(*o*) St. Clemens, of Alexandria, asserts that Abraham raised himself to the knowledge of the only God by the study of astronomy. It appears that this also was the opinion of the Arabs. Mahomet, who had collected the traditions of his country, represents the patriarch of the believers, with his eyes turned towards heaven, and after observing, with astonishment, the appearance and vanishing of the stars, the sun, and the moon, which he had at first looked upon as divinities, he makes him exclaim, *No, I will not adore Gods who rise, and who lie down.* See also Ab. Ecchellens. Arab. Hist. VI.

[Translator.]

at the death of each individual, this prayer (*p*),  
 “ O Sun, and ye other Gods, who bestow  
 “ life on man, receive me, restore me to  
 “ the eternal Gods, that I may dwell with  
 “ them.”

The Greeks pretended that, even in the opinion of the Egyptians, *Phtha* was nothing but fire, the purest, the most subtle of every thing, which they elevated above æther, from whence souls detached themselves to animate bodies ; for which reason they gave it the name of Vulcan, who presides over that element. “ The sages of Egypt, says  
 “ Servius (*q*), embalm the bodies, in order  
 “ to preserve them; and that their souls  
 “ remaining long attached to them, may  
 “ not quit them to animate others. The  
 “ Romans, on the contrary, burn them immediately, that they may return to their  
 “ first nature.” This is the metempsychosis which Herodotus (*r*) pretends has passed from Egypt into all the countries of the earth. If we may credit these authors, the

(*p*) Porphyry, lib. 4.

(*q*) Servius on the *Æneid*, lib. 3.

(*r*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

Egyptians regarded *Phtha*, or the superior part of æther, as the divine essence, which successively gave life to all the universe. The followers of Plato and the Pythagoreans professed the same creed. They published that the soul, immortal in its nature, leaving the body, again returned to mix itself with the soul of the world, from whence it derived its origin (*s*).

However these opinions may be, they are Greeks who speak, and it is not to be doubted, that they altered the religion of Egypt, by intermixing the reveries of their metaphysicians. The facts I have cited in the first part of this letter, prove that *Phtha* was looked upon, in remote antiquity, as the ordaining spirit, and the great architect of the universe. The inhabitants of Memphis raised a temple to him, where he was principally worshipped (*t*). But as I have related, the worship of the visible Gods pre-

(*s*) Plutarch, lib. 4, on the doctrine of the Philosophers.

(*t*) Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus have described this temple. Suidas adds, the inhabitants of Memphis adore Vulcan, under the name of *Phtha*.



vailed amongst the people, over that of the Supreme Being, and the Priests alone burnt incense on his altars.

We ought not to separate from *Phtha* the God whom the Egyptians adored under the name of *Neith*, since he is also the creative spirit. *Neith*, in fact, signifies *he who disposes all things* (u). But by the first of these attributes, God was understood to be taken in a general sense, and by the second, his wisdom was more particularly characterized, His worship flourished at Saïs, a town of the Delta, where the Priests had a famous college. Plato (x), who frequented it, expresses himself thus: “Saïs, the capital of the Saïtic prefecture, is a considerable town, of which Amasis was King. *Neith*, to whom the Greeks have given the name of Minerva, is its tutelar Deity.” The following inscription, engraved in hieroglyphic characters on the gate of the temple of *Neith*, marks the sublime idea they had conceived of that divi-

(u) Jablonfski, tome premier.

(x) Timæus of Plato.

nity (*y*): “I am what is, what shall be, what has been. No mortal has lifted up my Tunica. The fruit I have engendered is the Sun.” This definition can be applied only to the Supreme Being, who existing by his essence, and having neither beginning nor end, contains in himself the past, the present, and the future (*z*). This incomprehensible spirit lies hid from the limited view of man, who cannot lift up the veil which covers him. These words: *the first I have engendered is the sun*, clearly demonstrate, that *Neith* and *Phtha* are the same divinity; for Manethon asserts also, in a figurative sense, that *Phtha* is the father of the sun. The Phœnicians, who received

(*y*) Proclus, the learned Commentator of Plato, gives us this inscription in that work. Plutarch cites it in his treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*z*) Man may be considered as the image of God, for he contains within himself, in certain respects, the past, the present, and the future. The remembrance of what has been, the sentiment of his actual existence, the hope of what he shall be, make him enjoy at the same time these three modes of being; accordingly the Creator has said in Genesis, *Let us make man after our own image*.

their

their religion and their knowledge from their brethren the Egyptians, likewise acknowledged (*a*) Minerva, or *Neith*, for the artist of nature.

The Egyptian Priests adoring more particularly, under the name of *Neith*, the divine wisdom, which directs the course of the world, and enlightens human beings, had placed the arts under his protection. The warrior wore on his finger a ring, on which was engraved a scarab or beetle. Horapollo gives us the reason of it (*b*). “The Egyptians, says he, pretend that the world is composed of males and females. “They paint a scarab to represent Minerva (*c*).” This ring which distinguished the soldiers, was a sign by which they did homage to the Divinity, whose emblem they bore, and who held in his hand

(*a*) Julian, Or. 4.

(*b*) Horapollo, Hieroglyphics, lib. 1.

(*c*) I have already said that the Egyptians, to mark in a sensible manner the productive power of the Creator, described him with two sexes; now as they attributed the two sexes to the scarab, or beetle, they made that insect the symbol of *Neith*.



the fate of battles. One of the Pharaohs, *Pfammenites* (*d*), instructed by *Neith*, announces that the Kings put themselves under the protection of the Supreme God, believing that they held their knowledge from him.

Cadmus, the Phœnician, was the first who carried this worship into Greece. He gave the name of *Neith* (*e*) to one of the seven gates of Thebes, in Bœotia. The Egyptian theology was taught there. The poets soon mixed with it their brilliant allegories. They called *Neith* Minerva, made her proceed, completely armed, from the brain of Jupiter, celebrated her as the Goddess of Combats, and the Mother of the Arts. Philosophers still saw the truth through the veil with which it was obscured; but the people were unable to discover it, and bestowed incense on a fabulous Deity.

“ The first woman, says Eustathius (*f*),

(*d*) Jablonski, tome premier.

(*e*) Jablonski, tome premier.

(*f*) Eustathius's Observations on Iliad, lib. I.

“ who

“ who formed a web, was an Egyptian. She  
 “ was seated; it is for this reason that the  
 “ Egyptians represented Minerva seated.”  
 They intended, doubtless, by giving her this  
 attitude, to remind men that she had taught  
 them the arts, and that all their knowledge  
 came from her. The ancient Greeks, imi-  
 tating their Preceptors in every thing, re-  
 present Minerva seated, in their sculptures  
 and engravings (*g*).

The Egyptians, after adoring the power  
 of the Creator, under the name of *Phtha*,  
 his wisdom under that of *Neith*, honoured  
 his beneficence by calling him *Cneph*, or  
*Good, per excellentiam* (*b*). “ The Priests  
 “ of Egypt, says Eusebius (*i*), call Cneph  
 “ the Architect of the Universe.” Strabo  
 speaks of his temple built in the isle of  
 Elephantis. This beautiful monument  
 is still remaining, such as I have de-  
 scribed in my thirteenth Letter. The

(*g*) Strabo, lib. 13.

(*b*) Jablonski, tome premier.

(*i*) Eusebius, Evangel. Prepar. lib. 3.

symbol of this God was a serpent, as Eusebius testifies. “ The serpent in the middle of a circle, which it touches in the two opposite points of its circumference, indicates the Good Genius.” For this object, they chose a particular sort of serpent, of which Herodotus (*k*) gives us the following description: “ There are found, in the environs of Thebes, sacred serpents which are not venomous (*l*). They have two horns on the top of their head. When they die, they are buried in the temple of Jupiter.” The name of *Cneph* (*m*), or Good Genius, was bestowed on them, as well as on the divinity they represented, and the veneration of the people extended no farther than to the image.

(*k*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

(*l*) This species of serpents, honoured by the name of *Haridi*, still play a brilliant part, as we have seen in our days in the hands of the Priests of Achmin.

(*m*) Eusebius Prepar. Evangel. lib. 3, says, The Phœnicians call this serpent the Good Genius; for this same reason the Egyptians call him *Cneph*.

“ One



“ One day, says Plutarch (*n*), I saw  
 “ two men disputing; one of them per-  
 “ ceiving a serpent, called it *Agatho Dai-*  
 “ *mon*, Good Genius, and tried to take  
 “ it.”

We must not here confound the Good Genii of the Greeks and Romans with those of the Egyptians. The former, by this denomination, understood intermediate beings between the divine and human nature; the latter employed it to point out the benevolence of him who presides over heaven and earth, and whose all-powerful will gives motion to the stars through the immensity of space.

Such, Sir, are the religious opinions of the Egyptians on the subject of *Phtah*, of *Neith*, and of *Cneph*, three attributes under which they adored the same God, but by which they respectively characterised his power, his wisdom, and his goodness. This worship was gradually effaced. It remained buried in the Temples, and the people, ei-

(*n*) Plutarch's Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

ther deceived by the Priests, who presented nothing to their senses but symbolical figures, or incapable of elevating their minds to a knowledge of the infinite Spirit, who is every where present, and every where escapes our senses, honoured his works, and addressed their prayers and their offerings to them.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R L.

OF THE VISIBLE GODS OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND CHIEFLY OF OSIRIS, A SYMBOLICAL DIVINITY, WHICH REPRESENTED THE SUN.

*At first the Egyptians worshipped the Sun, under the designation of Phré, and afterwards under that of Osiris. This Deity very famous. His temples and Priests in every corner of the kingdom. His origin derived from astronomy, which having observed his course more regular than that of the moon, made use of it for the measuring of time. The name of Osiris, derived from Osch Iri, the Author of Time, shews the design of the Priests in introducing this allegorical divinity.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

“THE ancient Egyptians,” says Diodorus Siculus (o), “contemplating the arch of the heavens, raised above their heads,

(o) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i.



“ and admiring the marvellous order which  
 “ reigns in the universe, regarded the sun  
 “ and moon as eternal Gods, and honoured  
 “ them with a particular worship. They  
 “ called one Osiris, and the other Isis.”  
 The assertion of this historian is too general.  
 To have written in a manner more conformable to truth, he should have excepted the Pharaohs, the persons initiated in the mysteries, and especially the Priests, who did not believe in that idolatry to which they had subjected the people. Besides, it is reasonable to believe, they at first taught them, that these brilliant bodies were the works of the Most High. However that may be, the Egyptians worshipped the sun and the moon, under the pompous titles of the King (*p*) and Queen of heaven. The star of the day was first called *Phré* (*q*). The father-in-law of the patriarch, Joseph, was called, according to the version of the Septuagint, *Petephre*, Priest of the Sun. The astronomers observing his course, and his principal effects, gave him the symboli-

(*p*) Jeremiah, chap. 7, and 44.

(*q*) Jablonski, tome premier.

cal name of Osiris, which was consecrated by religion (*r*). “It is acknowledged,” says Macrobius, “that Osiris is no other than the sun. When the Egyptians wish to describe him in their hieroglyphic characters, they paint him with a sceptre and one eye.”

They could not figure in a manner more sensible the star which enlightens the world, and to whom they attributed the empire of the sky. Accordingly Martian Capella (*s*), in the beautiful hymn which he composed in honour of the father of the day, says,

Eye of the world, brilliant torch of Olympus;

Latium calls thee the Sun, for, after thy author,

Thou art the splendid cause of light. The Nile calls thee Seraphis;

And Memphis adores thee under the name of Osiris.

Some authors have also called the Nile Osiris. Plutarch explains this opinion (*t*).

“The Egyptians look upon the Nile as the preserver of their country, and as deriv-

(*r*) Macrobius, Saturnal, lib. 1.

(*s*) Martian Capella, lib. 2.

(*t*) Plutarch's Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

“ing its source from Osiris.” In fact, the vapours exhaled by the sun, and then condensed in the atmosphere, fall down in rain, and form the great river which constitutes the riches of Egypt. It is accordingly in this sense that Homer always calls it *the emanation of Jupiter* (u). The Egyptians, says Herodotus (x) pretend that Osiris is the same as Bacchus. This sentiment has many partizans amongst the Greeks, and is not without probability. The Priests of Egypt made Osiris travel from one end of the world to the other. They painted him as a powerful King, who had conquered the earth, and loaded men with bounties. The Greeks, who attributed the same gifts, the same conquests, to Bacchus, have said that he was the same with Osiris. But in the sacred language of Egypt, these journies only represented the course of the sun, and the advantages he procures to mortals. These allegories have been at all times in use amongst the Orientals, and the Psalmist

(u) Jupiter was the same with the Sun, or Osiris.

(x) Herodotus, lib. 2.



makes use of one when he thus expresses himself (z): The sun “is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” Tibullus, following literally the opinions of the Greeks, has rendered them in verses full of grace and harmony (a).

*Primus aratra manu Solerti fecit Osiris,*

*Et teneram ferro sollicitavit humum.*

*Primus inexpertæ commisit semina terræ,*

*Pomaque non notis legit ab arboribus.*

*Hic docuit teneram palis adjungere vitem:*

*Hic viridem durâ cedere falce comam.*

A fact admitted by the gravest writers of antiquity, evinces to a demonstration how far the Greeks were deceived in attempting to establish a perfect resemblance between Bacchus and Osiris. The first was honoured as the author of the vine, and the Egyptians, so far from attributing its cul-

(z) Psalm 19.

(a) Tibullus, lib. 1. elegy 8.

ture to Osiris, abhorred wine as poison. "The Egyptians," says Plutarch (*b*), "had never drank wine before the time of Psammeticus (*c*) Regarding this liquor as the blood of the giants, who, after making war against the Gods, had perished in the combat, they did not offer them any in libations, imagining it was odious to them. They asserted even, that the vine had sprung from this blood, mixed with the earth."

This sacred fable had passed from Egypt into Persia, and as far as the extremities of India (*d*). St. Clemens, of Alexandria, reports that the Magi abstained from wine with the utmost attention. The Arabs had a law which prohibited them the use of it (*e*). Ovington (*f*), in short, who has travelled in India, assures us, that in our days the Brachmins detest that liquor, and hold it in no less horror than Manes, who

(*b*) Plutarch's Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*c*) This Prince was one of the last Egyptian Pharaohs.

(*d*) Stroma 3.

(*e*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(*f*) Ovington's Voyage, Vol. I.

regarded it as the blood of demons. It is difficult to say whence arose this aversion of the Orientals for wine; but it really exists, and this is probably one of the reasons which induced Mahomet to prohibit it (g). Perhaps we ought to search for the cause of this prohibition in the curse pronounced by Noah against his son Cham, who, having surprized him in his drunkenness, insulted his situation. However this may be, the Egyptians, who hold it in horror, never could attribute the culture of the vine to Osiris.

But what does this signify? On what occasion was it given to the sun? This question has excited the researches of the ancients and the moderns, and they have laboured to resolve it. Diodorus Siculus (b), and Horopollo (i), say, that Osiris signifies *Poliophthalmus*, he who has many eyes. This interpretation applies to the sun, but

(g) Wine is an abomination invented by Satan. —  
Coran.

(b) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(i) Horopollo, Hieroglyphics, lib. 1.



does not explain the word Osiris. For if *Os*, or *Ofsch*, may be translated in Egyptian by *many*, *Iris* has no connection with *eye*. “The name of Osiris,” says Plutarch (*k*), “indicates a great number of things, and “may be interpreted in various ways. It “expresses efficacious strength and bounty.” This still does not render the literal sense. The learned Jablonski (*l*) interprets this word in a more natural manner. “Osiris,” says he, “comes from *Ofsch-Iri*, he who “makes time.” The Egyptians understood by this expression what God declares in speaking of the sun and of the moon (*m*) : “And God said, let there be lights in the “firmament of the heaven, to divide the “day from the night, and let them be for “signs, and for seasons, and for days and “for years.” The following passage of Clemens, of Alexandria, favours this sentiment (*n*) : “The Egyptians paint

(*k*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*l*) Jablonski, tome premier.

(*m*) Genesis, Chap. i. verse 14.

(*n*) St. Clemens, quoted by Eusebius, Prep. Evangel. lib. i.

“ the sun, borne in a vessel, or on a crocodile. This emblem gives us to understand that the star of the day, journeying through the mild and moist air, engenders time.”

The Egyptian astronomers, after repeated observations, regulated the year by the course of the sun. The great circle of gold, of 635 cubits, which they placed on the summit of the tomb of Osimandué, and where was seen the rising and setting of the stars for every day of the year, is a splendid proof of their labours, and of their discoveries. “ The Priests of Thebes,” says Strabo (o), “ applied themselves principally to the study of astronomy and philosophy. They made use of the sun, and not the moon, to measure time.” Julius Cæsar, who passed a year amongst them, made himself acquainted with their learning, and reformed the Roman Calendar, which was extremely defective. “ This Prince,” says Macrobius (p), “ imitating the Egyptians, who alone were perfectly

(o) Strabo, lib. 17.

(p) Macrobius, Saturnal. lib. 1.

“ acquainted with divine things, formed  
 “ the year from the motion of the sun,  
 “ who finishes his revolution in 365 days  
 “ and a quarter.” The same author, entering into the spirit of the astronomers, looks upon that measure of the year as the chief virtue of the sun.

The solar year was found by the academy of Heliopolis, under the reign of Afeth (q), 1325 years before J. C. and 320 after the departure of the Israelites. The Priests who till then had honoured the sun under his proper name of *Pbré*, bestowed on him, in memory of so important an event, that of *Osiris*, or the *Author of Time*.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(q) Vignoles, Chronologie, tome premier.



## L E T T E R L I.

OF AMMON AND HERCULES, EMBLEMS OF  
THE SUN.

*Amoun, called by the Greeks Ammon, and by the Latins Jupiter Ammon, was particular worshipped at Thebes, which the scripture styles the city of Ammon, and the Greeks Diospolis the city of Jupiter. His statue decked with the skin and head of a ram. This symbolical divinity, which represented the vernal sun, delivered oracles in a temple, situated in the midst of the desarts of Lybia. The statue of Hercules, which partook of the worship of its deity, at the Vernal Equinox, denoted the force of the sun when he had reached the Equator.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**T**HE Egyptians, Sir, versed in the study of Astronomy, perceived that the sun appeared under different aspects according to his

his situation in the Zodiac. They observed that he slackened his motion towards the solstices, that he hastened them at the equinoxes, and that his influence was greater or less under these various circumstances. They expressed these different phenomena by characteristic denominations. Having adopted in their theology the use of the hieroglyphic language, which speaks only by symbols, they alternately painted the sun under the form of a child, of a man grown up, and an old man, now joyous, now sad, or splendid, in the midst of light. The priests by these emblems alluded to astronomical or physical effects. The vulgar, accustomed to see these figures in the temples, forgot the object they represented, and adored them as divinities. Macrobius, who had penetrated into the mysteries of this ancient religion, unveils them to us in the following terms (*r*): “ The Egyptians, at  
 “ the winter Solstice, wishing to mark the  
 “ shortest day of the year, drew from the  
 “ sanctuary, the sun, represented under the

(*r*) Macrobius, Saturnal. lib. I.

“ form of an infant. His growth is rapid,  
 “ which they indicate by representing him  
 “ at the spring Equinox in the figure of a  
 “ young man. At the summer Solstice, when  
 “ he has reached his maturity, his age is dis-  
 “ tinguished by a full face, ornamented  
 “ with a long beard. At length they dis-  
 “ play him with the features of an old  
 “ man, to point out the diminution of the  
 “ days.”

These representations, adopted doubtless before the use of writing, and preserved by the priests, expressed emblematically the four seasons of the year. First let us examine what the Egyptians understood by the name of Ammon, so celebrated in antiquity. *Amoun*, says Plutarch (s), of which we have made Ammon, is the Egyptian name of Jupiter. This god was particularly worshipped at Thebes, called by the sacred books *Hamon-no*, the possession of Hammon, and by the Septuagint (t) the city of Am-

(s) Treatise of Isis and Osiris. Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, give Jupiter also the name of Ammon.

(t) Ezechiel, chap. 30. The Greeks and the Romans called it *Diopolis*, the city of Jupiter.



mon. Herodotus tells us under what form he was honoured (*u*). “The inhabitants of Thebes regarded the ram as sacred, and do not feed on its flesh. Every year however, on the festival of Jupiter, they cut off the head of a ram, and take off its skin, with which they cover the statue of the god.” Proclus teaches us the object of this ceremony (*x*): “The Egyptians,” says he, “had a singular veneration for the ram, because the image of Ammon bore his head, and that this sign, the first of the Zodiac, was the presage of the fruits of the earth.” Eusebius (*y*) adds that this symbol marked the conjunction of the sun and moon in the sign of the ram.

You recollect, Sir, the ceremony observed by the priests of the temple of Ammon, when men went to consult that oracle. Faithful observers of the opinions adopted by their ancestors, who made the sun travel

(*u*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

(*x*) Timæus of Plato.

(*y*) Eusebius, prep. Evangelic. lib. 3.

in a vessel, they carried in a boat the statue of that god, formed of precious stones, and bearing the head of a ram. So many authorities and facts, evidently demonstrate, that amongst the astronomers of Egypt, Ammon represented the sun. It is in this sense that Diodorus Siculus has said (z): *Osiris is the same with Ammon*. Notwithstanding, these two names did not represent the same phenomena. The former, as you will have observed, announced this luminary the author of time; the latter, the spring, and the commencement of the astronomical year which happen in the sign of the ram, and was pointed out by the symbolical figure of that divinity. The word *Amoun*, composed of *Am-oueïn* (a) *shining* denoted, the desired effects produced by the sun on attaining the Equator, such as the encrease of the days, a more splendid light, and above all, the fortunate presage of the inundation and abundance.

The priests, on the festivals of Ammon,

(z) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(a) Jablonski, tome premier.



were accustomed to associate Hercules in his worship. After covering the statue of Jupiter with the skin of the ram, they brought near to this emblematical god, the representation of Hercules (*b*), whom they called in their language *Dsom* or *Dsiom*(*c*), *strength*. This expression characterized the virtue of the star of the day, when arrived at the Equinoctial line. Accordingly, Plutarch(*d*) says, they asserted that Hercules, placed in the sun, turned with him. This observation has not escaped Macrobius (*e*): “ The  
 “ name alone of Hercules (Heracleos)  
 “ proves that he indicated the sun. In fact,  
 “ *Heras* signifies *of the air*, *cleos*, *glory*; and  
 “ to whom attribute this epithet, if not to  
 “ the body which fills the universe with his  
 “ fire, and which on retiring, leaves it  
 “ plunged in darkness?” Hence have arisen the brilliant allegories of the Greeks, who themselves acknowledge, that the

(*b*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

(*c*) Jablonski, tome premier.

(*d*) Plut. Treatise of Isis Osiris.

(*e*) Macrobius, Saturnal, lib. 1.



twelve labours of this hero, allude only to the sun passing through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, in his annual revolution.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Horus, as well as Osiris, had a barbe for his symbol. The same attributes frequently ascribed to both. His throne supported by lions, because he represented the sun at the summer solstice. His education at Heliopolis, on the border of the great lake, denoted his great power in raising vapours into the atmosphere, whence they fell down in dew upon the earth. The victory of Horus over Typhon, depicted the happy effects produced by the sun in his progress through the twelve signs, such as the inundation, the extinction of the north winds, and the extinction of those named the Etesian winds.

To Mr. L. M.

LETTER

## LETTER LH.

OF HORUS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY WHICH  
REPRESENTED THE SUN.

*Horus, as well as Osiris, had a hawk for his symbol. The same attributes frequently ascribed to both. His throne supported by lions, because he represented the sun at the summer Solstice. His education at Butis, on the border of the great lake, denoted his great power in raising vapours into the atmosphere, whence they fell down in dew upon the earth. The victory of Horus over Typhon, depicted the happy effects produced by the sun in his progress through the summer signs, such as the inundation, the extinction of the north winds, and the excitement of those named the Etesian.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**H**ORUS, a renowned deity of ancient Egypt, was also, Sir, an emblem of the  
sun.

sun. Plutarch positively affirms it (*f*): that virtue which presides over the sun, whilst he is moving through space, the Egyptians called *Horus*, and the Greeks *Apollo* \*.

The veneration of the people for this god (*g*) appears from the circumstance of three cities being called by this name (*b*) in the Thebais. The sparrow-hawk represented equally *Osiris* and *Horus*. It was their common emblem, and they had sometimes the same attribute. The interpretation left by *Hermapion* of the hieroglyphics engraved on the obelisk of *Helio-*

(*f*) *Plut. Treatise of Isis and Osiris.*

\* *Job* also calls *Ur* or *Orus* the sun—"If I gazed upon the sun (*Ur, Orus*) when he was shining, or on (*Jârêcha*) the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been severely enticed (i.e. to worship) or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God who is above." *Job*, chap. xxxi. ver. 26, 27, 28.

*Translator.*

(*g*) *Horapollon, Hieroglyphics, lib. i.*

(*b*) Their Egyptian name was *Cities of Horus*. The Greeks called them *Cities of Apollo*.

polis,



polis, offers these remarkable words (i): *Horus is the supreme lord and the author of time.* You know, Sir, that these qualities were chiefly attributed to Osiris; that they may apply to Horus, he must necessarily denote the star of the day, in certain circumstances; this is what is explained to us by the oracle of Apollo of Claros:

Learn that the first of the gods is *Jao*.

He is called *invisible* in winter, Jupiter in the spring (k),

The *sun* in summer, and towards the end of autumn, the tender *Jao*.

The star of the day, on attaining the summer Solstice, and called per excellentiam *the sun*, is the same as Horus. In fact the Egyptians represented him borne on lions (l), which signified his entrance into the sign of the lion. They who presided over the divine institutions, then placed sphynxes at the head of the canals and sacred fountains, to warn the people of the approaching in-

(i) Ammian Marcellinus.

(k) That is to say *Amoun*. These various denominations will be explained in the course of these letters.

(l) Horapollon, Hieroglyphics, lib. i.

undation. Macrobius, who informs us why the Greeks gave Horus the name of Apollo, confirms this sentiment (*m*): “ In the mysteries,” says he, “ they discover as a secret, which ought to be inviolable, that the sun arrived in the upper hemisphere, is called Apollo.” These testimonies concur in proving, that this emblematical deity was no other than the star of day, passing through the signs of summer.

These lights may lead us to the explication of the sacred fable, which the priests published on the subject of Horus; for they enveloped in mystery every point of their religion. Plutarch (*n*) gives it at length. I shall only quote the principal traits. They said that he was the son of Osiris and of Isis; that Typhon, after killing his brother Osiris, took possession of the kingdom; that Horus, leaguings himself with Isis, avenged the death of his father, expelled the tyrant from his throne, without depriving him of life, and reigned gloriously in Egypt.

(*m*) Macrobius. Saturnalia, lib. 1.

(*n*) Plutarch. Treatise of Isis and Osiris.



A person who has travelled ever so little in Egypt, easily discovers natural phenomena, hid under the veil of fable. In the spring, the wind *Khamfin* frequently makes great ravages there. It raises whirlwinds of burning sands, which suffocate travellers, darken the air, and cover the face of the sun in such a manner as to leave the earth in perfect obscurity. Here is the death of Osiris, and the reign of Typhon. These hurricanes break loose usually in the months of February, March, and April. When the sun approaches the sign of the lion, he changes the state of the atmosphere, disperses these tempests, and restores the northerly winds, which drive before them the malignant vapours, and preserve in Egypt coolness and salubrity under a burning sky. This is the triumph of Horus over Typhon, and his glorious reign. As the natural philosophers acknowledge the influence of the moon over the state of the atmosphere, they united her with this god, to drive the usurper from the throne. The priests considering Osiris as the father of Time, might bestow the name of his son on Horus,



Horus, who reigned three months in the year. This is, I believe, the natural explication of this allegory. Besides, all enlightened men must have understood this language, which was familiar to them. The people only, whose feeble sight extends no farther than the exterior, without diving into the true meaning of things, might regard these allegorical personages, as real gods, and decree prayers and offerings to them.

(o) Jablonski, who has interpreted the epithet of *Arueri*, which the Egyptians gave to Horus, pretends that it signifies *efficacious virtue*. These expressions perfectly characterize the phænomena which happened during the reign of this god. It is in summer, in fact, that the sun manifests all its power in Egypt. It is then that he swells the waters of the river with rains, exhaled by him in the air, and driven against the summit of the Abyssinian mountains; it is then that the husbandman

(o) Jablonski, tome premier.

D d 2

reckons

reckons on the treasures of agriculture. It was natural for them to honour him with the name of *Arueri*, or *efficacious virtue*, to mark these auspicious effects.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R LIII.

OF THE CELESTIAL SERAPIS, A SYMBOL  
OF THE SUN.

*The worship of Serapis flourishing under the Ptolemies, who built a superb temple in honour of him. Adored in Egypt before their reign. His origin on the banks of the Nile. This emblematical divinity denoted the Sun in his progress through the autumnal signs. Said to be invisible, because seen only for a short time by the inhabitants of the north. The same with the Pluto of the Greeks, but divested of the fables with which their poets involved him.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Ptolemies having brought from Synope, a city of Pontus, to Alexandria, the statue of a god, who on his arrival received the name of Serapis, propagated his worship throughout Egypt. The magnificent temple



ple they built in his honour, and which for grandeur, the beauty of its ornaments, and the majesty of its architecture, was compared to the capitol, the festivals they established, the brilliant ceremonies they instituted, attracted the veneration of the people to this deity. Serapis, become the god of the court, made the Egyptians almost forget their ancient gods. The provinces emulated each other in building temples to him, and burning incense on his altars. It is to this celebrity that we must attribute the opinion of those writers, who have pretended that his worship was first introduced into this country by the Ptolemies, and that he was a stranger there before their reign. Various passages, extracted from better informed historians, prove the contrary. Plutarch (*p*) in his life of Alexander the Great, introduces a man, who says to him: Serapis has appeared to me, and after breaking my chains, has sent me to thee. The Athenians having decreed to this conqueror the

(*p*) Plutarch, Life of Alexander.

honours of Bacchus, Diogenes the Cynic (*q*) exclaimed: *Let them make me Serapis then.* These circumstances prove that Serapis was known before the Ptolemies. Other passages inform us that he had his birth on the banks of the Nile. One sees in Egypt, says Pausanias, several temples of Serapis (*r*). Alexandria possesses the most magnificent; the *most ancient* is at Memphis. Lastly, Tacitus, whose evidence cannot be called in question, expresses himself thus, in speaking of the god of Synope transported to Alexandria (*s*): “ A temple worthy the grandeur  
“ of this city, was built on a spot of ground  
“ called *Rachotis* (*t*). There was at this  
“ place an ancient chapel consecrated to  
“ Serapis and Isis.” These authorities leave no doubt of the antiquity of the Egyptian

(*q*) Diogenes Laertius, Life of Diogenes the Cynic.

(*r*) Pausanias, Attic.

(*s*) Ann. Tacit. lib. 4.

(*t*) In the time of Alexander, Rachotis was only a hamlet inhabited by fishermen. It ultimately became a considerable suburb of Alexandria. At this day we see there a hill of rubbish of near one hundred feet in elevation, and under which are buried the remains of *Serapeum*.



Serapis. History informs us also that he was in certain respects the Pluto of the Greeks, and one of the symbols of the sun.

“ When the god of Synope,” says Plutarch (*u*), “ was transported to Alexandria, “ the interpreter Timotheus, and Manethon “ of Sebennytus, conjectured on the sight “ of the cerberus and the dragon which “ adorned his statue, that it represented “ Pluto, and persuaded Ptolemy that this “ god was *the same with Serapis*; for he “ did not go under that name in the coun- “ try from whence he was brought. He “ received therefore on his arrival that of “ Serapis, which the Egyptians give to “ Pluto.” It must not be imagined however that the Egyptian Pluto was the sovereign of hell, king of ghosts, and judge of the dead, like that of the Greeks. This theology of Grecian origin, was unknown at Memphis (*x*). Porphyry tells us so in express terms: “ The priests of Egypt un-

(*u*) Plutarch, Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*x*) Prophecy quoted by Eusebius, prepar. Evangel. lib. 3.

“ derstood



“ derstood by Pluto, the inferior sun, which  
 “ remaining under the earth near the win-  
 “ ter solstice, passes over and enlightens  
 “ unknown regions.” It is for this reason  
 that Callisthenes calls Serapis *the invisible*  
*god of Synope*. For the same reason, Julian,  
 in speaking of Pluto says (y): “ Plato asserts  
 “ that the sublime souls of virtuous men  
 “ are carried before that god, whom we  
 “ call also Serapis, because he is invisi-  
 “ ble.”

The epithet of invisible was given him,  
 because the sun, in approaching the winter  
 solstice, remains longer concealed under the  
 earth, and seems to hasten to conceal him-  
 self from the sight of the northern nations.  
 To mark his abode of six months in the  
 northern, and the other six in the signs of  
 the southern hemisphere (z), they painted  
 him in two different colours, sometimes  
 luminous, at other times of a dark blue.  
 The former was called sparkling or superior  
*Amoun*; the latter, *Serapis* or inferior. This

(y) Julian, Or. 4.

(z) Macrobian. Saturnal. lib. 1.

is what the ancients, but particularly Jablonski amongst the moderns, have left us as the most probable account of this emblematical deity. Nor is it unlikely, that in the opinion of the ancient philosophers of Greece, Pluto was no other than the inferior sun, but that under the brilliant pencil of the poets, he became the monarch of the infernal regions.

I have the honour to be, &c. "

## L E T T E R L I V.

OF HARPOCRATES, AN EMBLEM OF THE  
SUN.

*Harpocrates represented, in Egypt, the Sun at the winter Solstice, and, in Greece, the God of Silence. Delineated by the Egyptian Priests with his feet joined together, in such a manner that he could scarcely walk. This emblem of the slow, and almost insensible motion of the sun, when verging to the Tropic of Capricorn. Represented sitting on the Lotus flower, because it never opens till towards the end of autumn.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

MACROBIUS informs us, Sir, that the Egyptians drew from their sanctuary the sun, represented under the form of an infant, to announce to the people the shortest day of the year. This emblematical deity

was



was called *Harpocrates* (a). The Greeks made of him the God of Silence, because he was born holding one of his fingers on his mouth. Isis, says Plutarch (b), brought forth at the winter Solstice the tender Harpocrates. This Egyptian name signifies *lame* (c). He was represented with this infirmity to mark the slow, and almost imperceptible motion of the sun, when at the Tropic. Horapollo, in the explanation he has left us of the hieroglyphics, assures us of this in the following terms (d): “The  
 “ two feet of Harpocrates were joined to-  
 “ gether, so as to form only one. The  
 “ Egyptians figuratively expressed by this  
 “ emblem the course of the sun at  
 “ the winter Solstice.” Plutarch adds (e) that he was painted, seated on the flower of the Lotus. A more expressive symbol could not be given this God, for the calix of this

(a) Saturnal. lib. 1.

(b) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(c) Jablonfski, Pantheon Egyptiacum, tome premier.

(d) Horapollo, Hieroglyphics, lib. 2.

(e) Plut. Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

superb lily of the Nile, does not blow before the end of autumn.

The Priests, who enveloped with the veil of fable the most striking phenomena of nature, and who had composed an ænigmatical theology, said that Jupiter (Ammon) having originally had his feet joined together, could not walk freely; that the shame he felt at this deformity induced him to live in solitude; that Isis, touched at his situation, restored him the use of his legs by separating them. Through this allegory we discover Harpocrates, or the sun, stationary at the winter Solstice; and by the operation of Isis, Ammon, or the star of the day, advancing with a more rapid motion, when he reaches the Equator.

But the Egyptians were not the only people who expressed themselves in a symbolical manner. All the ancient nations, especially in the infancy of language, were compelled to adopt the use of parables and allegories. Before the invention of letters, sensible signs were necessary to speak to the understanding; and the metaphors employed so frequently by the Hebrew and the Arab,

stamp the seal on their antiquity. "The  
 " Paphlagonians, according to Plutarch (*f*),  
 " said that the sun slept in winter, and was  
 " awake in summer; and the Phrygians,  
 " that he was chained during the winter,  
 " and that in the spring he walked free  
 " from his irons."

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*f*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

LETTER



## LETTER LV.

OF MENDES, THE SYMBOL OF THE  
SUN.

*Mendest he first emblem of the sun. Denoted the fecundating influence of this planet. The he-goat sacred to him, because the most prolific of animals. The Priests initiated in the mysteries of Mendès. The Phallus, an emblem of generation, adorned their habits, and decorated the statues of other deities, Named by the Greeks, Pan, but improperly, for he bore little resemblance to that demi-god.*

To Mr. L. M:

Grand Cairo.

THE deity I am about to treat of, Sir, was probably the first symbol of the sun. The Egyptians having discovered that they owed the riches of their country to that star, that he was the principal cause of the inundation, that his beneficent rays conveyed heat and life throughout nature, that made

the plants spring up, and ripened the harvests, looked on him as the first source of fertility. They worshipped him under the name of *Mendès*, which signifies *very fruitful* (*g*). To point out in a sensible manner the productive power with which they believed him to be endowed, they consecrated the goat to him as the most prolific of animals. This animal was fed in the Temple of *Mendès*, as the living image of the God he represented. The inhabitants of the Mendesian province celebrated festivals in his honour, wore mourning at his death, and held him in such extraordinary veneration, that \**decency* forbids me to relate what Herodotus, Pindar, Plutarch, and several other historians, have written concerning them, to such a pitch can superstition mislead feeble mortals! The father of history (*b*), deceived by this worship, thought that *Mendès* really signified a *be-goat*. See

\* *Preterea Mendes ubi Pan colitur, et Hircus animal— Hoc in loco Hirci cum mulieribus coeunt.* Strabo, lib. 17. [Translator.]

(*g*) Jablonski, *Pantheon Egyptiacum*, tome premier.

(*b*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

veral Grecian writers have adopted this mistake. Others have discovered it, and have observed that *Mendès* was the symbolical deity for fecundity, the goat his living image, and the sun the principle. Suidas positively asserts it (*i*). “The Egyptians,” says he, honour the goat, because he is “consecrated to the generative virtue.” § Diodorus Siculus (*k*) and Horapollon (*l*) are of the same sentiment.

The Greeks, who represented Pan with the horns, the feet, and the tail of a goat, discovered a striking analogy between him and the Egyptian God. They gave to *Mendès* the name of Pan, and called the city of *Chemmis*, now *Achmim*, *Panopolis*, in which Pan had a temple. But this resemblance was only in appearance. Their Pan, the guardian of the woods, the caverns, and mountains, had only the title of demi-god,

(*i*) Suidas, at the word *Mendès*.

§ *Hircum autem deificarunt, ut apud Græcos, Priapum, Propter genitalem partem.* Diodorus Siculus, lib. i.—

[Translator.]

(*k*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i.

(*l*) Horapollon, hieroglyphics, lib. i.



and that of Egypt was in the number of the eight great divinities. “Hercules, “Bacchus, and Pan,” says Herodotus (*m*), “have been newly received into the temples of Greece. Pan (that is to say, “Mendès) is the most ancient of the eight “great Gods of Egypt.” Diodorus Siculus adds (*n*), “The Egyptians honour Pan “with a particular worship. Almost all “the temples have his statue, and the “Priests who inherit the priesthood, first “initiate themselves in his mysteries.”

These passages authorize us to regard *Mendès* as the first emblem of the sun. Indeed, reason itself leads us to this conclusion. Before men were astronomers, before they had conceived the idea of the Tropics and the Equator, and observed the various phænomena produced by the revolution of the sun, the Egyptians must have remarked his productive virtue. To paint this sensibly, they created an emblematical divinity which they called *Mendès*, very pro-

(*m*) Herodotus.

(*n*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i.

*lific*, and of which the goat, from his procreative quality, was the image. It is for this reason that Diodorus Siculus<sup>(o)</sup> declares that *Mendès* is the same with Osiris. In truth, both one and the other represent the star of the day, but each of them has different attributes. What adds a fresh degree of evidence to this truth is, that the *Phallus*, the symbol of generation, and particularly of *Mendès*, decorated all the Gods I have been speaking of, and served as an ornament to the sacerdotal dress of the Egyptians.

I have laid before you, Sir, the different denominations under which the sun was adored in ancient Egypt. You have seen, that under the celebrated name of Osiris, he was regarded as the author of time; that Ammon marked his passage to the Equator, announced the spring, and the renewal of light; that Hercules indicated his beneficent power; that the glorious reign of Horus, representing him in the signs of the summer, announced to the people the extinction of the southerly winds, and the

(o) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

progreſs of the inundation; that Serapis was the emblem of this luminary, returning from the Equinoſial Line towards the Tropic of Capricorn; that Harpocrates marked the ſlowneſs of his courſe when he has reached the winter Solſtice, and that Mendès was the ſymbol of his generative virtue. Theſe various attributes, perſonified by the Priests, compoſed a fabulous theology which the people looked upon as ſacred, and which made them offer incenſe to chimerical deities. In the following letters I ſhall give you ſome account of Iſis, and the deities connected with her. Through the whole, you will diſcover the ſame ſpirit of myſtery; through the whole, you will ſee the Priests ſtudying nature, obſerving aſtronomical and phyſical effects, and concealing their diſcoveries from the eyes of the vulgar, with an impenetrable veil.

I have the honour to be, &c.

L E T T E R



## L E T T E R LVI.

OF ISIS, OR THE MOON, AN EGYPTIAN  
DEITY.

*The moon anciently worshipped by the Egyptians under its proper name Joh; the adoration of which, when introduced into Greece, gave birth to the fable of Job's being changed into a cow. Its influence on the atmosphere being observed, they afterwards named it Iris, which signifies the cause of abundance. The inundation of the Nile ascribed to the tears of this deity; that is, to the dew, of which she excites a fermentation in the waters. To this day the Coptis pretend that the dew which falls at the Solstice, makes the waters ferment, and by that means produces the innundation.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians, Sir, had a boundless veneration for the moon. From the most remote antiquity, she was honoured by  
E e 3 them,

them as the Queen of Heaven (*p*). At first they worshipped her under her proper name of *Job* (*q*). Inachus, the first king of Argos, carried this worship into Greece, one hundred and twenty years before the birth of Moses (*r*): “It is there,” says Eustathius (*s*), “that a cow is the symbol of Jo or the moon; for in the Argian language the moon is called *Jo*.” John Malala (*t*) confirms this sentiment. “In our days the Greeks call the moon Jo, in a mystic and hidden sense.” After the Greek language prevailed over the Egyptian, this foreign name appeared mysterious, and was only made use of within the walls of the temples, where the origin of the ancient modes of worship was preserved; it is for this reason that Malala calls it mystic.

In the end, the Egyptian priests, employed in observing the phænomena of nature,

(*p*) Jeremiah.

(*q*) *Iob*, in the Egyptian language, signifies the moon. Pantheon Ægyptiarum de Jablonki, tome second.

(*r*) Jablonki, tome second.

(*s*) Commentary on Dion. Perigetes.

(*t*) Chronologie de Jean Malala.

having remarked that the moon has a direct influence on the atmosphere, the winds, and the rains, regarded it, like the sun, as one of the sources of the inundation. They sought therefore for an expression which might characterize this effect, and called it *Isis*, which, in the Egyptian language, signifies (*u*), *the cause of abundance*. This happened 320 years after the departure of the Israelites. At this period they bestowed surnames on the sun and moon, proper to fix their discoveries, and presented the people with a new theology. It is to this change that we must attribute the origin of the Grecian fable, which makes *Io* cross the sea, metamorphosed into a cow, and conducts her into Egypt, where she receives the name of *Isis* (*x*). Lucian, who was perfectly versed in ancient mythology, puts these words into the mouth of Jupiter: “ Conduct *Io* to the  
“ banks of the Nile across the waves of the  
“ sea. Let her become *Isis*; let her be the  
“ goddess of the Egyptians: let her augment

(*u*) Jablonſki, *Pantheon Ægyptiacum*, tome ſecond.

(*x*) Lucian, *Dialogue of the gods*, book i.



“ the waters of the river and let loose the  
“ winds.”

The swelling of the Nile being the event, the most important for this country, since the lives of the whole nation depend upon it, the causes of it were sought after with the greatest attention. The priests, initiated in the mysteries, that is to say, acquainted with the natural sense of the allegories with which they amused the credulity of the vulgar, knew every thing which was connected with the inundation, and by what signs it might be conjectured how far it would be moderate or favourable. Their intimate connections with the Ethiopians, had procured them most valuable information on this head, which they reserved to themselves: “ The abundant rains,” says Eustathius (*y*) “ which fall during the summer in Ethiopia, make the Nile swell, as Aristotle and “ Eudoxus assure us, who say they derive “ this knowledge from the Egyptian “ priests.” They knew also that these rains owed their origin to the northerly

(*y*) The learned commentator of Homer, Odyf. lib. 4.

winds. “The rains of Abyssinia,” says Pliny, “are attributed to the northerly winds, which convey thither during the summer the clouds of the northern countries.” These effects being merely physical, were not unknown to the sacerdotal tribe; but to rule over the minds of the people, and hold them in subjection to the yoke of religion, the priests enveloped their own knowledge in mysteries, and were the sole depositaries of science.

The Nile beginning to increase at the new moon which follows the solstice, the priests, who regarded this planet as the mother of the winds, (the vulture, the symbol of Isis, announced her power of engendering and letting loose the winds) (*a*) decreed to her the honour of this phenomenon. “Isis,” says Servius (*b*), “is the Genius of the Nile. The sistrum she bears in her right hand, indicates the encrease and the flowing of the waters. The vase she holds in her left, marks their abundance in

(*z*) Plin. lib. 5. and Pomponius Mela, lib. 1,

(*a*) Euseb. prep. Evangel. lib. 3.

(*b*) Servius, Observations on the Æneid, lib. 8.

“ all the canals.” Temples were erected to her in the different provinces, and she had altars and sacrifices throughout the country. “ Coptos,” says Eustathius (*c*), “ is a city  
 “ of the Thebais, where *Ïo* is adored under  
 “ the name of Isis. It is on her festivals  
 “ that they celebrate with the *fistrum* the  
 “ increase of the Nile.” The people, from the allegorical language of the priests, imagined that they owed this bounty to the tears of that divinity. The Egyptians, according to Pausanias, were persuaded that the tears of Isis had the virtue to augment the Nile, and to make it rise up into the country. The Coptis are not yet cured of this superstition. In our days, they say that at the solstice there falls a dew which makes the waters of the river ferment, and produces their overflow. Are not these the tears of the goddess so celebrated amongst the ancient Egyptians, their ancestors? They afterwards attempted to establish a pointed analogy between the phænomena of

(*c*) Eustathius the grammarian.

the



the course of the moon, and those of the inundation. They said, as Plutarch (*d*) assures us, “ That the degrees of the elevation of the waters corresponded with the phases of that planet; that at Elephantinos they rose to the height of twenty eight cubits, a number equal to the days of her revolution; that at Mendès, where the encrease was the least considerable, they approached to seven cubits, corresponding to the number of days in which she decreases; that the mean term of the inundation at Memphis, was fourteen cubits, and was relative to the period of the full moon.” This passage proves with what attention they endeavoured to become acquainted with every thing, concerning an event so particularly interesting to the public felicity.

The Egyptians having called the moon *Isis* or *the cause of abundance*, bestowed this epithet on the earth, as on the mother of

(*d*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*e*) Servius on the *Æneid*, lib. 8.

fruits. We know, says Macrobius (*f*), that Osiris is the sun, and Isis the earth \*. Isis, in the Egyptian language, adds Servius, means the earth. Considered in this point of view, she has a striking affinity to the Ceres of the Greeks. This observation has not escaped Herodotus (*g*), who declares that it is the same divinity. But not to wander from the Egyptian theology, we must not extend this denomination to the globe in general (*b*). Plutarch, who was well acquainted with this matter, informs us that the priests honoured only with the name of Isis, that part of Egypt watered by the

(*f*) Macrobius. Saturnal. lib. 1.

\* The gods, says Blackwell, in whose worship all the Egyptians, agreed were no more than *Isis* and *Osiris*, the sun moon and earth: for Isis is sometimes *Diana*, though for the most part *Ceres*.—See also Herodotus, *Euterpe*.

*Translator.*

(*g*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

(*b*) Plutarch has composed a compleat treatise on Isis and Osiris, where much curious matter is to be met with.

Nile,

Nile, and in allusion only to her fecundity; he adds that, in the sacred language, they termed the inundation, the marriage of Osiris with Isis.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R LVII.

OF SOTHIS, A STAR SACRED TO IRIS.

*Some writers call Sothis by the name of Iris; but this star, denominated Sirius by the Greeks, and Canicula by the Latins, was only sacred to that goddess. The Egyptians marked the rising of Sothis by two stated periods. The veneration of the people for this star arose from a particular circumstance; namely, that at its heliacal rising, they could judge of the degree of inundation. On this account, it was named the star which makes the waters increase.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

ASTRONOMY having observed the course of Sothis, and its connections with Isis and the inundation, offered this star to the veneration of the people. It became consecrated by religion, and possessed such celebrity that several authors have called it

by the name of Isis. Horapollo (*i*) thus expresses himself: "Isis is also the name of  
 " a star, called in Egyptian, Sothis, and in  
 " Greek, Astrocyon." The Egyptians,  
 adds Damascius (*k*), assert that Sothis is  
 the same with Isis.

However these opinions may be, it is  
 certain that Sothis did not indicate Isis, but  
 only the constellation of the dog-star, and  
 particularly the star which shines at the  
 head of it. The Egyptians dated the com-  
 mencement of their civil year from his  
 rising. "In Egypt," says Plutarch (*l*),  
 "that star was called Sothis, to which the  
 " Greeks give the name of the dog-star,  
 " and Sirius. The constellations of Orion  
 " and of the Dog, are consecrated to Horus  
 " and to Isis." The astronomer Theon (*m*),  
 comes in support of this sentiment. "The  
 " Dog rises towards eleven o'clock at night.  
 " It is at this epocha that the Egyptian

(*i*) Horapollo, Hieroglyphics, lib. 1.

(*k*) Damascius, life of Isidore.

(*l*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*m*) Phænomena of Theon.

“ year begins. This star and his rising are  
 “ consecrated to Isis.” Porphyry (*n*) goes  
 farther. “ Aquarius,” says he, “ is not at  
 “ Memphis, as at Rome, the commence-  
 “ ment of the year, but Cancer. Near to  
 “ this sign is Sothis, called by the Greeks,  
 “ the dog. The Egyptians regard the  
 “ rising of this star as the first day of the  
 “ month, and as the instant of the birth of  
 “ the world.” We may join to these au-  
 thorities, that of Macrobius (*o*): “ Antiquity  
 “ assigns to the sun and to the moon, the  
 “ lion and the crab, because they were in  
 “ those signs at the creation of the world.”  
 We may believe that these last words mark  
 the period when men, after numerous ob-  
 servations on the movement of the heavenly  
 bodies, formed from their discoveries a  
 system of doctrine, to which they gave the  
 name of astronomy. They dated from this  
 epocha, *the birth of the world*. If this con-  
 jecture be just, it proves that the Egyptians  
 are the most ancient astronomers on earth,

(*n*) Porphyry, of the cave of the Nymphs.

(*o*) Macrobius. Dream of Scipio, lib. I.



for it is to them that writers attribute this allegorical language.

The quotations I have laid before you, Sir, demonstrate that Sothis did not represent Isis, but was only consecrated to her. The astronomers formed two periods which they called Sothic, because they commenced with the rising of that star. In the former, which comprehended 1461 years, they considered principally the course of the sun, who after this long revolution returned to the same point of the heavens from whence he set out. In the latter, the duration of which was twenty-five years, they paid attention to the course of the sun, and of the moon. They remarked that after this space of time the new moons returned to the same days of the year, without being however in the same point of the zodiac. They made use of this cycle, which comprehended exactly 309 lunar revolutions, to regulate the festivals; for they paid great attention to the new moons.

The following was the principal reason which led them to consecrate the dog-star to Isis: they regarded this divinity as the

cause of the inundation, and as they were able on the rising of Sothis to judge of the degree to which the waters would rise, they dedicated it to this star. Horapollo gives us to understand this indisputably (*p*): “The rising of the dog-star announces by certain signs, the events of the year.” This passage must be understood as relative to the increase of the Nile, the most important phenomenon for Egypt. Accordingly Diodorus Siculus (*q*) tells us, that the Egyptians called Sothis, *the star which makes the waters increase*.

Bochart and Kircher, who knew that amongst the Greeks, Sothis was called *Cynos*, Dog, and amongst the Romans, *Canicula*, have pretended that this word had the same meaning in Egyptian. But this is an error that Jablonski (*r*) has refuted in a convincing manner. He proves that this name is derived from *Soth-ois*, *the beginning of time*. It is impossible to give a more

(*p*) Horapollo, Hier. lib. 1.

(*q*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(*r*) Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tome second.

proper designation of a star, from whose rising was dated the renewal of the civil year, and in an allegorical manner the creation of the world.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R LVIII.

OF BUBASTIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Great honours paid to Bubastis in Egypt. A city distinguished by her name. She was reputed the patroness of pregnant women, and known to the Greeks and Romans by the name of Diana and Ilithyia. This symbolical deity represented the new moon. Her festival celebrated the third day of the month, because then her increase is visible over all the world.*

To. Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo,

YOU know, Sir, that the Egyptians bestowed different names on the sun, either to characterize his effects or his relations with respect to the earth; they followed the same method respecting the moon. Chæremon, a sacred  
writer

writer of Egypt, leaves no doubt on this subject. “(s) Every thing which is published of Osiris and Isis, all the sacerdotal fables, allude only to the phases of the moon, and the course of the sun.”

Bubastis was one of the principal attributes of Isis. Theology having personified her, formed of her a divinity, in whose honour a city of that name was built, as described by Herodotus (t), and where the people collected from all parts of Egypt, at a certain period of the year. A cat was the symbol of this deity. The priests fed it with sacred food, and when it died, they embalmed its body, and carried it in pomp to the tomb prepared for it. The ancients have explained this worship variously, all of them in a manner by no means natural, and which I shall not relate. The Greeks pretend that when Typhon declared war against the gods, Apollo transformed himself into a Vulture, Mercury into an Ibis, and Bubastis into a Cat, and that the vene-

(s) See Porphyry, Epist. to Anebon.

(t) Herodotus, lib. 2.

ration of the people for the latter animal took rise from that fable; but they ascribe their own ideas to the Egyptians, who thought very differently. However that may be, the cat was greatly honoured in Egypt, and a Roman soldier having imprudently killed one, was immediately put to death by the populace.

Bubastis, in the language of the priests, was deemed the daughter of Isis, and even represented her in certain circumstances. It is for this reason that the Greeks, who honoured the moon by the name of Diana, bestowed it also on this Egyptian divinity. Bubastis, says Herodotus (*u*), is called Diana by the Greeks. The Egyptians attributed to her the virtue of assisting pregnant women, as antiquity testifies (*x*). Nicharchus says also, in speaking of a lady who had been happily delivered, without invoking her, “ Thus has the office of Bubastis  
“ been rendered useless. If all women  
“ were to produce children like *Philanium*,

(*u*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

(*x*) Antolog. lib. 1.



“ what would become of the worship of  
 “ the Goddess ?”

The Greeks and Latins, disciples of the Egyptians, ascribed the same power to Diana; and Horace does not think it unworthy of his pen to address the following Strophe to her (*y*) :

*Montium Custos remorumque, Virgo,  
 Quæ laborantes utero puellas  
 Ter vocata audis, adimisque letho,  
 Diva triformis :*

The philosopher will seek for the origin of this ancient worship in the laws imposed by nature on women, and which in some measure follow the lunar revolutions. The natural philosophers, and the poets, buried it under allegories, unintelligible to the people.

A perfect resemblance does not exist between the two deities I have been speaking of. The Greeks constituted Diana Goddess of the Chace, and of the Forests, an attribute the Egyptians did not acknowledge in Bubastis. The former added, that she was

(*y*) Horace, lib. 3, Ode 16.

the daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and Bubastis was produced by Osiris and Isis.

A barbarous custom was introduced at the festivals celebrated in honour of Bubastis, called by the Greeks also, *Ilithyia*, or *Lucina*, to mark her presiding over childbed. The Egyptians adored her under this name in the city of *Ilithyia*, situated near Latopolis (*z*). “ In this city, says Plutarch (*a*), they  
“ burnt men alive, calling them Typhons,  
“ as Manethon assures us. Their ashes  
“ were thrown to the winds.” “ Amasis,  
“ continues Porphyry (*b*), who cites the  
“ same fact, abolished these sanguinary sa-  
“ crifices, and established figures of wax  
“ of the natural size, for the human vic-  
“ tims.” Herodotus (*c*), on the other hand, warmly maintains that the Egyptians were never guilty of this crime. “ How could

(*z*) Strabo, lib. 17, makes mention of this city, the ruins of which are not now to be seen.

(*a*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*b*) Porphyry, of Abstinence.

(*c*) Herodotus, lib. 2. According to this historian, the Egyptians sacrificed only swine, calves, oxen, and geese.

“ a people,



“ a people, exclaims he, who can scarcely  
 “ prevail on themselves to sacrifice a few  
 “ animals, shed human blood upon the al-  
 “ tars of their Gods?”

The testimonies being very positive on one side and the other, the most rational conjecture is, that the pastoral Arabs who subjugated Egypt, long before the arrival of the Israelites, brought with them that barbarous custom established amongst them from the most remote antiquity (*d*). What gives an air of probability to this opinion is, that the Egyptians ceased shedding human blood as soon as the Pharaoh Amasis had taken Heliopolis from these ferocious conquerors,

(*d*) The Dumatenian Arabs annually slew an infant, and buried it under the altar. They made use of its carcase as of a divine image, *Porphyry, of Abstinence, book second*. I could cite many other examples to prove that the Arabs sacrificed human victims. Mahomet, who forcibly reproaches them with this abominable custom, has absolutely put an end to it amongst them. On surveying the earth from one extremity to the other, and on recurring to the origin of nations, one sees with astonishment that there is not one in which superstition has not offered up human sacrifices to the gods.

and



and had driven them to the frontiers of Arabia.

It remains for me, Sir, to resolve a question which naturally arises here. How could Bubastis be called the daughter of Isis, since she also was a symbol of the moon? The Egyptian theology easily explains these apparent contradictions. Isis was the general appellation of the moon, Bubastis a particular attribute. The sun, in conjunction with the star of the night, formed the celestial marriage of Osiris and Isis; the crescent which appears three days after, was allegorically called their daughter. It is in this sense that the Hebrews called this same phenomenon, *the birth of the moon*, and that Horace says,

*Cælo Supinas si tuleris manus,  
Nascente lunâ, Rustica Phidyle, &c. &c.*

These observations inform us, why in the city of Ilithyia, where Bubastis was adored, the third day of the lunar month was consecrated by a particular worship (*f*). In

(e) Horace, Ode 17.

(f) Eusebius, prep. Evangel. lib. 3, relates this fact.

fact, it is three days after the conjunction that the moon, disengaged from the rays of the sun, appears as a crescent, and is visible to us. The Egyptians celebrated therefore a solemnity in honour of Bubastis, which in their tongue signified *New Moon* (g). The crescent with which her head was crowned, expresses palpably the intention of the priests in creating this symbolical divinity.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(g) Jablonski, Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tome second.

LETTER

## L E T T E R LIX.

OF BUTIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY WHICH  
REPRESENTS THE SUN.

*This Goddess, named by the Greeks Latona, had a famous temple in the city of Butis, where the sanctuary consisted of an enormous block of granite. Here she delivered her oracles. The Egyptians placed her in a moving island; and in this they were imitated by the Greeks. This deity was the symbol of the full moon; and as the dew is at that time most copious, they ascribed it to her influence. It was believed she had educated Horus, and saved him from the ambushes of Typhon, which ought to be understood in an allegorical sense.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo

THE Egyptians, Sir, revered also, under the name of *Butis*, or *Buto*, an emblematical divinity, who, in some respects, was the same with *Isis*. They built in her ho-



nour the city of Butis on the branch of the Nile, which running near to Sebennytus, now called *Samanout*, discharges itself into the lake of Bourlos. This goddess was adored there in the magnificent temple I have described to you from Herodotus (*b*), and the sanctuary of which, composed of a single block of granite of sixty feet every way, is the largest and the heaviest stone mentioned in the history of nations (*i*). The oracle of Butis became very famous, and they flocked from all parts of Egypt to consult it. The Greeks, who derived their mythology from the sa-

(*b*) Letters on Egypt, Vol. I.

(*i*) The block which composed this sanctuary had only five sides, for the roof was formed of another stone. These sides were 60 feet square, and six in thickness, which gives 84,808 cubic feet. Now, this number multiplied by 184 pounds, which is the weight of a cubic foot of granite, gives 15,604,672 pounds; and, deducting from this calculation 604,672 pounds for the opening of the door, the dimensions of which are not given us by the historian, there will remain for the weight of that enormous stone 15,000,000 of pounds. This mass greatly surpasses any which have been moved on earth by human power.

cerdotal fables, gave to this divinity the name of Latona (*I*). The Egyptians pretended that she had nourished Horus and Bubastis, and that the island on which her temple was built, floated on the water. The Greeks, imitating their Preceptors, said that Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana (*k*), took refuge at Delos, which floated with the waves. The reflection of the Father of History (*l*), how an island can be moveable, and swim, was no obstacle to them. They adopted the Egyptian allegory, and accommodated it to their theology. The poets cloathed it in brilliant colours, and the people who could not penetrate the real meaning, offered up their incense to chimeras.

Let us examine, Sir, what was the object of the priests in publishing it, for that ought to be the object of our enquiries. You know that they studied with attention

(*I*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

(*k*) You have seen that Apollo and Diana, worshipped in Greece, were the same with Horus and Bubastis

(*l*) Herodotus, lib. 2.



all the phænomena of nature. Under a climate, whose temperature is much more constant than that of Europe, they pursued its variations with more facility. The observations of many ages (*m*), preserved in the sacred archives, and deposited in the sanctuaries, had taught them to foresee what was to happen at each season of the year. They had remarked, that during the new moon the dews were less frequent, and that they became extremely abundant when it was at the full. They attributed to this planet a great influence over the atmosphere, the virtue of attracting the vapours from the lakes and rivers, and of afterwards diffusing them over the earth in imperceptible drops. They made of the full moon, therefore, a divinity, which they called Butis. Conformably to their principles, they placed her abode on the bank of a great lake, as if she might more easily drench herself with its waters. This doctrine, whether it has

(*m*) A people who had a period of 1461 years, must have observed the heavens and all the phænomena of nature for a great number of ages.



passed from Egypt into other parts of the world, or whether natural philosophers have deemed it to be founded on real phænomena, has been adopted by several of the ancients and moderns.

“(n) The Stoics pretended that the sun  
 “ enflamed his rays with the waters of the  
 “ sea, and that the moon attracted to her-  
 “ self the mild humidity of the lakes and  
 “ fountains. It is imagined, says Pliny (o),  
 “ that the fresh waters are the aliment of  
 “ the moon, and that the sun is fed by  
 “ those of the sea.” “ When the moon is  
 “ full, says Macrobius (p), the air either  
 “ dissolves itself into rain, or if the sky be  
 “ serene, it distils an abundant dew. This  
 “ is what has made the Lyric Poet, Alcman,  
 “ say, that the dew was the daughter of  
 “ the air.” Amongst modern naturalists,  
 Mr. Mile (q) has adopted this sentiment:  
 “ On a fine day, and especially in the

(n) Plutarch.

(o) Plini. lib. 2.

(p) Macrob. Saturnal, lib. 8.

(q) Histoire Naturelle, tome second.

“ spring,

“ spring, a subtle and cold vapour is at-  
“ tracted by the moon into the middle re-  
“ gion of the air. Condensed shortly into  
“ imperceptible drops, it moistens the earth  
“ with abundant dew, and furnishes plants  
“ with proper nourishment.”

I do not quote these authorities, Sir, as unquestionable facts : It cannot be denied that the moon has great influence on the atmosphere surrounding our globe ; but I think it would be difficult to prove that she is endowed with the power of attracting towards herself the exhalations from the water. This is the virtue of the sun, who dilating the particles of the humid element, and rendering them lighter than the ambient air, forces them to rise into the atmosphere, until they are in equilibrio. But were the ancients ignorant of this attraction ? Do not the passages I have quoted tend to prove that they were acquainted with this phenomenon, and that they knew that it was more sensible when the two great bodies which enlighten us are in opposition ? However that may be, the Egyptians, placed under a burning sky, were hardly ever refreshed by the salutary



rains which fall in other climates, and whose country would be uninhabitable, did not the nocturnal dews (*r*) restore life to vegetables, attentively observed the causes which might produce them. Perceiving that they were more abundant during the full moon, they created of it a divinity, who presided over the dews.

It is at the full moon especially, says Plutarch (*s*), that the dew falls in the greatest quantity (*t*). In Egypt, at Butis, and at Babylon, adds Theophrastus, where the rains seldom moisten the earth, the dews furnish the aliment of the plants. This is the reason why the holy scripture (*u*) frequently promises the Israelites, who inhabited a climate pretty similar to that of Egypt, the dew of heaven, as a signal favour, and announces the refusal of it as a chastisement.

(*r*) These dews are so copious, especially in summer, that the earth is deeply soaked with them, so that in the morning one would imagine that rain had fallen during the night.

(*s*) Plutarch, lib. 3.

(*t*) Theophrastus's History of Plants, lib. 8.

(*u*) Genesis, chap. xxviii.

To



To have a more lively idea of the effect of these promises and threats, let us for a moment suppose the devouring sun of these countries transported to France, and let us examine what would happen in that rich kingdom, if for one year only the sky, become like iron, poured down neither rain nor dew. We should soon see the country burnt up, every source of fecundity exhausted, and all animals perish.

The Egyptians, in short, who were attentive observers, had divided (x) the time from the crescent to the full moon, into three equal parts. They called the first period *an imperfect gift*, and the third, which comprehends from the eleventh to the fifteenth day, was named per excellentiam, *the perfect gift*, because the dews then fall in abundance. The name of Butis, under which they honoured their symbolical deity, precisely marked the phenomenon of which they believed it to be the cause, for it signifies, *the star which attracts humidity, or the mother of the dew* (y).

(x) Proclus, Tim. of Plato.

(y) Jablonki, Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tome second.

You will conceive, Sir, from the genius of the Priests, that they concealed these natural effects under allegories. This is the fable they intended, and which Herodotus has preserved (z). “ The Egyptians say  
“ that Latona (Butis) whom they place in  
“ the number of their eight great divinities,  
“ dwelling in the city of Butis, where we  
“ see her oracle, received Horus as a de-  
“ posit from the hands of Isis, and conceal-  
“ ed him in a floating island. She pre-  
“ served him from the outrages of Typhon,  
“ who, searching after the son of Osiris,  
“ repaired to this place; for they pretend  
“ that Horus, or Apollo, and Bubastis,  
“ whom we call Diana, were the children  
“ of Osiris and Isis”.

You know, Sir, the destructive effects of the south wind which raises whirlwinds of burning dust, and suffocates men and animals in the midst of the sands. One of its most pernicious effects, too, is totally to prevent the dews from falling, and depriving Egypt of that aliment so necessary to vege-

(z) Herodotus, lib. 2.



table life. This scourge is the tyrant Typhon, who seeks for the son of Osiris, to put him to death. But Isis has entrusted him to the care of Butis, whose habitation is placed in the midst of waters; that is to say, that the sun, by attracting their exhalations, and the full moon, by exercising her influence on the atmosphere, put an end to those evils produced by the *Khamfin*, and restore to the earth those salutary dews which give new life to nature. This I imagine is the natural interpretation of this sacerdotal fable.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R L X.

THE NILE ADORED AS A GOD BY THE  
ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

*The Nile raised to the rank of gods. A city built in honour of him. His priests, festivals, and sacrifices. At first he bore the general name of Jaro, which signifies a river. When the phænomena of his inundation were observed, he received the epithet of Neilon, that is, one who grows in a stated time. At the winter solstice, they invited him to a feast, which was publicly prepared for the purpose; and the people believed, that without this ceremony he would never overflow their fields,*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** Have represented the Nile to you, Sir, as a river to which Egypt owes her fertility and her riches; I am now going to paint her to you as a divinity to whom superstition

tion erected altars. You may conceive of what importance he is to this country, since without the aid of his fertile waters, it would soon be converted into a desert. The veneration of the people was proportioned to the wonderful advantages he procured them. They carried it even to the most fantastic excess(*a*). Religion, says Plutarch, afford to none of the gods a more solemn worship than to the Nile. Nor have the Egyptians been the only people who have deified rivers(*b*). The ancient Greeks and the Indians also granted them divine honours. But the priests of Egypt surpassed them all by the pomp of their ceremonies. They seemed to worship Osiris and Isis only from their connection with this river, and from their decided influence on its waters.

They at first called it *Jaro*(*c*), which signifies river. It long retained that general denomination, and we may conclude that

(*a*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*b*) Maxime de Tyr.

(*c*) Genesis, chap. 41. This name in Coptic signifies also, River. Jablonski, Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tome second.



when Homer wrote, it had no other, as this poet and geographer calls it simply the river of Egypt. After they had observed, perhaps for ages, the phenomena of its increase, they bestowed on it the epithet of *Neilon, which increases at a certain period (d)*. This characteristic expression, adopted by all the nations of the earth, obliterated the ancient name. Hesiod is the first author who has employed it, from whence we may conjecture that this poet was posterior to Homer. Thetis, says he, has produced from the ocean, the great rivers the Nile, the Alpheus, and the Eridanus, famous for its deep whirlpools (e).

The Ethiopians and the Egyptians described it under different names. Dionysius Periegetes (f) tells us this in these words: “The river which waters in its long windings the country of Ethiopia, is called

(d) This word comes from the Egyptian *Nei Alei, which encreases at a certain period*. The Greeks have made *Neileon* of it, and the Latins, *Nilus*. Jablonski, *Pantheon Ægyptiacum*, tome second.

(e) *Theogony of Hesiod*.

(f) *Dion. Perieget. Description of the universe*.

“ *Siris,*



“ *Siris*, but the instant he bathes with his  
 “ azure waters the walls of Syena, receives  
 “ the name of Nile.” The rivulets, adds  
 Priscian (*g*), which form this great river,  
 rush from the mountains situated to the east  
 of Lybia. The Ethiopians call it *Siris*,  
 and the husbandmen of Syena, the *Nile*.

The people of Egypt thought they could  
 not make too striking a display of their  
 gratitude towards a river to whom they  
 owed in great measure their existence. Ac-  
 cordingly the pompous denominations of (*b*)  
 father, of preserver of the country, and of  
 the terrestrial Osiris, were lavished on him.  
 They declared that the gods were born upon  
 his banks (*i*); which must be taken alle-  
 gorically. Nilopolis (*k*) was founded in ho-  
 nour of him, and a superb temple was there  
 built to him. Herodotus (*l*) informs us

(*g*) Priscian, Pliny, lib. 5. and Solinus confirms these  
 authorities.

(*b*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*i*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(*k*) The City of the Nile. See Stephen of Byzan-  
 tium.

(*l*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

that

that in all the considerable cities, there were priests consecrated to the Nile, whose principal occupation it was to embalm the bodies of such as were killed by crocodiles, or who were drowned in his waters. “In  
 “ a town of Egypt,” says Palladius (*m*),  
 “ was to be seen a temple remarkable for  
 “ its grandeur, wherein was a wooden  
 “ statue famous for the adoration of the  
 “ Nile.” “The fecundity of this coun-  
 “ try,” adds Libanus (*n*), “is a gift of the  
 “ Nile. This god is invited by sacred  
 “ ceremonies to assist at the splendid fes-  
 “ tival which is annually prepared for him,  
 “ that he may overflow the lands. If they  
 “ who preside over divine things, fail to  
 “ observe this solemnity at the appointed  
 “ time, he would cease to carry his fertility  
 “ over the plains of Egypt.”

It is evident, Sir, that the priests abusing the credulity of the vulgar, instituted this superstitious worship, the absurdity of which they knew, in order to establish themselves

(*m*) Pallad. chap. 57.

(*n*) Libanius, Ov. pro Templis.



as the mediators between heaven and earth, and to be regarded as the dispensers of abundance. The enigmatical theology which they composed, and which they hid from the people under the veil of hieroglyphics, was wonderfully subservient to their views, and they employed all the light of their understanding to render it respectable. *These observations may be applied to many other nations.*

The grand festival of the Nile happened at the summer solstice, the time when the inundation commenced. "This solemnity," says Heliodorus (o), "is the most celebrated of the country. The Egyptians grant divine honours to their river, and revere him as the first of their divinities. They declare him to be the rival of heaven, since he waters the country without the aid of clouds and rain."

A Nilometer was the symbol of his increase. At the moment it commenced, the priests brought it forth from the temple of Serapis, and carried it in pomp through the

(o) Heliodorus, lib. 9.



towns and cities. This is the statue of wood against which Palladius declaims. When the waters subside, they deposit it in the sanctuary. Besides these emblems, they had also sculptured on stone, an image of the inundation, consecrated to the god of the Nile (*p*). Pliny speaks of it as follows in treating of the Basaltes. “ The largest  
 “ we know of, is that which is placed in  
 “ the temple of Peace by the Emperor  
 “ Vespasian. It represents the Nile with  
 “ sixteen children playing around him.  
 “ They represent the number of cubits to  
 “ which his waters mount.”

Such, Sir, were the religious opinions of the ancient Egyptians respecting the Nile, and the festivals established by superstition in his honour. They are not entirely extinct in our days. The pomp with which the canal that conveys the waters to Grand Cairo is annually opened, still preserves their memory.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*p*) Pliny, lib. 36.

LETTER

## L E T T E R L X I.

OF APIS, THE SACRED OX OF THE EGYPTIANS, ADORED BY THE PEOPLE.

*Apis renowned over the world, Kings and princes solemnly offered sacrifices to his godhead. Description of his distinguishing marks, his inauguration, the place where he was kept, and the temple to which they removed him at his death. Festivals celebrated at the birth of a new Apis. This allegorical deity was created by the priests to be the guardian of the solar year of 365 days, the type of the cycle of 25 years, and the symbol of the inundation.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**PIS became famous in Egypt, and renown conveyed his name to the neighbouring nations. Pomponius Mela (*q*), and

(*q*) Pomponius Mela, lib. I



Ælian (*r*), and Lucian (*s*), who report the testimonies of the priests, tell us that he was generally worshipped throughout the country, and that his divinity was proved by evident characters (*t*). Alexander, after conquering this kingdom, did not disdain to offer sacrifices to him. Titus (*u*), Adrian (*x*), and Germanicus (*y*), went to visit him, and rendered homage to him. These great Princes were undoubtedly fully sensible of the folly of this worship; but curiosity led them to become acquainted with the mysteries, with which the priests encompassed their God, and the desire of acquiring the love of the Egyptians, induced them to offer incense to their idol.

The wisest and best informed writers on the Egyptian religion, inform us, that Apis was only a symbolical deity. “ Amongst

(*r*) Ælian, lib. 11.

(*s*) Lucian.

(*t*) Arrian's Expedition of Alexander.

(*u*) Suetonius's Life of Titus.

(*x*) Spartian's Life of Adrian.

(*y*) Annal. lib. 2.



“ the animals consecrated to ancient rites,  
 “ says Ammianus Marcellinus (*z*), Mnevis  
 “ and Apis are the most celebrated : the  
 “ first is an emblem of the sun, the second  
 “ of the moon.” Porphyry (*a*) tells us  
 that Apis bore the characteristic signs of the  
 two stars ; and Macrobius (*b*), who con-  
 firms this opinion, adds, that he was equally  
 consecrated to them both.

You may suppose, Sir, that this Bull, be-  
 come the object of public adoration, could  
 not be born like other animals ; accordingly  
 the priests published that his origin was  
 celestial. “ An Apis is seldom born, says  
 “ Pomponius Mela (*c*). He is not pro-  
 “ duced by the ordinary laws of generation.  
 “ The Egyptians say he owes his birth to  
 “ celestial fire.” Plutarch (*d*) explains this  
 passage : “ The priests pretend that the

(*z*) Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 22.

(*a*) Porphyry, quoted by Eusebius, *Prép. Evangel.*  
 lib. 3.

(*b*) Macrobius, *Saturnal.*

(*c*) Pomponius Mela, lib. 1.

(*d*) *Treatise of Isis and Osiris.* Herodotus, lib. 2,  
 says the same thing.

“ moon diffuses a generative influence, and  
 “ as soon as a cow who takes the bull is  
 “ struck by it, she conceives an Apis. Ac-  
 “ cordingly we discover in him the signs of  
 “ that star.”

Such were the fables industriously spread by those who presided over the divine institutions. The vulgar, to whom this emblematical deity presaged abundance, received them eagerly, and implicitly believed them. Pliny (*e*) has described the characters which distinguished this sacred Bull: “ A white  
 “ spot, resembling a crescent, on the right  
 “ side, and a lump under the tongue, were  
 “ the distinguishing marks of Apis.” When a cow, therefore, which was thought to be struck with the rays of the moon, produced a calf, the sacred guides went to examine it, and if they found it conformable to this description, they announced to the people the birth of Apis, and fecundity.

“ Immediately, says Ælian (*f*), they  
 “ built a temple to the new god, facing

(*e*) Pliny, lib. 8. Ælian, lib. 11, confirm this description.

(*f*) Ælian's Treatise on Animals, lib. 11.



“ the rising sun, according to the precepts  
 “ of Mercury, where they nourished him  
 “ with milk for four months. This term  
 “ expired, the priests repaired in pomp to  
 “ his habitation, and saluted him by the  
 “ name of Apis.” They then placed him  
 in a vessel magnificently decorated, covered  
 with rich tapestry, and resplendent with  
 gold, and conducted him to Nilopolis,  
 singing hymns, and burning perfumes.  
 There they kept him for forty days (*g*).  
 During this space of time, women alone  
 had permission to see him, and saluted him  
 in a manner which I shall not relate, but  
 which is described by respectable authori-  
 ties. They were never after admitted into  
 his presence for the remainder of his life.  
 After the inauguration of the god in this  
 city, he was conveyed to Memphis with the  
 same retinue, followed by an innumera-  
 ble quantity of boats, sumptuously decked  
 out (*b*). There they completed the ceremo-

(*g*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. Eusebius, prepar. Evan-  
 gelic. lib. 3, relates the same fact.

(*b*) Ammian Marcellinus.



nies of his inauguration, and he became sacred to all the world (*i*). Apis was superbly lodged, and the place where he lay was mystically called *the bed*. Strabo (*k*) having visited his palace, thus describes it: “ The edifice where Apis is kept, is situated  
 “ near the temple of Vulcan. He is fed  
 “ in a sacred apartment, before which is a  
 “ large court. The house in which they  
 “ keep the cow that produced him, occupies  
 “ one of its sides. Sometimes, to satisfy  
 “ the curiosity of strangers, they make him  
 “ go out into this court. One may see him  
 “ at all times through a window; but the  
 “ priests produce him also to public view.”  
 Once a year, says Solinus, they present a *heifer* to him, and the same day they kill her.

A bull, born in so marvellous a manner, must be possessed of supernatural knowledge. Accordingly the priests published, that he predicted future events by gestures, by motions, and other ways, which they construed according to their fancy. “ Apis,

(*i*) Pliny, lib. 8.

(*k*) Strabo, lib. 17.

“ says Pliny (*l*), has two temples called  
 “ Beds, which serve as an augury for the  
 “ people. When they come to consult  
 “ him, if he enters into a particular one, it  
 “ is a favourable presage, and fatal if he  
 “ passes into the other. He gives answers  
 “ to individuals by taking food from their  
 “ hands. He refused that offered him by  
 “ Germanicus, who died soon after.” It  
 would be unjust to conclude, that this respectable writer gave credit to such auguries. He relates the opinion of the Egyptians, and contents himself with citing facts without offering his judgment.

(*m*) Diogenes Laertius informs us, that, during the stay of the astronomer Eudoxus, in Egypt, Apis appeared to lick the edge of his garment, and that the priests predicted his celebrity; but that his career would be of short continuance. Several historians relate, that some children who were playing round the sacred Bull, feeling themselves suddenly inspired, saw into futurity, and re-

(*l*) Pliny, lib. 8.

(*m*) Diogenes Laertius, lib. 7.

vealed events that were to happen. What empire has superstition over the minds of men ! yet they boast of their knowledge !

You have seen, Sir, the installation of Apis. His anniversary was always celebrated for seven days (*n*). The people assembled to offer sacrifices to him, and, what is extraordinary, oxen were immolated on the occasion. This solemnity did not pass without prodigies. Ammianus Marcellinus, who has collected the testimonies of the ancients, relates them in these words : (*p*) “ During the seven days in which the  
“ priests of Memphis celebrate the birth of  
“ Apis, the crocodiles forget their natural  
“ ferocity, become gentle, and do no harm  
“ to any body.”

This Bull, however, so honoured, must not exceed a mysterious term fixed for his life. “ Apis, says Pliny (*q*), cannot live  
“ beyond a certain number of years. When

(*n*) Nicetas.

(*o*) Herodotus, lib. 2, relates this fact.

(*p*) Ammianus Marcellin. lib. 22, to which may be added the testimony of Solinus, who cites this fact.

(*q*) Pliny, lib. 8.



“ he has attained that period, they drown  
 “ him in the fountain of the priests; for  
 “ it is not permitted, adds Ammianus Mar-  
 “ cellinus, to let him prolong his life beyond  
 “ the period prescribed for him by the sacred  
 “ books.” When this event happened, he  
 was embalmed, and privately let down into  
 the subterraneous places destined for that  
 purpose. In this circumstance, the priests  
 announced that Apis had disappeared; but  
 when he died a natural death, before this  
 period arrived, they proclaimed his death,  
 and solemnly conveyed his body to the tem-  
 ple of Serapis.

(r) “ At Memphis was an ancient tem-  
 “ ple of Serapis, which strangers were for-  
 “ bidden to approach, and where the priests  
 “ themselves only entered when Apis was  
 “ interred. It was then, says Plutarch (s),  
 “ that they opened the gates called *Lethes*  
 “ and *Cocytus* (of oblivion and lamenta-  
 “ tion) which made a harsh and piercing  
 “ sound.”

(r) Pausanias.

(s) Treatise of Isis and Osiris. These were the gates  
 of Serapis.

Ammianus Marcellinus, and Solinus, paint with great energy the general despair of the Egyptians, who, with cries and lamentations, demanded another Apis from heaven; and Lucian (*t*) represents this very pleasantly. “When Apis dies, is there any  
 “one so enamoured of his long hair as not  
 “immediately to cut it off, or to display on  
 “his bald head the symptoms of his sorrow?”

It is of some consequence, Sir, to know the term prescribed for the life of Apis, since that will point out to us the object of the priests in creating this symbolical divinity. Plutarch throws some light on this subject (*u*). “The number of five, multiplied by itself, gives the number of the  
 “letters of the Egyptian alphabet, and the  
 “age of Apis.” His life therefore was twenty-five years. Now you know that this number marked a period of the sun and of the moon, and that this Bull was consecrated to these two bodies. The follow-

(*t*) Lucian, of sacrifices.

(*u*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris,

ing observation of Syncellius (x) may still farther aid us: When he comes down to the thirty-second Pharaoh, called Afeth, he says, “ Before Afeth, the solar year consisted  
“ but of 360 days. This Prince added five  
“ to complete its course. In his reign a calf  
“ was placed amongst the gods, and named  
“ Apis.” The following passage will furnish us with an additional explanation (y):  
“ It was customary to inaugurate the Kings  
“ of Egypt at Memphis, in the temple of  
“ Apis. They were here first initiated in  
“ the mysteries, and were religiously in-  
“ vested; after which, they were permitted  
“ to bear the yoke of God, through a  
“ town, to a place called the sanctuary,  
“ the entrance of which was prohibited  
“ the profane. There they were obliged  
“ to swear that they would neither insert  
“ months nor days in the year, and that  
“ it should remain composed of 365 days,

(x) Chronography of Syncellius.

(y) Fabricius, Bibliothec. Latin.



“ as had been established by the ancients.”

These facts authorize us to believe, that Apis was the tutelary divinity of the new form given to the solar year, and of the cycle of twenty-five years, discovered at the same time. Nor can it be doubted that he had a marked relation to the swelling of the Nile, for it is testified by a great number of historians. You know that the new moon which followed the summer solstice, was the æra of this phænomenon, on which the eyes of every body were fixed. Pliny speaks as follows on this subject (*a*): “ Apis had on his right side a white mark, “ representing the crescent : this mark, continues Ælian (*b*), indicated the commencement of the inundation.” Ammianus (*c*) confirms these authorities. If Apis possessed the characteristic signs which

(*a*) Pliny, lib. 8.

(*b*) Ælian's Treatise on Animals, lib. 11.

(*c*) Ammian Marcellin.

proved his divine origin, he promised fertility and abundance of the fruits of the earth. It seems demonstrated therefore that this sacred Bull, the guardian of the solar year of 365 days, was also regarded as the genius who presided over the overflowing of the river. The priests, by fixing the course of his life to 25 years, and by making the installation of a new Apis concur with the renewal of the period, of which I have been speaking, had probably perceived, as the result of long meteorological observations, that this revolution always brought about abundant seasons. Nothing was better calculated to procure a favourable reception of this emblematical deity from the people, since his birth was a presage to them of a happy inundation, and of all the treasures of teeming nature.

The solemnity of his inauguration was called *Apparition*. That which was renewed every year towards the twelfth or thirteenth of the month *Payn*, which corresponds with the seventeenth or eighteenth of June, was called *the birth*  
of

of *Apis*. It was a time of rejoicing, which Ælian describes in the following manner (d): “What festivals! what sacrifices take place in Egypt at the commencement of the inundation! It is then that all the people celebrate the birth of *Apis*. It would be tedious to describe the dances, the rejoicings, the shews, the banquets, to which the Egyptians abandon themselves on this occasion, and impossible to express the intoxication of joy which breaks forth in all the towns of the kingdom.”

The name of this respectable Bull may still throw a fresh light on the observations you have been reading. *Api*, in fact, in the Egyptian tongue, signifies *number (e)*, *measure*. This epithet perfectly characterizes an animal established as the guardian of the solar year, the type of the

(d) Ælian's Treatise on Animals.

(e) Jablonski, *Pantheon Egyptiacum*, tome second.



cycle of twenty-five years, and the pre-  
sage of a favourable inundation (f).

I have the honour to be, &c.

(f) Monsieur Huet, Bishop of Avranché, has endeavoured to prove that Apis was a symbolical image of the Patriarch Joseph, and has supported his opinion with all his erudition. Some authors, misled by the authority of this learned man, have adopted this system, which I have not thought proper seriously to combat, because it falls of itself. It proves only to what point a prejudiced man may abuse his knowledge, when his pen is not guided by sound reason and the spirit of impartial criticism,

LETTER

## L E T T E R LXII.

OF MNEVIS AND ONUPHIS, SACRED BULLS  
OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

*Mnevis and Onuphis consecrated to the sun. The worship of the former rubrified in remote antiquity, and the epoch of its commencement is unknown. The latter, brought up in the temple of Apollo, at Hermunthis, had no degree of celebrity, if we may judge by the silence of historians. Apis, deified with the view of preserving the remembrance of ancient observations, became famous, and eclipsed the other two.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**M**NEVIS and ONUPHIS were two bulls, consecrated to the sun. The former was the tutelary divinity of Heliopolis; the latter, fed in the temple of Apollo, of *Hermunthis*, now called *Armant*, had relation to the increase of the Nile.

“ The

“ The city of Heliopolis, says Strabo (*g*),  
 “ built on an artificial eminence, possesses a  
 “ temple of the sun. The bull Mnevis, is  
 “ fed there in a sacred precinct. The He-  
 “ liopolitans regard him as a god.” The  
 ancients unite in affirming that this bull  
 was consecrated to the sun (*b*). The epocha  
 of his consecration is lost in the obscurity of  
 time. It is much more ancient than that  
 of Apis. Mr. de Vignoles (*i*) makes it  
 mount as high as to Menes, the first of the  
 Pharaohs; but this opinion, being unsup-  
 ported by the authority of history, must be  
 regarded as a conjecture. It was very pro-  
 bably, however, prior to the departure of  
 the Israelites, who, accustomed to the Eryp-  
 tian idolatry, moulded a golden calf in the  
 desert, to serve them as a guide. The wor-  
 ship of Mnevis gradually disappeared, when  
 Apis, who was consecrated to more impor-

(*g*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*b*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. *Ælian's Treatise on Animals*, lib. 11, and Porphyry cited by Eusebius, *Prep. Evang.* lib. 3.

(*i*) *Chronologie de Vignoles*, tome second.



tant events, became the general deity of the country. Accordingly Macrobius (*k*) informs us that Mnevis held only the second rank amongst the sacred Bulls. Ammianus Marcellinus (*l*) adds, that they related nothing memorable of him.

Strabo (*m*) relates that Cambyfes, the scourge of Egypt, overthrew the magnificent temple of Heliopolis. It is doubtless from this era that we must date the downfall of the worship of Mnevis (*n*). Jablonski, who has interpreted his name, says that it signified, *dedicated to the sun*. The city of Hermuntis, which possessed a nilometer, admitted also the worship of a bull, called *Onuphis* (*o*), the Good Genius, because he was honoured as the symbol of abundance. The priests fed him in the magnificent temple of Apollo, which I have described to you in my twelfth Letter.

(*k*) Macrobius, Saturnalia, lib. 1.

(*l*) Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 22.

(*m*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*n*) Jablonski, tome second. He derives it from *Mnecin*, dedicated to the sun.

(*o*) Ælian's Treatise of Animals, lib. 12.

At the bottom of one of its apartments are still to be seen two marble bulls, furrounded by women who suckle their children. Doubtless they celebrated in his honour the festivals practised on the birth of Apis. But as this city was less considerable than Memphis, become the capital of the kingdom, after the Kings of Thebes had transferred thither the seat of empire, Onuphis did not enjoy so much celebrity as Apis. This is the reason why none of the ancients, except Strabo, Macrobius, and Ælian, make any mention of him. Such, Sir, were the bulls consecrated by the priests, to preserve the memory of their discoveries, and which the vulgar worshipped as divinities.

You must have remarked, Sir, that, from the most remote antiquity, the Egyptians consecrated the ox or the bull, as the symbol of fecundity. The ancient Greeks followed this example. In the end they contented themselves with painting the horn of that animal, filled with ears of corn, and fruits, to express this emblem, and

and the poets sang the Cornucopia in their verses. Thus have the greatest part of the ancient customs been derived from Egypt.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

LETTER



## L E T T E R LXIII.

OF THE TERRESTRIAL SERAPIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY WHICH BORE A RELATION TO THE NILE.

*The terrestrial Serapis regarded by the Egyptians as a deity that presides over the increase of the waters. His emblem a Nilometer of wood, divided into cubits. A festival celebrated in honour of him at the commencement of the inundation. The Nilometer named by the priests Sari Api, the pillar of mensuration. Brought forth from his sanctuary at the beginning of the inundation, and led back when it was on the decline. Such was the origin of this emblematical deity, to which the Greeks gave the name of Serapis.*

To Mr. L. M:

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians, Sir, acknowledge two deities of the name of Serapis, one celestial, of whom I have spoken, the other terrestrial,

restrial, which shall be the subject of this letter. The former represented the sun of autumn, the latter was connected with the inundation (*q*). “The people of Egypt,” says Gregory of Nazianzen, “measure the increase of the Nile by cubits.” “Some authors,” says Suidas (*r*), “assert that Serapis is the same as Jupiter, others, that he represents the Nile, because he bears on his head a bushel, and a cubit, symbols of the inundation.”

The writers from whom he has gathered these opinions were all equally in the right. The celestial Serapis might be called Jupiter, as an emblem of the sun, and that of whom I speak, was thought to preside over the overflowing of the river; accordingly Aristides, the rhetorician (*s*), calls him the god who makes the waters swell in summer, and calms the hurricanes. The ancient Christian authors agree in this point with the Gentiles. They attribute, says Ruffin (*t*),

(*q*) Gregory of Nazianzen, Or. 29.

(*r*) Suidas, on the word Serapis.

(*s*) The rhetorician Aristides, Or. pro Serapis.

(*t*) Histoire de l'Eglise, lib. 2.



to Serapis, that virtue of the Nile which procures riches and fertility to Egypt. Socrates(*u*) confirms this sentiment: "The Egyptians award to Serapis the glory of watering their fields."

It may be proper to enquire into the origin of this deity. By following the rays of light scattered through the annals of history, we shall be able to tread upon his footsteps, and arrive at his cradle. You know that the Egyptians, attentive to every thing which could give them an insight into the progress of the inundation, had constructed several Nilometers in different parts of the kingdom. There was one in the Isle of Elephantinos, at Hermuntis(*x*), now called Armant, at Memphis, and even in the Lower Egypt; at first they contented themselves with building a hall on a level with the bed of the river, and the height of the water was marked by lines traced out on the walls at stated distances. They afterwards erected in the middle of this basin, which

(*u*) Socrates, History of the Church, lib. 1.

(*x*) Heliodorus, lib. 19. describes the Nilometer of Hermuntis.



the ancients called a well, a column divided into cubits and digits, and which served by way of Nilometer. It was called *Sari Api (y)*, *column of measurement*. This place became sacred, and the priests, the depositaries of all knowledge, had the exclusive right of entering it. Their observations, and their discoveries, written in sacerdotal characters, served by way of guide to their successors. Enlightened by these meteorological tables, continued for ages, and more and more improved, they predicted from this sanctuary the phenomena of the inundation long before it reached its term. Masters of this important science, they announced to the people, either abundance or sterility, and were looked upon as oracles. In order to give more authenticity to their predictions, they declared that they received them from Serapis, the divinity under whose protection they placed the column of measurement. Aware that the vulgar must be

(y) Jablonski, tome second, gives this explication of these Egyptian words of which the Greeks have made Serapis.

gratified

gratified with sensible objects, they composed a Nilometer of wood, which was the emblem of Serapis, and to which they attributed a divine virtue. The priests carried it about with solemnity on the festivals of Apis.

“ It was the custom,” says Ruffin (z),  
 “ to carry the measure of the Nile into  
 “ the temple of Serapis, as to the author  
 “ of the inundation. The Nilometer was  
 “ afterwards deposited *in the church* to  
 “ render homage to the sovereign of the  
 “ waters.” Zozomne (a) adds that this  
 change took place under the Emperor Constantine. From that moment the cubit with which they measured the increase of the river, ceased to be carried into the temples of the Gentiles, and it was placed in the churches. Julian (b), called the apostate, restored things to their former situation; but the Emperor Theodosius, having overthrown the magnificent temples of Serapis

(z) Ruffin, Histoire de l'Eglise, livre second.

(a) Zozomene, Histoire de l'Eglise, livre premier.

(b) Zozomene, Histoire de l'Eglise, livre 4.



at Alexandria, abolished this superstitious ceremony. These and several other authorities I could cite, if it were necessary, prove that the Egyptians at first called the Nilo-meter, *Serapis*, the column for measurement; that they bestowed the same name on the god under whose protection they placed it, and to whom they attributed the power of encreasing the waters; and lastly, that they carried the symbolical image of it in their solemnities. Thus did they abuse their knowledge to keep the people in idolatry, and to render themselves respectable in their eyes.

(c) There is still remaining an Alexandrian crown piece, on one face of which, the Nile, under the form of an old man, is represented in a recumbent attitude. He bears a bushel on his head, holds in one hand the cornucopia, and in the other a piece of papyrus with this inscription: *To the Holy God Nile.* On the reverse of the medal, is a head of Serapis, covered with a bushel, with this legend: *To the Holy God Serapis.*

(c) Pignorius, exposition de la table Ifiaque.

I shall



I shall not lay any stress, Sir, like Jablonski, on the situation of the ancient temple of Serapis, as that question appears to me a matter of indifference. I shall only observe that this learned man, to whose knowledge I do homage, and whose valuable researches have been so serviceable to me, is deceived in placing that edifice in the Isle of *Raouda*, where we at present see a Mekias, the sole remains of the Nilometers of Egypt. I could present you with a long dissertation on this subject, and combine with the testimonies of the ancients my own local knowledge; but I should be apprehensive of abusing your patience. My object was to trace to the origin of the terrestrial Serapis, which I hope I have fulfilled.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R LXIV.

OF ANUBIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Anubis had in Egypt temples and priests, and a city was built in honour of him. His statue bore the head of a dog; and this animal, from being his living image, was consecrated to him. This allegorical divinity, invented by the astronomers, represented the horizon. Hence he was regarded as the inseparable companion of Osiris and Iris. Called in the sacred language their illegitimate son, because he is not luminous of himself, and shines only by borrowed lustre.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**NUBIS, who was regarded as the faithful companion of Osiris and of Isis, received divine honours in Egypt. Temples and priests were consecrated to him, and his image was borne in all religious ceremonies.

Lucian

Lucian puts these words into the mouth of Socrates (*d*): Do you not see with what respect the Egyptians adore the god Anubis? They give to his statue an emblematical form, which is the head of a dog upon a human body (*e*). Accordingly Virgil (*f*) and Ovid call him the *Barker Anubis*.

The ingenious Lucian, who diffuses such a delightful vein of pleasantry over every object that falls under his pen, and who in his exquisite sarcasms, spares neither heroes nor gods, introduces Momus on the stage, and makes him speak as follows: “ O thou  
 “ whom Egypt representeth with the head  
 “ of a dog! Who art thou? Speak.  
 “ Since thou barkest, how hast thou pre-  
 “ sumed to suffer thyself to be placed in the  
 “ rank of the immortal gods?”

(*b*) *Cynopolis*, the present *Minieh*, situated

(*d*) Lucian, tome premier.

(*e*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. says, The god called Anubis is represented with the head of a dog.

(*f*) Virgil, *Æneid*, lib. 8. Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, lib. 9.

(*g*) Lucian, tome second.

(*b*) *Cynopolis*, the city of the Dog.



in the lower Thebais, was built in honour of Anubis. The temple wherein he was worshipped no longer subsists. The priests celebrated his festivals there with great pomp, and consecrated the dog to him, as his living representation (*i*). “Anubis,” says Strabo, “is the city of dogs, the capital of the Cynopolitan prefecture. These animals are fed there on sacred aliments, and religion has decreed them a worship.” An event however related by Plutarch, brought them into considerable discredit with the people. Cambyfes having slain the god Apis, and thrown his body into a field, all animals respected it except the dogs, which alone ate of his flesh. This impiety diminished the popular veneration for them.

Cynopolis was not the only city which burned incense on the altars of Anubis. He had chapels in almost all the temples, which made Juvenal say (*k*), So many cities

(*i*) Strabo, lib. 17. Stephen of Byzantium, adds, Cynopolis is the city in Egypt where Anubis is adored.

(*k*) Juvenal, Sat. 13.

venerate the dog! — On solemnities, his image always accompanied those of Isis and Osiris. Rome having adopted the ceremonies of Egypt, the Emperor Commodus (*l*), to celebrate the Isiac feasts, shaved his head; and himself carried the god Anubis. His statue was either of massive gold or gilt, as well as the attributes that accompanied him. The ancients are agreed in this point, and Lucian, who relates an outrage committed by a Syrian slave, confirms this sentiment. This slave, says he, formed a connection with some sacrilegious persons. They entered the sanctuary of Anubis, robbed the god of two vases, and a caduceus of gold, with two cynocephali of silver. Even the name of Anubis signifies *gilded* (*m*). It was mysterious, and the Egyptian priests, as we shall see, had not given it without reason,

(*l*) Lampridius, chap. 9. Spartian quotes the same fact.

(*m*) Jablonski, Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tome 3. Anubis, says he, comes from *Nub*, *Gold*, and *Annub*, *gilt*. The Greeks have made Anubis of it.



But what was the signification of this emblematical deity? what is the natural meaning concealed under it? Plutarch explains this (n). “The circle which touches  
 “ and separates the two hemispheres, and  
 “ which is the cause of this division, receiving the name of *Horizon*, is called  
 “ Anubis. He is represented under the  
 “ form of a dog, because that animal  
 “ watches day and night.” St. Clemens of Alexandria, who was well informed in the mystic theology of the Egyptians, favours this explication. The two dogs, says he (o), (the two Anubis) are the symbols of two hemispheres, which environ the terrestrial globe. He adds in another place: Others pretend that these animals, the faithful guardians of men, indicate the tropics, which guard the sun on the south and on the north, like porters.

If you adopt, Sir, the former of these interpretations you will see that the priests, regarding Anubis as the horizon, gilded his

(n) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(o) Clemens of Alexandria, Stromata 5.



statue, to mark that his circle receiving the first rays of the sun, appears sparkling with brightness on his rising, and that at his setting, he reflects his last rays upon the earth. They said in their sacred fables, that Anubis was the son of Osiris, but illegitimate. In fact, he only gives to the earth a borrowed light, and he never can be esteemed, like Horus, as the father of the day, or as the legitimate offspring of Osiris. We may add, that the visible horizon turning with the sun, is his inseparable companion.

In the latter of these explications, where Anubis represents the tropics, he is also the faithful guardian of Isis and Osiris. In fact, the course of the sun and of the moon is contained between the circles wherein the solstices are performed. They neither deviate to the right nor left. These limits assigned by the author of nature, might therefore, in hieroglyphic language, be represented by a divinity with the head of a dog, who seemed to oppose their passage on the side of the two poles. The other opinion, notwithstanding, seems to me more natural, and

and to be more analogous to the ideas of the priests.

You see, Sir, that those authors who have amused themselves at the expence of the Egyptians, have either been insincere, or did not comprehend their allegories. It is reasonable to imagine that Anubis, at first, was only a symbolical image, invented by astronomers, to give a sensible expression of their discoveries; that afterwards, the people, accustomed to see it in their temples, which were the depositaries of science, adored it as a deity; and that the priests favoured their ignorance by connecting it with their religion. The worship of Anubis introduced that of the dog, become his emblem. Almost all the gods of the Gentiles have originated in this manner. Before the invention of writing, men made use of imitative figures to convey their ideas. This representative language was at first intelligible to every body. When characters were discovered adapted to transmit the thought by sounds, the people employed them, because they were more easy. The hieroglyphics remained in the sanctuaries, and  
the

the priests alone preserved the knowledge of them. In the end, these allegorical signs no longer represented the real meaning of things to vulgar understandings, but the exterior forms and figures only, which became the objects of superstition.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R LXV.

OF TYPHON, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Typhon regarded as an evil genius. The Crocodile and Hippopotamus consecrated to him. His statue insulted, when the calamities, of which they believed him to be the cause, did not cease. This allegorical deity represented, in the imagination of the priests, winter, and the fatal effects produced in Egypt by the blowing of the south and south-east winds. The sacred fable on the subject of Typhon is propagated into Phœnicia, Greece, and Italy. It is decorated with new allegories by the natural philosophers and poets of those countries, and accommodated to their religion. Notwithstanding the veils with which they have covered it, its origin is still perceptible.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE already spoken to you, Sir, of Typhon, because his history is connected with that of all the gods of Egypt. I am  
going

going to lay before you the principal traits of them. Their combination will throw a new light on the enigmatical theology of this country. Hitherto you have seen it offer incense only to beneficent deities, adoring the sun, the moon, the Nile, and consecrating animals to them. These acts of homage were dictated by gratitude. The worship of Typhon was the result of anxiety and fear. The beneficial gods received thanksgivings and offerings. They strove to appease this malignant genius by artifices; and when the calamities which were imputed to him did not cease, they insulted his image.

The Egyptians, regarding Typhon as the evil principle, consecrated to him the crocodile (*p*), the hyppopotamus, and the ass, on account of his dusky colour. These animals, which they imagined were agreeable to him, were worshipped in several cities. They were fed in sacred precincts, and they imagined that these religious marks of attention would calm the fury of Typhon,

(*p*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris. Herodotus, lib. 2.



whose soul was thought to animate them (*q*). The Egyptians, says Plutarch, strove to appease this evil genius by sacrifices. When this failed, they treated him as follows (*r*):

“ On certain festivals they loaded him  
 “ with opprobrious terms, abused him with  
 “ invectives, and struck his statue. If any  
 “ extraordinary heats happened which occasioned pestilential disorders, or other  
 “ calamities, the priests, holding Typhon  
 “ in horror, conducted into some gloomy  
 “ place one of the animals dedicated to him.  
 “ First, they tried to terrify him by menaces, and, if the contagion did not  
 “ cease, they sacrificed him to the public  
 “ vengeance.”

It is clear that the object of these ceremonies was to appease the alarms of the people, and to raise their hopes. During the time of practising them, the mischiefs

(*q*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris. Herodotus confirms this opinion: The crocodile, says he, dedicated to Typhon, received worship in certain cities, because the Egyptians were persuaded that his soul animated them. lib. 2.

(*r*) Plutarch in the same treatise.

resulti



resulting from the southerly wind might cease, and the nation, who concluded that Typhon was neither appeased by sacrifices nor intimidated by menaces and insults, ascribed the glory of it to the priests.

Let us examine the natural meaning of the word *Typhon*. Jablonski<sup>(s)</sup> tells us, it is composed of *Theu*, *wind*, and *Phou*, *pernicious*<sup>(t)</sup>. The testimonies of the most ancient authors confirm this interpretation. Hesychius says, “ They give to a violent “ wind, the air of which is scorching, the “ name of Typhon.” Eustathius renders the same expression by that of *(u)* *burning wind*, and Euripides employs it to express a whirl of burning wind<sup>(x)</sup>.

The ancient Egyptians, to characterise

(s) Jablonski, *Pantheon Ægyptiacum*, tome 3.

(t) Hesychius.

(u) Eustathius's *Iliad* of Homer.

(x) Euripides, *Phenissæ*. The same wind is called by Job, chap. 27 (Latin version) *burning wind*; by the Greeks, *breath of fire*; by the Latins, *Eurus*; by the Arabs, *Sam*, poison; lastly, by the modern Egyptians, *Merisi*, south wind, and more generally *Khamsin*.

its violence, gave it the epithet of *Aphob*,  
(y) Giant.

I have mentioned to you more than once, in the course of these Letters, its destructive effects; but however forcible the expressions I have made use of may seem, they fall greatly short of the reality. Whole caravans suffocated in the deserts, whole tribes of Arabs extinguished in one day, the sky obscured by a dust which burns the eyes, destroys the functions of the breast, and hides the face of the sun; showers of sand with which the surface of all Egypt has sometimes been covered, the sandy hills, in short, which rolled along from the depth of the deserts, threaten to swallow up every living being; such is the calamity they called *the giant Typhon*. I have read in the history of the Arabs (z), of a hurricane from the south which lasted three days and three nights, and Egypt was on the brink of ruin. Had it continued with the same violence, this beautiful kingdom would have

(y) Jablonki, Panth. Ægypt. tome 3.

(z) Elmacin, History of the Arabs.



been converted into a frightful solitude. The Priests, to express the fury of Typhon, published in their allegorical language, that he was not born in the same manner as Osiris and Horus; but that, having burst open the side of his mother, he escaped by that opening (*a*).

Herodotus (*b*) gives the following description of two statues, which in his time were placed in the temple of Vulcan, at Memphis. “ One which faces the north, and which is called Summer, is adored by the Egyptians, and is encompassed with marks of their respect and gratitude; the other turned towards the south, and called Winter, meets with a very different fate.” The latter is that which they scourged on certain occasions, because it represented Typhon. It is in the month of February, in fact, that the southerly wind begins to be felt, and to cause the misfortunes I have mentioned. During the summer, the northerly winds prevail in their turn,

(*a*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.

(*b*) Herodotus, lib. 2.



purify the air, and procure the happiest effects for this country. The knowledge of these circumstances will furnish us with the means of giving a satisfactory explanation of the sacred fable, circulated by the priests, on the subject of Typhon, and of which I have already, in part at least, delivered to you my sentiments. Plutarch relates it at length. It will be sufficient to cite some of the most remarkable particulars of it.

(c) Opiris, having mounted the throne of Egypt, reigned there with glory, and became celebrated for his beneficence and justice. He travelled over the universe to load men with his bounties. Typhon, his brother, did not dare for some time to undertake any thing against his interest, because Isis watched over the safety of the kingdom; but when Osiris returned from Ethiopia, Typhon lay in wait for him with 72 conspirators, attacked and slew him, enclosed his body in a wooden coffin, and threw it into the Nile. It descended into the Mediterranean by the Tanitic branch. Isis

found it on the coast of Phœnicia, and brought it back to Egypt. But the usurper perceiving it at night, whilst he was chasing the wild boar, broke it, divided the body into 14 parts, and dispersed the scattered members over the country. Isis collected them all (*d*), and carefully preserved them. Delivered from all his enemies, Typhon exercised his despotic sway over Egypt. To make sure of the crown, he tried to kill Horus, son of Osiris, and industriously fought after him. But Latona, who had concealed him, and who brought him up at Butis, evaded his researches. This god became strong, declared war against the murderer of his father, vanquished him, and delivered him over, loaded with irons, to the care of his mother. Isis set him at liberty. Horus, full of indignation, wrested from her her crown, fought fresh battles with the tyrant, and, after overthrowing him

(*d*) “ Except the private parts, which being thrown  
 “ into the river, were devoured by the Lepidote, the  
 “ Phagre, and the Oxyrinchus.” Perhaps this circumstance was added to denote the prodigious fecundity of those fishes which became sacred.



a second time, enjoyed a glorious and peaceable reign.

A few short observations will suffice to explain this fable, which must be already partly understood. Osiris is the general name of the sun, who diffuses his favours from one end of the world to the other, and who peculiarly manifests his power in Egypt. His return from Ethiopia marks the period when returning from the Tropic of Capricorn, he proceeds towards the Equator, and passes through the winter signs. This is the season when the southerly wind prevails. The seventy-two conspirators (*e*) indicate the number of days during which it usually blows. This is the epoch of the

(*e*) At this day, the time during which the southerly wind prevails is called *Khamzin*, or *fifty*; but this number, as well as that of *seventy-two*, does not mark its duration with precision. It is sometimes of longer, sometimes of shorter continuance. This epoch, therefore, could only be marked by a number approaching the truth, and that of 72 appears to me the most accurate. I have already apprized you that this phænomenon was not continued, for it would render Egypt uninhabitable, and that it seldom lasts three days successively.

death



death of Osiris and the triumph of Typhon. Horus, brought up near the lake of Butis, denotes, in the opinion of the Egyptians, the sun, who attracts towards him the benignant vapours, to shed them in dew upon the earth. The strength he has acquired, and his victory over the tyrant, point out his entrance into the summer signs, and the northerly winds which begin to repulse the tempests from the south. In short, Typhon, set at liberty by Isis, teaches us that this scourge sometimes recurs even to the end of the month of June, especially at the full moon (*f*); but the sun having reached the Tropic of Cancer, the north wind resumes

(*f*) I have seen in Egypt instances when this phenomenon has become tremendous; for then the southerly wind drives back towards the north the clouds which are to cause the overflowing of the river, and the country is threatened with sterility. As this event frequently happens during the full moon, the priests said that Horus, enraged at Isis for releasing Typhon, had wrested her crown from her, and was obliged to fight new battles with the tyrant, in which he was victorious; that is to say, that the moon being in conjunction, and travelling in the day with the sun, had lost her light, and that in this interval, the north wind resumed its superiority.

its

its empire, cools the air, puts an end to contagious maladies, drives the clouds towards the lofty summits of the Abyffinian mountains, and swells the Nile with the rains which fall there in torrents. This is the glorious reign of Horus.

The Greeks, the disciples of the Egyptians, greedily received these allegories, and, by adapting them to their theogony, cloathed them in foreign colours, and in fresh fables. Some of them changed the names of Typhon into Typhæus; others left him his ancient denomination.

Hesiod (*g*) painted him with a hundred dragons heads coming out of his shoulders. Pindar says (*b*), that he was buried under Mount Ætna, whence he launches forth his fires. Apollodorus (*i*), who lived 140 years before Christ, gives us the following description of him. “ The enormous giant Typhon, foaming with rage, and making horrid bellowings, launched

(*g*) Hesiod, Theogonia.

(*b*) Pindar, Ode first.

(*i*) Apollodorus, Bibliotheca, lib. 1.



“ burning rocks towards heaven. He vo-  
 “ mited from his mouth a torrent of flames.  
 “ The gods seeing him ready to scale  
 “ Olympus, were terrified, took to flight,  
 “ and escaped into Egypt. Their enemy  
 “ pursuing them, they concealed them-  
 “ selves under the form of animals; but  
 “ Jupiter, perceiving Typhon at a dis-  
 “ tance from him, struck him with light-  
 “ ning, and buried him under Mount  
 “ *Ætna* (*k*). Hyginus adds, that since that  
 “ time the mountain vomits forth flames.”

Next come the Romans. They still improved upon their models, and Ovid thus sung the war of the giants (*l*):

Emissumque ima de sede Typhoea terræ  
 Cælitibus fecisse metum cunctosque dedisse  
 Terga fugæ, donec fessos Ægyptia tellus  
 Ceperit, & septem discretus in ostia Nilus.  
 Huc quoque terrigenam venisse Typhoea narrat,  
 Et se mentitis superos celasse figuris:  
 Duxque gregis, dixit, sit Jupiter, unde recurvis  
 Nunc quoque formatus Libys est cum cornibus  
 Ammon (*m*).

Delius

(*k*) Fables of Hyginus.

(*l*) Ovid Metam. lib. 5.

(*m*) It is unnecessary to tell you, Sir, how far the Latin poet here wanders from the truth. The statue of Ammon



Delius in corvo, proles Semeleia capro,  
 Fele foror Phœbi, nivea Saturnia vacca,  
 Pisce Venus latuit, Cyllenius ibidis alis.

You see, Sir, how the truth, in proportion to its distance from its first source, and in passing from one people to another, becomes obscure, and covers itself with so thick a veil, that it is hardly possible to discover it, and how the poets who employ the same allegories to adorn their verses, fill them with words, with the true sense of which they are totally unacquainted. It is evident, however, that the Greeks and Latins, desirous of explaining the worship the Egyptians paid to different animals, pretended that the gods assumed their forms to escape from the pursuit of Typhon. This error has been lately renewed by the learned *Warburton*, but it has obtained no more credit on that account. Neither *Herodotus* nor the ancient authors have written any thing resembling it. *Hyginus* (n) asserts the contrary. “The Egyptians,

Ammon was represented with horns, because that symbolical god denoted the sun when in the sign of the ram.

(n) Fables of *Hyginus*.

“ says

“ says he, allow no violence to be committed on animals, because they regard them as *images* of the gods.” In fact, they consecrated some animals to them, either in acknowledgment of their bounty, or in commemoration of important discoveries, and they honoured them as living emblems of their divinities.

The priests related in a very different manner the tragical end of Typhon, whom they drowned in the waters of a pestiferous lake. “ The lake Sirbon, says Eustathius(*o*), is situated at a small distance from Pelusium. They say, that Typhon was buried there.” Accordingly the Egyptians, as Plutarch tells us(*p*), called it *the breath of Typhon*. This lake, whose malignant vapours was very injurious to the health of the inhabitants of Pelusium, is no longer to be found in Egypt. It must, as well as many others, have been choaked up by the sand.

(*o*) Eustathius's Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes.

(*p*) Treatise of Isis Osiris.

The fable of Adonis appears to have been copied from that of Osiris. Let us hear Macrobius (q), who has unveiled with wonderful sagacity the mysteries of the worship of ancient nations. “ When we attentively  
 “ consider the religion of the Assyrians, it is  
 “ no longer doubtful that Adonis was the  
 “ sun. Philosophers have given the name  
 “ of Venus to the upper hemisphere, a part  
 “ of which we inhabit. Regarding the wild  
 “ boar as the symbol of winter, because  
 “ he loves wet, muddy, and frozen places,  
 “ they feigned that this animal had slain  
 “ Adonis. The winter, which diminishes  
 “ the light and heat of the star of the day,  
 “ is the wound therefore of Adonis.” It is unnecessary for me to point out to you, Sir, in what particular this fable resembles that of the Egyptians. In one and in the other it is winter which desolates these countries, and causes the death of the sun. This mysterious language is embellished by the painting of the Greeks, who have sung in verses breathing grace, sen-

(q) Macrobi. Saturnal. lib. 1.



timent, and nature, the tears of Venus for her lover\*. You have remarked how an allegory, under the veil of which the phenomena of nature were alluded to, was metamorphosed, so to speak, in passing from Egypt into Phœnicia and Greece, and even to Rome; but by collecting with discernment the testimonies of the ancients, we recover it pretty nearly as it was at first invented.

I have the honour to be, &c.

\* See an account of the mourning of Venus for her lover, in Bion's Ode, the Euterpe of Herodotus, and in Plutarch de Iside & Osiride, when he was supposed to be slain in hunting amongst the monsters of the Zodiac, on approaching too near Arctos, the North—the *Frozen Bear*. But Adonis was unquestionably an emblem of the sun amongst the Assyrians, the Phœnicians, and Egyptians, in the language of the two first of which countries, *Adon* signified Dominus, and *Adoni*, Dominus meus. Blackwell's Letters on Mythology.

[Translator.]

## L E T T E R LXVI.

OF NEPHTHYS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Nephtys was, in the sacred language, the barren spouse of Typhon. Not prolific till Osiris had commerce with her. This word, in its natural signification, denoted the sandy plains which stand between the Nile and the Red Sea, and are greatly exposed to the south-east wind. When in years of an extraordinary inundation the river stretched to those parts, the phænomenon was imputed to the adultery of Osiris with Nephtys. By Thueri or Afo, Queen of Ethiopia, reputed the concubine of Typhon, was denoted the south wind, which, uniting with that of the east, formed the south-east, a wind extremely formidable to the Egyptians, on account of its scorching breath, and the torrents of sand which it rolls upon the country.*

To. Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**T**HE Egyptian priests, Sir, continuing their allegory, gave Typhon a spouse called  
*Nephtys*

*Nephtys* (*r*), the sister and the rival of Isis. She was struck with a perpetual sterility, and only became fruitful, when Osiris, deceived by appearances, had commerce, with her. The crown of Lotus, which decorated the head of the god, and which he forgot in the apartments of *Nephtys*, exposed his crime. Such was the fable on the subject of the spouse of Typhon, and which I shall endeavour to explain.

You recollect, Sir, that the Nile sometimes received the name of Osiris, and that Isis, in certain circumstances, denoted the plains he overflowed. Accordingly this goddess was regarded as his legitimate spouse, and the inundation, in the sacerdotal language, was called their marriage. When the river, in years of extraordinary increase, rose higher than the hills which bound its course on the east, and flowed into the deserts, it carried fecundity with it even thither, and the sands were covered with verdure and with plants, the most remarkable of which was the Lotus. Here is the crown which

(*r*) Treatise of Isis and Osiris.



discovered the adultery of Osiris. “ The  
 “ Egyptians,” says Plutarch(*s*), “ bestow  
 “ on the confines of their kingdom, which  
 “ stretch towards the sea, the name of Neph-  
 “ thys; he adds: When the Nile spreads  
 “ itself over this part of the country, they  
 “ call this overflowing, the commerce of  
 “ Osiris with Nephthys, a commerce an-  
 “ nounced by the Lotus which grows a-  
 “ mongst the sands.”

The characteristic expression of *Nephthys*, which signifies (*t*) *country exposed to winds*, explains the natural sense concealed by the priests under the emblem of the fable. All that part of Egypt, in fact, which extends from the Red Sea to the Nile, from Sienna to the Mediterranean, being unprotected by lofty mountains, is greatly exposed to the winds from the south-east. It was allegorically, stiled therefore, the barren spouse of Typhon, because he there roves at liberty,

(*s*) Plutarch, in the same treatise.

(*t*) It is composed of the Egyptian words, *Neph Theu*, *country exposed to the winds*. Jablonski, Pantheon Ægyptiacum, tome 3.

and rolls over the fields of Egypt, the sands of these vast solitudes.

This malignant genius had also a concubine, not less dangerous, called *Thueri* or *Afo*, Queen of Ethiopia (*u*). When Osiris returned from his travels, Typhon, as I have already related, prepared an ambush for him, aided by seventy-two conspirators, and by Queen Afo (*x*). Plutarch, profoundly versed in the Egyptian theology, gives this explanation of that passage: “ Queen Afo, “ who assisted Typhon, denotes the south “ wind which comes from Ethiopia. If “ he repulses the northerly winds which “ convey the clouds towards that burning “ country; if he prevents the rains from “ falling, which produce the swelling of “ the Nile, then Typhon, victorious, de- “ stroys the plains with his fiery breath.”

(*u*) *Thueri* comes from *Thuris*, south wind. *Afo*, in the ancient dialect of the Thebais, signifies Ethiopia. Thus the Queen *Afo* denoted the wind which usually prevails in Ethiopia, that is to say, the south wind. Jablonski, tome 3.

(*x*) Plutarch, Treatise of Isis and Osiris.



Such was the allegory circulated by the priests, on the subject of the spouse and concubine of Typhon. The former represented the sandy deserts, which seem abandoned to the winds from the south-east; the latter, the southerly storms. When these two winds combined (*y*), it was Typhon who came, accompanied by Nephthys and Aso, to dethrone Osiris, and spread desolation over the rich valley watered by the Nile. We perceive that these allegorical personages have been invented by the first men, who stood in need of sensible images, to make themselves understood. Homer, the poet who approaches the nearest to that antiquity, frequently expresses himself like the priests of Thebes and Memphis. At this day Typhon, Nephthys, and Aso, are un-

(*y*) When the south wind, and that of the east blow at the same time, they form the south-east wind; this is precisely what the Egyptians most dreaded, because it is the most fiery, and rolls along with it a greater quantity of sand. As soon as it begins to blow, the thermometer mounts to above thirty-three degrees, and if it continues some days, it exceeds thirty-six.

known



known in Egypt, but the same winds, known there under the general denomination of *Khamfin*, continue to cause the same ravages, and to desolate this delicious country.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R LXVIII.

OF CANOBUS, A PRETENDED DEITY OF  
THE EGYPTIANS.

*Canobus, named by the writers of the Lower Empire Canopus, was the pilot of Menelaus. He died on the coast of Egypt, and they erected to him a tomb. This place, called in the Egyptian language Cahi noub, the golden land. A city and temples were built here. The Greeks, misled by this appellation, spread a report that they had been erected in honour of the stranger; but this was a mistake. Ruffin relates a long fable, by which he affects to prove, that the deity which they worshipped in the temple of Canobus was a pitcher: but this was only an offering made to the god of the Nile, the water of which it served to purify.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

CANOBUS, Sir, became famous under the empire of the Ptolemies. It is of importance

portance therefore to inquire into his origin, the motives that induced some historians to deify him, and what he really signified in the opinion of the Egyptians. Several of the writers of Greece and Italy, building on the testimony of Homer and Hecateus, make Menelaus land in Egypt, and say that Canobus, his pilot, dying of the bite of a viper, that hero erected a tomb to his memory on the side of the beach. This brilliant fact, supported by grave authorities, cannot be called in question. They add, that a city was afterwards built on this spot, called Canobus (z), in honour of the stranger. Dionysius Periegetes (a) improving on their reports, expresses himself in these terms: "In the most northerly gulph of Egypt, we see the famous temple of the Spartan Canobus."

It would be very remarkable for the Egyptians, who from the formal testimony of Genesis (b), had an utter aversion for

(z) I have hitherto called it Canopus in conformity with the modern usage, but the real name is Canobus.

(a) Dion. Periegetes.

(b) Genesis, chap. 43.



strangers, to have elevated to the rank of god-head a Grecian pilot, whilst we know that they never awarded divine honours to any mortal. Herodotus, who lived for some years with the priests of Heliopolis and Memphis, learnt from their mouth, that Menelaus, after receiving Helen from the hands of King Proteus, repaid this service by outrages, and pillaged the coast before he set sail (*c*). Besides this, he makes no mention of Canobus. Is it credible that such ingratitude should have been rewarded by the apotheosis of his pilot, even supposing that the religion and the manners of the Egyptians were not directly repugnant to it? Let us give no credit therefore to the improbable assertion of Dionysius Periegetes, the only writer among the Gentiles who has decreed the honours of a temple to the Lacedæmonian pilot.

(*c*) The testimony of Herodotus cannot be invalidated, who, a Greek by birth, never would have invented a falsehood to throw discredit on his nation, in whose presence he read his history. This must have been a well known fact in his time, and the love of truth alone could have made him speak of it.

Ammianus

(*d*) Ammianus Marcellinus tells us, that the city of Canopus possessed several temples. The most celebrated was that of Serapis; the most ancient built in one of the suburbs, was in honour of Hercules (*e*). These are the only ones mentioned by antiquity. Strabo (*f*) describes the temple of Serapis, which the Ptolemies decorated with a truly royal magnificence. They made an addition to it of several buildings, in which they formed an academy where the Belles Lettres were taught, and above all, the mysteries of the religion, and ancient language of Egypt. A great number of learned men flourished there, and Ptolemy, the astronomer, rendered it very famous. “He passed,” says Olympiodorus (*g*), “forty years in the wings of” the temple of Canopus, during which he

(*d*) Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 22.

(*e*) Herodotus, lib. 2. This town built before Canopus, was called Heraclea, the city of Hercules.

(*f*) Strabo, lib. 17. See letter 3 of the first volume of Letters on Egypt, where I have described from Strabo, the ceremonies practised in this temple, and the prodigious increase of people who repaired thither from Alexandria and all parts of Egypt.

(*g*) Commentaries of Olympiodorus.

“dedicated



“ dedicated himself to the study of astro-  
 “ nomy. His system and discoveries were  
 “ engraven there on the columns.” Serapis  
 was its tutelar deity, and his worship, en-  
 couraged by the Ptolemies, propagated itself  
 into Greece (*b*). Pausanias, in travelling  
 through that charming country, saw in the  
 citadel of Corinth, a temple dedicated to  
 Serapis the Canobite. The sciences as well  
 as the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy,  
 were for ages cultivated at Canobus. But  
 the Emperor Theodosius, having destroyed  
 her colleges and her temples, a part of hu-  
 man knowledge was buried under their  
 ruins, and the learned were dispersed.

Aristides, the rhetorician, wishing to  
 know the origin of the name of Canobus,  
 questioned an Egyptian priest (*i*). He gives  
 the following account of it. “ I learnt  
 “ from a priest of distinction in his order,  
 “ that this place was called Canobus, long  
 “ before Menelaus landed there. He proved  
 “ by invincible arguments, that this word

(*b*) Pausanias, Corinthian.

(*i*) Aristides the rhetorician.



“ could not be perfectly written in gold  
 “ characters, and that it signified *land of*  
 “ *gold*. It is to be presumed,” adds Aristi-  
 des, “ that the Egyptians are better ac-  
 “ quainted with their own history than  
 “ Homer and Hecateus.” Mr. de la  
 Croix (*k*), thus corroborates his testimony :  
 the monuments we have now remaining of  
 the Coptic language, leave no room to  
 doubt the fidelity of this relation. *Kabi*, in  
 fact, a word which on account of its aspi-  
 ration cannot be written in Greek, signifies  
*land*, and *noub*, *gold*.

The Greeks knowing that the chief part  
 of the Egyptian cities bore the name of the  
 divinities they adored, and that Canobus had  
 his tomb in a place called *Cabinoub*, deceived  
 doubtless by the resemblance of these ex-  
 pressions, affirmed that this city was built in  
 honour of him; and Dionysius Periegetes has  
 made them dedicate to him a temple. We  
 see how greatly he has strayed from the truth.  
 The Christians of the first ages of the church,  
 who were inclined to throw a ridicule on

(*k*) Dissertation Philologique.

the idolatry of the Gentiles, endeavoured to establish this error. "Canobus," says Epiphanius (*l*), "and his spouse *Eumenouth*,  
 " were buried on the sea shore, twelve  
 " miles from Alexandria (*m*), and honour-  
 " ed with divine worship." He is the first author who hazarded this assertion. Ruffin expatiates largely on the subject, and his zeal leads him still farther astray.

(*n*) "How paint the crimes committed  
 " by superstition at Canobus? There, under  
 " pretext of studying sacerdotal literature,  
 " (the name given to the ancient language  
 " of Egypt) magic was almost publicly  
 " professed. This place, which may be  
 " termed the source of dæmons, became  
 " more celebrated amongst the Pagans,  
 " than Alexandria itself. It will not be  
 " improper to unfold the origin of these  
 " monstrous errors. It is said, that the  
 " Chaldeans, transporting the fire, which

(*l*) Epiphanius, tome second.

(*m*) This is the exact distance from Alexandria to *Abouker*, formerly Canobus.

(*n*) Ruffin, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, livre second.

# O N E G Y P T.

“ was their god, into all the provinces,  
 “ offered to let him combat those of  
 “ other nations, on condition that if he  
 “ remained conqueror, they should adore  
 “ him. The priests of Canopus accepted  
 “ the challenge, and devised this stratagem.  
 “ They fabricate in Egypt pitchers of an  
 “ extremely porous earth, through which  
 “ the water filtrates and is purified. He  
 “ took one of them, stopped up the pores  
 “ with wax, and painting it of various co-  
 “ lours, filled it with water, and made it his  
 “ god. He covered it with the head of an  
 “ ancient statue, said to be that of the pilot  
 “ of Menelaus. The Chaldeans presented  
 “ themselves ; the contest began ; they  
 “ lighted fire around the vase ; the wax  
 “ melts ; the water runs through the pores  
 “ and extinguishes the fire. The fraud of  
 “ the priest gave the victory to Canopus  
 “ over the Chaldean deity. From that  
 “ moment his image has been represented  
 “ with very short feet, a narrow neck, and  
 “ the belly and back rounded like a pitcher.  
 “ It is under this form he is worshipped as  
 “ the vanquisher of all the Gods.”

I do



I do not know where Ruffin has met with this fable, for he does not cite his authorities; but it is so puerile, that it is unnecessary to refute it. Besides that, it formally contradicts the worship of the Egyptians, who have never adored water. If this pretended contest had any real foundation, certainly St. Clemens of Alexandria, who knew the religion of Egypt much better than the priest of Aquileia, would not have forgot it. This tale, however, will aid us at least in discovering some truths. The Egyptians have fabricated from the remotest antiquity, vessels of porous earth, which serve to filtrate water and to clarify it. The Greeks called them *Beaucalion*, the Arabs call them *Bardak*. This invention was very interesting in a country where for five months of the year the Nile brings down a great quantity of sand, mud, and insects. Before they drink its water, they let it subside in great jars, into which they throw powder of almonds bruised, which precipitates in a few hours the heterogeneous particles. But to make it more agreeable, they expose it on their windows to the  
north

north wind, in *Bardaks*. It penetrates the pores, and as it is constantly struck by the refreshing breath of the north wind, it contracts a coolness which is delicious in this burning climate. The poor as well as the rich, drink with a sort of voluptuousness, of the water which has remained for some days in these vases. This art therefore was a valuable discovery for Egypt. The ancient inhabitants who made it, were sensible of its importance. To mark their gratitude for it to the god of the Nile, they consecrated one of these pitchers in the temple of Serapis at Canopus. This is the offering which Ruffin, aided by a fable, strives to pass for a divinity. Several monuments concur in proving what I have advanced. We see on a crown piece struck in the time of the Emperor Adrian, by the inhabitants of Canopus, one of these vases (o) with a serpent twisted round the mouth of it. Now we know that this figure was the emblem of *Cnepb*, the good genius, and in a more extensive sense, the author of nature.

(o) Cotelarii Monumenta, vol. 1.



Even the Canal which came from the Nile, and discharged itself into the sea near Canobus, was called (*p*) *Agatho Daimon*, the good genius, doubtless, because it touched upon a city where the people adored Serapis, and the priests the supreme Being. It is natural to suppose, therefore, that the earthen vessel deposited in his temple, was nothing else than a testimony of homage done to his beneficence (*q*). We find similar consecrations in the greatest part of the Egyptian monuments. The sacrifice engraved on the rock near Babain, and offered to Jupiter Ammon, or the sun of the spring season, presents us with seven pitchers of this kind, bearing the three piles, on which repose the lambs that were offered in sacrifice. The obelisks were symbols of the rays of the sun,

(*p*) Ptolemy's Geography.

(*q*) Amongst the rarities which Mr. Dombey, who has travelled with glory for nine years in south America, has just brought back to France with him, I have remarked some vases taken from the tombs of the people of Peru, which greatly resemble those we find in the vaults of Saccora; and some idols of gold, similar to those the Arabs tear from the mummies, which their avarice leads them to pull to pieces.

and



and their shade served to mark his course, whilst he was above the horizon. All these facts testify that the Egyptians were very attentive in consecrating to god the fruit of their inventions. The name of *Cabi Noub*, land of gold, bestowed on the country which produced the clay, the best adapted to the composition of these pitchers, for filtrating the water, shews us that it was with reason the priests offered one of them to the gods in the very place where they were fabricated, and perhaps even invented.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R LXIX.

OF THOTH, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND REGARDED AS A CELEBRATED MAN BY THE GREATER PART OF WRITERS.

*Thoth was held to be an extraordinary man by a great number of writers. To him they ascribed the invention of all arts, sciences, and human institutions; and dignified him with the name of Trismegistus, or thrice great. This alone might be sufficient to prove that the personage was allegorical. Thoth, in the Egyptian language, signifies a pillar; and as it was usual to engrave approved works upon pillars, they all received the general appellation of Thoth. The three Thoths or mercuries might denote the infancy, the progress, and the perfection of human knowledge.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

AFTER offering you, Sir, some notions respecting the principal divinities of Egypt, it remains that I should treat of *Thoth*, that  
symbolical

symbolical divinity, or famous personage who received the homage of antiquity, and who was regarded as the inventor of almost the whole of human knowledge. The ages in which his existence is placed, are so very remote, that it is almost impossible to throw upon them any light, capable of clearing up the objects which lie hid in the obscurity of time. Plato, who wrote upwards of two thousand years before us, and who was educated in the school of the priests of Heliopolis, did not himself know what judgment to form of Thoth, already of too ancient a date for him to discover his origin (*r*). “*Theuth*, says he, invented letters, distinguished the vowels from the consonants; the mutes from liquids; a discovery which alone should make him be regarded as a god, or as a divine mortal. Fame says that he lived in Egypt.” In this state of uncertainty the most prudent measure is faithfully to report the passages of the ancients, and to examine them with the spirit of impartial criticism.

(*r*) Plato calls him *Theuth*.



Thoth was differently named by different nations. "The Greeks, says Philo, of Biblos (s), gave the name of Hermes, or Mercury, to *Taaout*, whom the Egyptians call *Thoth*, and the Alexandrians *Thoth*." Historians agree in attributing to him the invention of almost all the arts. "Thoth, says Lactantius (t), remounts to the most remote antiquity, and though a man, he possessed all the sciences, which justly obtained him the surname of *Trismegistus*, three times great." He created the different parts of discourse (u), and first gave names to many things. He discovered numbers (x) and measures, and reduced arithmetic to a system (y). The Egyptians said that he taught them geometry, which was absolutely necessary for them; likewise astronomy and astrology:

(s) A Phœnician History ascribed to Sanchoniathon, translated by Philo, of Biblos, and quoted by Eusebius in his Preparation for the Gospel, lib. 3.

(t) Lactantius, lib. 1.

(u) Diodorus Siculus, Plato, and Eusebius, affirm that he was the inventor of letters, and the first who wrote books.

(x) Plato in Phædro.

(y) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

they

they added, that being the first who observed the nature and harmony of sounds, he composed the lyre. Clemens of Alexandria (z) speaks of the code of laws entrusted to the care of the priests, and Ælian points it out under the denomination of *the body of law of Mercury* (Thoth). The creation of theology, the establishment of divine worship, and the order of sacrifices, were also attributed to him (a); this doctrine was contained in the books of Mercury, deposited in the temples, and the priests there found every thing concerning religion. In short, Diodorus Siculus tells us, the Egyptians asserted that all the sciences, institutions, and arts, were invented by *Thoth*, or Mercury.

When we reflect on the nature of the human mind, which advances only step by step from one truth to another, when viewing the annals of history, we perceive but a small number of creative geniuses, widely dispersed, and at great intervals from each

(z) Clemens of Alexandria, lib. 6. *Stroma*. Cicero de *Natura deorum*, and Lactantius, lib. 1, say that he gave laws to the Egyptians.

(a) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.



other on the earth, making a few important discoveries; when Plato, an enlightened judge, considering *Thoth* simply as the author of letters, and of writing, calls him god, or a divine mortal, one is compelled to believe that this personage, whom they endow with universal science, never has existed; but that the learned men of a nation, verging on the origin of the human race, published under his name the various knowledge they had acquired for many thousand years. This sentiment, dictated by reason, is confirmed by the authority of several great men. Jamblichus<sup>(b)</sup> makes *Aba-mon* (or Anebo) a priest of Egypt, speak thus: “Mercury, the god of eloquence, is with  
 “reason regarded as the common divinity  
 “of priests; for it is the same spirit which  
 “presides over the genuine science of religion. This is the reason why our ancestors, on dedicating to him their works,  
 “the produce of their wisdom, graced  
 “them with the name of Mercury.”

Here then we have the books of the

(b) Jamblichus, *Myst. Egypt.*



Egyptians, published under the name of Thoth\*. Galen, trained up to the sciences in the academy of Alexandria, informs us of the manner in which this was practised:

“ All the discoveries made in Egypt, says  
 “ he, must be stamped with the approba-  
 “ tion of the learned. When they were  
 “ engraved on the columns (c) without the  
 “ names of the author, and deposited in  
 “ the sanctuary. Hence the prodigious  
 “ number of books *ascribed to Mercury*.  
 “ The disciples of Pythagoras imitated this  
 “ example by putting the name of Pytha-  
 “ goras at the head of their works.”

These passages evidently prove that *Thoth* was not a man, but that they engraved the works, approved by the colleges of priests, on columns (d) called *Thoth*, as we shall

\* Sonchoniathon says, *Taaut*, the inventor of letters, and first recorder amongst men, wrote that part of it relating to the rise of things, in signs or *sacred sculptures*. — ΟΙΝΙΚΩΝ θεολογία παρὰ ΕΥΣΕΒ. [Translator.]

(c) Galen, lib. i. contra Julian.

(d) They are usually called pillars of *Thoth*; but as Galen knew that this Egyptian word signified *column*, he did not chuse to be guilty of a pleonasm.

hereafter see, and that they went under this general denomination. The spirit by which the learned said they were inspired, and to which they ascribed their knowledge, was *Phtha*, the artist of nature, the source of all information. “The Egyptians, says “Diogenes Laertius (*e*), affirmed that “Vulcan (*f*) had taught them the principles of philosophy, and that the “Pontiffs and the Prophets assumed to “themselves the honour of being his “priests.” Accordingly, in the Chronicle of Scaliger, Vulcan is called *the Legislator of Egypt*.

It is of importance to examine these columns on which are engraven discoveries worthy of being transmitted to posterity. Mercury (Thoth) says Manethon (*g*), invented the mysterious columns, and ordained that the laws by which the stars are governed in their motions should be written

(*e*) Diogenes Laertius, History of Philosophers.

(*f*) The same as *Phtha*.

(*g*) Manethon, lib. 5.



on them. § Achilles Tatius (*b*) corroborates this: "The Egyptians are the first  
 " who have measured the heaven and the  
 " earth, and transmitted this knowledge to  
 " their descendants by engraving them on  
 " columns." \* Proclus adds that remarkable

§ Sanchoniathon says, "Before this the god *Taaut* had,  
 " in imitation of heaven, expressed the appearances  
 " (aspects) of the gods *Time* and *Dagon*, and the other  
 " deities in the *sacred engravures of letters*. To him  
 " (*TAAUT*, or *LETTERS*) *Time* going afterwards to  
 " the land of the south, gave all the kingdom of *Egypt*  
 " to be his royal seat." (The land of learning and parent of writing). Blackstone remarks on the fragment of Sanchoniathon he has given us, what a valuable writing that work would have been entire, and free from the interpolations of Philo and other commentators; and how the specimen we have of him, such as it is, shews us the irreparable loss we have sustained in the extinction of the records kept by the priests in the chief cities in Egypt, and all over the east; but especially in the grand temples of *Memphis*, *Thebes*, *Babylon*, and *Tyre*. Sanchoniathon says, too, of *Mysor*, liberty, came *Taaut letters*.—  
 [Translator.]

(*b*) Achilles Tatius, Commentator of Aratus.

\* Sanchoniathon tells us, "Then the God HEAVEN made *BAITYLLIAS*, having produced *animated stones*." Compare this with the Bible—"and he gave unto Moses,  
 " when



markable actions(*i*), as well as interesting inventions, were also written on them. These stones, which were remarkably hard, composed an immortal book, a sort of Encyclopedia, containing all the sciences, all the arts invented or improved for ages : it is for this reason the priests undertook nothing without previously consulting them (*k*). Pythagoras and Plato who read them, drew thence the foundation of their philosophy, which made Theophilus, of Antioch, say (*l*), “ What use has it been “ to Pythagoras to have penetrated the “ sanctuaries of Egypt, and to have consulted the columns of Mercury(*m*)?” Sanchoniathon, the most ancient historian after Moses, boasts of having derived his knowledge from the monuments of the

“ when he had made an end of communing with him  
 “ upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of  
 “ stone, written with *the finger of God.*” Exodus, chap. xxxi. v. 18. [Translator.]

(*i*) Proclus, Timæus of Plato, lib. 1.

(*k*) Jamblichus, Egyptian Mysteries.

(*l*) Theophilus, lib. 3.

(*m*) Sanchoniathon cited by Eusebius, prep. Evangel.

lib. 3.

temples

temples of *Taaout*, and from the mysterious books of the Ammonians.

The practice of imprinting on marble, in indelible characters, the discoveries of science, is almost as ancient as the world. We may conclude that stone was the first book of man \*. The historian Josephus speaks thus of it (*n*): “ The Patriarch Seth  
 “ knowing that Adam had foretold that  
 “ every thing on earth would perish either  
 “ by fire, or by a general deluge, and fear-  
 “ ing lest philosophy and astronomy should  
 “ be effaced from the memory of men, and  
 “ be buried in oblivion, engraved his know-  
 “ ledge on two columns, the one of brick,  
 “ the other of stone, that if the waters

\* Blackwell says, the word מַצֵּבָה, which the Jews are prohibited to erect, does not strictly mean a *statue* or *image*, but what the Greeks called ΣΤΗΛΗ (*Cippus*, *Titulus*,) a *pillar* or *column*; may not this be the custom in question, though differently applied by Blackwell? Persons, initiated in the Eleusynian mysteries were instructed out of the ΠΕΤΡΩΜΑ (two stone tablets). See also, Deuteronomy, chap. xxvii. verse 8. &c. &c.

*Translator.*

(*n*) Jewish Antiquities, book i.

“ should



“ should destroy the former, the latter  
 “ might subsist, and instruct the human  
 “ race in astronomical discoveries. This  
 “ column is still to be seen in the *Siri-*  
 “ *diac* land.”

Let us now attend to Manethon, a celebrated historian, and sacred writer of Egypt, who flourished more than three centuries before the Jewish author (o). He testifies, “ that he derived his knowledge from the  
 “ *steles* placed in the *Siridiac* land, where  
 “ *Thoth*, the first Mercury, had engraved  
 “ them in sacred language, and in hiero-  
 “ glyphic characters, and that after the de-  
 “ luge, the good Genius, son to the second  
 “ Mercury, translated them into the dialect  
 “ made use of by the priests, and wrote  
 “ them in sacerdotal letters.” Here, Sir, are two men or two nations, who imprint their discoveries on marble. I shall not examine whether *Seth*, as Jablonski (p) pre-

(o) Manethon in the book of Sothis, dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus. See the chronography of Syncellius.

(p) Jablonski, *Pantheon Ægyptiacum*, lib. 3. chap. 20.



tends, is the same with *Thoth*, and whether Josephus, who was posterior to Manethon, was desirous of giving a Patriarch the honour of an invention, the glory of which the Egyptians had long arrogated to themselves. This would be a research of pure curiosity. The important matter would be to ascertain from authentic monuments the place where these columns were situated, and their existence. Both the historians call it the *Siridiac* land, but that was unknown to the ancients as well as to the moderns, which has led some of the learned to imagine that instead of *Siridiac*, we should read *Siringic*, an expression which denotes subterraneous passages. This idea must have arisen from the following passage of Ammianus Marcellinus(*q*): “It is affirmed that the Egyptian priests, versed in all the branches of religious knowledge, and apprized of the approach of the deluge, were fearful lest the divine worship should be effaced from the memory of man. To preserve the remembrance of it, they

(*q*) Ammian Marcellinus, lib. 22.

“ dug in various parts of the kingdom, sub-  
“ terraneous and winding passages, on the  
“ walls of which they engraved their know-  
“ ledge under different forms of animals  
“ and birds, which they called hierogly-  
“ phics, and which are unintelligible to  
“ the Latins.”

It seems as if this writer had decided the question, and that by the *Siridiac* land, we are to understand these subterraneous passages in the rocks, in the environs of Thebes and Memphis. In fact, we find in those immense labyrinths, formed under the plain of Saccora, a great number of figures of men, of birds, and various animals sculptured on the walls. Near Thebes we meet with similar hieroglyphics in the numerous caverns of the mountains. Amongst these sacred characters, some are painted, some engraved, some cut in relief, divided into compartments, or arranged in columns. Are not these the sanctuaries into which the priests alone had the right of entering, and where they committed to stone, the different epochas of history, the inventions of the sciences, and the prodigies of art? I know  
the



the Scholiast of Sophocles (*r*) pretends, that the *steles* on which these remarkable events were consigned, were square stones. Perhaps they had that form in Greece; but the obelisks, the columns, the walls of the temples, and of the subterraneous passages covered with innumerable hieroglyphics, divided into compartments, were the steles of the Egyptians, according to the testimony of Sanchoniathon, Manethon, and the most ancient historians. The monuments described by Ammianus Marcellinus are still subsisting. The traveller contemplates them with a sterile admiration, as the first efforts of human genius to immortalize the fruit of its labours.

The testimonies of the authors I have cited, are not decisive enough to persuade us that these hieroglyphics are antecedent to the deluge. The reading of the events they contain could alone ascertain the truth or falsehood of that assertion. That would undoubtedly inform us, both of the era in which they were engraved, and the un-

(*r*) Scholiast of Sophocles on *Electra*.



known history of the first ages of the world. But we may at least form a reasonable conjecture that these characters preceded writing, and that they are the most ancient monuments that have reached us.

It is proved then, that *Thoth*, that so much boasted personage, never had any real existence, but that the Egyptian priests published their works under this general title, after they had been honoured by the unanimous approbation of the colleges. The interpretation of this word, leaves no doubt upon the subject. Jablonski (s) has proved that *Thoth* signifies column. The Greeks

(s) Jablonski, tome 3, says, *Thoth*, *Theuth*, or *Thoith*, comes from the Egyptian *Thouthi*, column.—Blackwell says in his *Letters on Mythology*—"I am inclined to think that *Taant* is pure Egyptian for LETTERS, from תא *Taau*, *signum nota*, such as the Egyptian letters especially were: thence תורת *Ottoth* SIGNALITERÆ, and with the ת transposed from the middle, or the Coptic article T' put before it *Taaöt*." N. B. this is translated from the Phœnician by Blackwell, and has neither been paraphrased by Philo, nor truly deduced by subsequent commentators. See Blackwell's *Letters*, p. 348, in the notes. *Translator.*

by translating it by the word ΣΤΗΛΗ (*t*), have retained this meaning. As the learned of Egypt were accustomed to write their books without putting their name to them, it was natural that they should bear that of the monuments by which they were to be transmitted to posterity. It appears even that this honour was granted only to such as made important discoveries, since the approbation of all the academicians of the country was necessary to enjoy it. When the Latins therefore, and persons who had but a superficial acquaintance with the Egyptian history, speak of the columns of *Tboth*, they are guilty of the same pleonasm as those geographers who call *Ætna* Mount *Gibel* (*u*). Observe, I request you, that *Sanchoniathon*, *Manethon*, *Galen*, and the other writers who penetrated into the mysteries of Egypt, and drew their information from the genuine sources, do not commit this fault, but only relate that

(*t*) *Stele* signifies also *column*.—ΣΤΗΛΗ (*Cippus*, *Titulus*) a *pillar* or *column*. Blackwell. *Translator*,

(*u*) *Gibel* is an Arabic word for mountain.



they carved on columns or steles, the remarkable events, and prodigies of art. Thus when, according to Ælian(\*), *the priests asserted that Sesostris was taught the sciences by Thoth or Mercury*, it signified, that on initiating him into the mysteries, they had taught him to read the history of human knowledge impressed in hieroglyphic characters on the columns. They bore at first that simple denomination; the custom of consulting them, the sacred places where they were kept, the deposits they preserved, all rendered them respectable. They became consecrated by religion, and were placed under the immediate protection of *Phtha*, or the creative spirit.

These principles established, we are enabled to give a probable explanation of the three *Thoth* or *Mercuries* reckoned by the Egyptians. They placed the most ancient before the deluge, and the others subsequent to that event. The first marked the infancy of human knowledge, whether it be, that some monuments have escaped the de-

(\*) Ælian, lib. 12.



struction of the human race, or whether those they raised shortly after, ascended beyond that terrible epocha. The second *Thoth* denotes the efforts of the Egyptians to discover physical and astronomical truths, the translation of the hieroglyphics into sacerdotal characters, and the fixed establishment of divine worship, and the laws. The third again, pointed out the flourishing state of the sciences, the progress of the arts, and the perfection to which they were carried, as testified by the pyramids, the temples, and obelisks, the immensity and magnificence of which have never been equalled by any people. The Egyptian priests expressed these eras in a sensible manner by the epithet of *Trismegistus*, *three times great*, which they bestow on their allegorical *Thoth*.

You must have observed, Sir, that the books of *Thoth* or Hermes, were the collection of the productions of all the learned men of Egypt, and formed their Encyclopedia. They have unfortunately perished in the conflagration of the Ptolemean library, and the originals which remain engraved on the marbles of Egypt, in a thousand

places, are unintelligible. Of so many treasures we have only a few fragments preserved by the ancients. As to the Hermetical books, boasted of by those who sacrifice their time, and their money in seeking after the philosopher's stone, they are merely supposititious works, and falsely attributed to Hermes, or the Egyptian *Thoth*.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R LXX.

## OF THE VOCAL STATUE OF MEMNON.

*The statue of Memnon greatly celebrated in ancient times for the sound which it emitted at sun-rise. Called by the priests the Son of the Day. The son of Aurora, the conqueror of Antilochus, celebrated by Homer. His interpreters, and the poets since his time, have applied those expressions to the Egyptian Memnon. This is a mistake; the Thebaic statue bore the name of Aménophis. The Memnon who came to the siege of Troy a little after, was sent from Susa by Teutam, king of Assyria. The vocal statue of Egypt was broken by Cambyfes. The mutilated figure ceased to emit any sound for a long time, but resumed its vocal power under the Ptolemies. After its disgrace, it pronounced seven notes. The priests, who gave the harmonic course of the seven planets the name of celestial music, and who consecrated to them the notes, called this statue the image of the sun, and the*



*cousin of Osiris, because it pronounced the seven notes which compsed the terrestrial music. It received the name of ame nouphi, to tell good news, because it pronounced the notes at the vernal equinox, a season dear to the Egyptians.*

To Mr. L. M:

Grand Cairo.

**I**HAVE briefly mentioned to you, Sir, the statue of Memnon, in describing the ruins of Thebes; but the wonders which are related of it are attested by so many great names engraven on its pedestal, that I cannot conclude these letters without attempting to extricate from obscurity some circumstances of its history. A hundred Greek and Latin, and a few Egyptian authors have celebrated it in their writings. Their opinions frequently differ, and are sometimes impressed with the character of a blind credulity. Others, more wise, unable either to reject the testimony of their senses, or to believe in miracles, remain in a state of suspense. I shall give you a faithful account of their various narrations, which will enable

able you to form a judgment respecting this statue, so celebrated in antiquity.

You have remarked, Sir, amongst the ruins of Thebes, several colossal figures, almost all mutilated, or lying on the earth. The largest was placed at the entrance of the vestibules of the tomb I have described to you (*y*). Diodorus Siculus calls it *Osimandué*; Strabo (*z*) says it was called by the Egyptians *Ismandes*; but writers in general give it the name of Memnon (*a*). This statue, still less remarkable for its gigantic stature, and the hardness of the granite of which it is composed, than for its property of producing a sound at the rising of the sun, was broken by Cambyfes. Half of it is overthrown, the other half remains up-

(*y*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

(*z*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*a*) *Osimandué* and *Ismandes* were probably the vulgar names of this colossus, among the Egyptians. These words are derived from *Ou Smandi*, to give a sound. Memnon may also come from *Ennioni*, of stone. The Greeks have made of it, *Memnon Ismandes*, the vocal stone. See Jablonski de Memnone.



on its base. Philostrates thus describes it (*b*):  
 “ The colossus of Memnon represented a  
 “ young man in the flower of his age, whose  
 “ face was turned towards the rising sun.  
 “ When his rays fell upon it, it was said to  
 “ speak.” Dionysius Periegetes says (*c*),  
 “ The people who inhabit Thebes, famous  
 “ for her hundred gates, and for the vocal  
 “ statue of Memnon which salutes his mo-  
 “ ther Aurora on her rising.” The priests  
 of Egypt called it the Son of Day (*d*), and,  
 according to Diodorus, *the Cousin of Osiris*.

Homer is the first who speaks of the son  
 of Aurora (*e*). “ Nestor preserved in his  
 “ heart the memory of his generous Anti-  
 “ lochus, slain by the illustrious son of Au-  
 “ rora.” His commentators have all been

(*b*) Philostrates, *Life of Apollonius of Thionos*,  
 lib. 6.

(*c*) Dionysius Periegetes, *Description of the Uni-  
 verse*.

(*d*) In the old Egyptian tongue, the day was called  
*Ebo*; the Greeks made of this, *Eos*, the morning, and  
 called Memnon the son of the morning. Jablonſki de  
 Memnone.

(*e*) Homer's *Odyſſey*.



of opinion that the latter expressions related to the Egyptian Memnon; but the prince of poets might have made use of them to point out one of the chiefs who came to the release of Troy from the eastern countries. This metaphorical language was familiar in his time. The scripture employs it in the same manner by calling the people of those climes *the children of the east*. The poets who flourished after him, gave a different explanation of his expression: “Aurora, “ says Hesiod (*f*), brought forth by Tithon, “ the valiant Memnon, who wore a brazen “ helmet, and was King of Ethiopia.” Pindar ascribes to him the victory over Antilochus (*g*): “ The brave Antilochus, endowed with a magnanimous soul, desirous “ of saving his father’s life, fell in the combat he sustained with Memnon, the leader “ of an army of Ethiopians (*b*). One of “ Nestor’s

(*f*) Hesiod. Theogonia.

(*g*) Pindar, Ode 2.

(*b*) These passages relate to the Egyptian Memnon. In fact, the ancient Greeks long called the Delta by the name of Egypt, and all the country farther to the southward,

“ Nestor’s horses, pierced by a spear thrown  
 “ by the hand of Paris, stopped his car.”

Building on these authorities, the poets of Greece and Italy confounded the Trojan with the Egyptian Memnon. Virgil (*i*) speaks of the troops of Aurora, and of the arms of the black Memnon. This colour, employed to mark the country of the hero, must not be regarded as a sign of deformity; for the poet of Achilles, in celebrating Euripilus, says (*k*), He was the handsomest of mortals, after the divine Memnon. Ovid (*l*) expresses himself thus in his *Metamorphoses*:  
 “ Aurora, who favoured the Trojan party,  
 “ is no longer touched with the misfortunes  
 “ of Ilion, nor of Hecuba; a nearer con-

ward, Ethiopia. Homer puts these words in the mouth of Menelaus, speaking to Telemachus: *I penetrated Egypt as far as Ethiopia*. Now, as he only conducts his hero to Thebes, it is evident that he understood the Thebais by this expression. Damis, the companion of Apollonius of Thianes, declares that he saw the temple and the statue of Memnon, in Ethiopia, that is to say, in Upper Egypt.

(*i*) Virgil’s *Æneid*, book 1.

(*k*) *Odyssey*, lib. 5.

(*l*) Ovid. *Metam.* lib. 5.



“ cern occupies her soul ; she mourns her  
“ own losses, and bewails in tears the death  
“ of Memnon.” On the base of the statue is the following beautiful epigram, written by the poet Asclepiodotus : “ Live  
“ Thetis, goddess of the sea ! Learn that  
“ Memnon, who died fighting under the  
“ walls of Troy, daily utters a pleasing  
“ sound near the tombs dug out of the Ly-  
“ bian mountains, at the spot where the  
“ impetuous Nile intersects Thebes, celebrated for her gates ; whilst Achilles,  
“ thirsting insatiably for battles, no longer  
“ speaks, either near the walls of Ilion,  
“ or in the Thessalian plains.”

Here, Sir, is the Egyptian or Ethiopian Memnon (for the ancients gave the name of Ethiopia to the Thebais) generally acknowledged to be him who gloriously fell in repulsing the Greeks. But these are testimonies of the poets, who are more anxious to present us with moving pictures, and brilliant fables, than accurate historical truths. Let us pursue the fable of his birth (*m*).

(*m*) Apollodorus, Biblioth. lib. 3.



Aurora, amorous of Tithon, carried him into Ethiopia, where she bore to him Emathion and Memnon (*n*). Ifacius Tzetza adopts the same allegory. Tithon, son of Laomedon, was beloved by the Goddess of the Day. From this commerce sprung Memnon and Emathion (*o*). Diodorus Siculus explains these passages: "Tithon, son  
 " of Laomedon, was brother to Priam,  
 " carried his arms into the eastern parts of  
 " Asia, and into Ethionia, from whence  
 " the fable of Memnon, produced by Au-  
 " rora, took its rise."

But who is this hero who assisted the Trojans; for the allegories of the poets are always founded on some truth? Diodorus (*p*) will tell us, "Memnon came to the succour  
 " of Troy, at the head of the troops of  
 " Teutam, Emperor of Assyria. Priam,  
 " sovereign of Troas, a dependency of that  
 " empire, oppressed by the weight of the  
 " war, had implored his assistance. Teu-

(*n*) Ifacius Tzetza.

(*o*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 4.

(*p*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 2.

“ tam sent him twenty thousand Ethiopians  
 “ and Suzians, and two hundred chariots,  
 “ commanded by Memnon. This war-  
 “ rior, a favourite of his King, then go-  
 “ verned Persia. He was in the flower of  
 “ his age, and already celebrated for his  
 “ bodily strength and greatness of mind.  
 “ He had built a palace in the citadel of  
 “ Suza, which bore his name until the  
 “ empire of the Persians, and formed a  
 “ public highway, still called in our days  
 “ *the Memnonian way.*” Suza, adds Stra-  
 bo(*q*), was founded by Tithon, father of  
 Memnon. This city was six leagues in  
 circumference. Its form was oblong, and  
 its citadel called *the Memnonium*(*r*). He-  
 rodotus(*s*) also calls Suza *the city of Mem-*  
*non.* Pausanias(*t*) assures us that this Ge-  
 neral came to the siege of Troy from Suza,  
 and not from Ethiopia, and that he sub-

(*q*) Strabo, lib. 15.

(*r*) That is, *the citadel of Memnon.*

(*s*) Herodotus, lib. 5.

(*t*) Pausanias in Phocicis, ch. 31.

duced all the nations of Media to the river *Choaspes*.

These authorities, the number of which I could augment, if necessary, evidently prove, that, during the memorable siege, the heroes of which are immortalized by the vast genius of one man, the Emperors of Assyria sent to the aid of Priam, a brave Captain, called Memnon, who had nothing in common with the Egyptian Memnon(u). It is probable, as I have already said, that Homer, in calling him the son of Aurora, meant only to indicate the east from whence he came. The poets after him invented the fable you have just read, solely to adorn their verses.

Let us now examine what was the real name of the statue which is the object of your enquiries, the opinion entertained of it by the ancients, and the end which the

(u) Philostrates positively says, Memnon was Ethiopian (Theban) and reigned in that country before the Trojan war. He who came to that siege is greatly posterior to, and different from, the former. *Life of Apollonius of Thianes*.



Priest had in view in erecting it. Herodotus (x) is the first who calls it Memnon, and he scarcely speaks of it, because it was mutilated when he visited Egypt. Since the days of that historian a crowd of travellers has cited it with enthusiasm, and they have almost all concurred in bestowing on it the name of Memnon, which only proves that this was the denomination generally adopted by foreigners; but to come at the real name, we must attend to the Egyptians, who must certainly be better acquainted with their own monuments. We read the following words in the chronicle of Alexandria (y): “Cambyfes ordered *Amenophis*, the vocal statue, vulgarly called Memnon, to be cut in two.” Pausanias, an accurate observer, comes in support of this authority (z). The Thebans assure us that the statue we call Memnon, is that of the Egyptian *Phamenophis*. The *Pb*(a), in the language of

(x) Herodotus.

(y) Chronicle of Alexandria.

(z) Pausanias in Atticis.

(a) Jablonski de Memnone.

the country, is the article masculine; its true name therefore was *Amenophis*.

After Cambyfes had knocked down the half of this coloffus, it ceased probably for a long time to utter any found; for Herodotus, who travelled through this country fhortly after the Perfian conquest, would not have omitted fo extraordinary a fact. The Ptolemies having founded a kingdom in Egypt, favoured the arts and fciences. From that period, the remains of the ftatue, ftill upon its bafe, continued to make its voice be heard, as Manethon informs us (*b*), but not fo diftinctly as before its misfortune. Three centuries after, the Romans conquered Egypt, and they flew with admiration to vifit antiquities. Germanicus was of this number. “ He could not refift,” fays Tacitus (*c*), “ the defire of contemplating  
“ the wonders of Egypt, the moft aftonifh-  
“ ing of which are the ftatue, in ftone, of

(*b*) Chronographia. Syncelli. Manethon, a fared writer of Egypt, flourifhed under the firft of the Ptolemies. He had retained the knowledge of the hieroglyphic language.

(*c*) Annals of Tacitus, lib. 2.



“ Memnon, which at the instant of being  
 “ struck by the rays of the sun, pronounces  
 “ vowels; and the pyramids which rear  
 “ their heads like mountains in the midst  
 “ of almost inaccessible sands.” The re-  
 port of this historian is confirmed by nume-  
 rous inscriptions. We read the following  
 on the right leg of the colossus: *I, Cai Lælia,*  
*spouse to the African Prefect, heard the voice*  
*of Memnon at half past six in the morning,*  
*the first year of the Emperor Domitian, &c.*  
 The following is inscribed on the left leg:  
*I, Publius Balbinus, heard the divine voice of*  
*the vocal statue of Memnon, otherways Pha-*  
*meneph. I was in company with the amiable*  
*Queen Sabina (the wife of Adrian). We*  
*read afterwards: Julius Camillus commanded*  
*me to engrave these words, at the instant when*  
*Adrian Augustus heard the voice of Memnon.*  
 And on the same side: *I, Mithridates, tri-*  
*bune of the twelfth legion, heard the voice of*  
*Memnon at six in the morning.*

A thousand other inscriptions testify the  
 same fact; it is needless therefore to recite  
 them. When to these authorities we add  
 those of Strabo, and of Tacitus, incredulity



itself cannot resist such testimonies. The marble which has preserved them for upwards of sixteen hundred years, is a durable book which deposes in favour of the voice of *Amenophis*. But what are we thence to conclude? Is this phænomenon owing to the nature of the stone? Pausanias leans to this opinion (*d*). “The stone they shew at  
 “ Megara, when struck with a flint, pro-  
 “ duces a sound which resembles the vibra-  
 “ tion of the string of an instrument. The  
 “ colossus I have seen at Thebes, on the  
 “ other side of the Nile, surprized me  
 “ much more. It produces every day at the  
 “ rising of the sun, a sound *as smart as that*  
 “ *of the cords of a guittar, or of a lyre, which*  
 “ *snap on being stretched.*” \* Philostrates,  
 missed

(*d*) Pausanias in Atticis.

\* Without presuming to offer an opinion concerning this enquiry, the *Translator* could not resist the insertion of the following extract from one of the notes to Blackwell's Letters on Mythology.—The real wandering Jew, Benjamin, one of the greatest travellers of the east, has given this curious description of the solar worship in his Itinerary. “There is a people, says he, “of the posterity of *Cbus*, addicted to the contemplation of the stars;  
 “ (perhaps

missed by his love of the marvellous, sets no bounds to his credulity (e). “The colossus of Memnon, though of stone, was gifted

“ (perhaps the people of whom Zephaniah says, chap. i. v. 5. *And them that worship the host of heaven on the house-tops*). *Translator*. They worship the sun as a god, and the whole country for half a mile round their town, is filled with great altars dedicated to him. By the dawn of morn they get up, and run out of town to wait the rising sun, to whom, on every altar there is a consecrated image, not in the likeness of a man, but of the solar orb, framed by magic art. These orbs, as soon as the sun rises, take fire and *resound with a great noise*, while every body there, men and women, hold censers in their hands, and all burn incense to the sun.” One would suspect these orbs to have been filled with some nitrous composition, and kindled by a collection of the rays. It nicely explains, not the shrine of *Moloch*, which is easily understood to be a portable tabernacle, such as was used by the Egyptians; but *the image of KIUN, the STAR of your gods, which you have made to yourselves*. Amos, chap. V. v. 26. Blackwell adds, this piece of idolatry committed by the *Jews* in the wilderness, soon after they had come out of Egypt, and on the borders of the sun’s votaries, the posterity of *Chus*, is not as I remember recorded in the Pentateuch.---The *Translator* will only take the liberty of suggesting, as matter of reflection, that VULCAN, who among the Phœnicians and Assyrians,

(e) Philostrates, Life of Appollonius of Thianes.



“ with speech. At the rising of the sun,  
 “ joyous to behold again his mother, he  
 “ saluted her in a pleasing voice. To-  
 “ wards the setting sun, he expressed his  
 “ sorrow in a sad and mournful tone. This  
 “ marble had also the property of shedding  
 “ tears at pleasure. It is pretended, that  
 “ echo answered to its voice, and imitated  
 “ perfectly the events of its joy and grief.”  
 Lastly, an ancient grammarian (*f*) says  
 that this statue was so marvellously com-  
 posed, that it saluted the king and the sun.

These passages, however, will never  
 induce us to believe that marble is ca-  
 pable of producing such a sound as is

Assyrians, was the same with *Saturn* or the *Sun*, and, as  
 Herodotus observes, was among the most ancient and  
 most honoured of the Egyptian deities, is derived from  
 BAL-KIUN or BUL-KAN, the LORD FIRE. May not  
 some combination be thence formed, respecting the  
 origin of this famous statue, as well as of the causes of  
 its voice, which is represented as similar to the snapping  
 of the cords of a musical instrument? In a country also,  
 abounding in nitre, like Egypt, an early discovery must  
 have been made of its explosive quality. *Translator.*

(*f*) Quoted by Jablonfski de Memnone.

attributed



attributed to Memnon. I know that the empty sarcophagus of the great chamber of the pyramid, resounds in a very sonorous manner, when struck with a stone or piece of metal ; but in whatever manner it might be disposed, the rays of the sun shining upon it, never could produce any such effect. Let us suppose, therefore, that the priests of Thebes had carried the mechanic art to the degree of perfection it has attained in our time, and that with as much ingenuity as Vaucanson, and other celebrated artists, they had fabricated a speaking head, the springs of which were so arranged, that it should pronounce vowels at the rising of the sun. Cambyfes destroyed this wonderful mechanism, by overturning the upper part of the statue ; and all the testimonies I have quoted, speak only of the trunk, which we still see at this day upon the pedestal. It is natural therefore to attribute the sound of the mutilated colossus to the artifices of the priests, who opposed this pretended miracle to the rising progress of Christianity. At all events, it is very certain that since the commencement of the fourth century of the church,

when the inhabitants of Egypt became Christians, no more has been said of the voice of *Amenophis*. [Does not the supposition of a nitrous preparation furnish an easier solution, and render the deceit as practicable on the trunk of the statue, as from the head? Translator.]

Let us try to discover the object of the priests in framing this vocal statue. We know that they consecrated their secondary deities to preserve the memory of their most important discoveries. *Amenophis* was undoubtedly created with the same intention. The comparison of some passages extracted from the ancients, may give weight to this conjecture. You recollect, Sir, that in the temple of Abydos, which Strabo(g) calls also *the temple of Memnon*, the priests repeated the seven vowels in the form of hymns, and that musicians were forbid to enter it. Demetrius of Phalerus confirms(b) this important fact: “ In Egypt the priests make use  
“ of the seven vowels instead of hymns, to  
“ celebrate the gods. They repeat them

(g) Strabo, lib. 17.

(b) Demetrius Phaler.



“ successively with such an accent as they  
 “ think proper. This continuity of sounds,  
 “ thus modulated, serves them instead of  
 “ the flute and the guittar, and produces an  
 “ agreeable melody.” The ancients, and  
 Jablonski (*i*), who has collected their testi-  
 monies with extreme attention, assure us  
 that these vowels were consecrated to the  
 seven planets, and that the statue of *Ame-  
 nophis* repeated them at a certain epocha.  
 Lucian (*k*) introduces Eucrates on the stage,  
 and makes him say: “ In Egypt I have heard  
 “ Memnon, utter, not according to custom,  
 “ *an insignificant* sound, but pronounce from  
 “ his mouth an oracle in seven sounds.”  
 This passage, probably, is no more than a  
 pleasantry of Lucian, but it is founded on  
 the general persuasion, that before Cambyfes  
 broke this Colossus, it pronounced the seven  
 vowels. The following dialogue written  
 in Greek on the left leg, is a fresh proof of  
 this:

(*i*) Jablonski de Memnon.

(*k*) Lucian, vol. 2.



A. *Cambyfes has mutilated me, me, this marble, formed after the image of the sun. I formerly possessed the melodious voice of Memnon. Cambyfes deprived me of the accents by which I expressed joy and grief.*

B. *What thou relatest is deplorable. Thy voice at present is obscure and incomprehensible. Wretched as thou art, I lament the misfortune that has reduced thee to this condition.*

The Egyptians regarded the spring equinox as the moment of the creation of the universe (*l*). “ They said, that at the  
 “ birth of the world, when the stars began  
 “ to move through space, the ram occupied  
 “ the middle of the heavens, the moon was in  
 “ the sign of the crab, the sun rose with  
 “ the lion, Mercury with the virgin, Venus  
 “ with the scales, Mars was in the scorpion,  
 “ Jupiter in the archer, and Saturn in  
 “ capricorn.” Syncellius (*m*) has discovered in an ancient Egyptian chronicle, that after a revolution of thirty-six thousand

(*l*) Macrobius, *Somnium Scipioris*.

(*m*) *Chronographia Syncellii*.

five hundred and twenty-five years, the zodiac would be restored to its first position, that is to say, that the first minute of the first degree of the equinoctial line would commence with the sign of the ram.

I leave the truth of these facts to the discussion of astronomers; but they announce at least, that in Egypt the attention of the learned and the people was chiefly directed to the spring equinox. *Amoun*, a symbolical divinity, was consecrated to it, and all the festivals they celebrated in his honour, related only to this interesting period. It was thence the astronomical year took date. It was thence, that, according to the priests, the seven planets recommenced their course, which they allegorically stiled *the cœlestial music*. It was at this moment also, that *Amenophis* pronounced the seven vowels which were the symbols of the planets, and which composed *the terrestrial music*. This famous statue may be called in sacred language *the cousin of Osiris* (n),

(n) Diodorus Siculus.

and *the image of the sun* (*o*), since it imitated on earth the office he performed in the heavens\*. The priests, by making him repeat the seven sounds, of which all languages are formed, and which marvellously paint our thoughts, were desirous of immortalizing the most beautiful of their discoveries, a discovery, which, according to Plato, could only be invented by a god, or by a divine mortal. Perhaps also, the shadow of this lofty colossus served to mark the instant of the equinox. Its name at least composed of *Ame Noupbi* (*p*), *to tell good tidings* (*q*), leads me to think so. The Greeks adopted these ancient ideas, in attributing to Apollo, who was no other than

(*o*) See the inscription I have mentioned.

\* This accords perfectly with the suggestion hazarded by the translator in his note respecting BAAL-KIUN, the LORD FIRE or the SUN, &c. *Translator.*

(*p*) Jablonski de Memnone.

(*q*) The sun attaining the Equator, promised the Egyptians a cessation of the southerly winds, and the approach of the inundation, which made them so anxiously attend to it.

the



the sun, the invention of the lyre and of music. The fictions of the poets observed this allegory, which painted the admirable harmony which reigns amongst the stars, and it was no longer heard of.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER.

## LETTER LXXI.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS WORSHIP OF THE EGYPTIANS.

*The Egyptians had only two dogmas in their religion, namely, that of a God the Creator, and that of the immortality of the soul; all the rest was allegorical. This religion was preserved pure and untainted within the temples; but the necessity they were under of using representative figures before the invention of letters, induced the people by degrees to adore them; which happened when the art of writing having become easy, they forgot the sense of the hieroglyphics. The gods of Laban were nothing but hieroglyphics, of which he had lost the meaning. They were to him the objects of worship, because they had been transmitted by his fathers, and he did not comprehend them. The same thing happened in Egypt.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**YOU** will now permit me, Sir, to make a few short reflections on the religion, the mysteries

· mysteries of which I have been endeavouring to lay before you. It contains only two dogmas, that of the infinite Spirit, author of the creation, and that of the immortality of the soul. The temples of *Phtha*, of *Neith*, and of *Cneph*, consecrated to the power, the wisdom, the goodness of the Supreme Being, are a demonstration of the first. The care with which they embalmed the bodies, the prayer repeated on the death of an Egyptian, furnish a proof of the second. The temple of *Cneph*, situated in the isle of Elephantinos, may be regarded as the most ancient of the country. In fact, before the Egyptians descended into the valley where the stagnant waters of the Nile formed impenetrable morasses, until they had drained them by the most prodigious labours, and rendered them fit for agriculture, they dwelt, according to Herodotus, on the mountains bordering on the cataracts. This monument, therefore, testifies, that amongst them the worship of the Creator preceded every other. We are justified even in asserting, that the priests retained it in its purity; for

men



men who had once risen by the sublime efforts of reason to the knowledge of one only God, or who have received it by tradition, could never, whilst they continued to compose an enlightened body, fall back into idolatry, which invariably implies a profound ignorance.

The rest of the Egyptian theology was purely allegorical. It embraced the course of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the most striking phænomena of nature. All these objects were personified in the sacred language of the priests; but far from making them the objects of adoration, they considered them only as admirable signs by which the Most High manifested his omnipotence to their senses. It is very probable that they at first taught this religion in its purity, but that it became insensibly corrupted, because the vulgar, accustomed to behold in the sanctuaries, the symbolical figures I have spoken of, and to offer sacrifices and thanksgiving to the Creator, at the periods when they were produced, forgot the invisible object of their veneration to  
worship

worship his works, hidden under these emblems §.

But why did not the priests extinguish this blind worship? Why did they hold the nation in subjection to the yoke of so deplorable a superstition? Doubtless this was not originally their design. The necessity of

§ A Christian writer, of abilities, makes the following *arch*, but pertinent answer to the despisers and too zealous calumniators of the ancient mythology. “ Suppose that amidst the calamities that frequently beset the  
“ *Jewish* nation, the book of their law, whose preservation is almost a miracle, had perished, and with it, as of  
“ other incidents, the memory of the Brazen Serpent,  
“ erected by their law-giver, had been irretrievably lost;  
“ what idea could we have now entertained of the serpents  
“ erected at this day as Talismans all over the east, in imi-  
“ tation of that divine pattern? We might have groped in  
“ the dark, attributed them perhaps to the power of *Mer-*  
“ *cury's Caduceus*, the magic rod with twining snakes,  
“ or to *Æsculapius's* badge of life and health, a single  
“ serpent wreathed round his staff; or to the mystical  
“ veneration of the Egyptians, who have most of these  
“ Talismans, for that reptile, which they still venerate,  
“ amidst all the strictness of the *Mahometan* doctrine concerning the unity of God and the preciseness of the  
“ *Christian Coptis*.” See Dr. Pocock, and our author, for an instance of this veneration for the serpent *Haridi*.—  
[Translator.]

expressing



expressing their ideas, previous to the invention of letters, by allegorical figures, the practice of confining them to the temples, accustomed the people to look on them as sacred. When the less difficult art of writing had made them entirely lose the meaning of these figures, they set no bounds to their veneration, and paid real homage to these symbols, which were only respected by their fathers. Then Osiris and Isis became tutelary divinities of Egypt; Serapis presided over the inundation; Apis foretold abundance; and the evil genius, Typhon, threatened the country with the most destructive calamities. These ideas, once deeply impressed on the minds of the people, it would have been difficult to eradicate them, without involving the total overthrow of the established worship: perhaps, also, (for men have been the same in all ages) the priests adroitly availed themselves of this ignorance to become the mediators between heaven and earth, and the sole dispensers of the divine oracles. But what should render men circumspect when they take upon them to condemn a learned body,



body, who published those wise laws which formed the glory of the Athenian code, and who erected a great number of durable and useful monuments, is that the Hebrews, though restricted to the ancient creed of Abraham by their elders and their prophets; no sooner found themselves in the desert, than taking advantage of the absence of Moses, who was waiting on the mountain the oracles of heaven, they compelled Aaron to cast a golden calf to serve them as a god; so true it is, that the view of sensible objects has more empire over the multitude than all the precepts of the profoundest wisdom. In short, if we reason impartially, we shall perceive that it is sometimes no less difficult than dangerous to shew mankind the truth. The principal philosophers of Greece and Rome, as well as the Egyptian Priests, acknowledged only one God. Mythology, in their eyes, was no other than a tissue of allegories, implying effects and natural causes. They bowed their head, however, before the statues of Jupiter, of Pallas, and of Venus. Socrates alone had the courage to lift up his

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voice against these fabulous divinities, and Socrates was compelled to swallow poison. Do you wish for another and more recent example of the danger of enlightening our fellow-creatures? Galileo proclaims a most important discovery to the world; and Galileo, after being obliged to ask pardon on his knees for having dared to tell the truth, was persecuted for the remainder of his life, and died in exile. It is doubtless very noble to be a martyr at this price, but few minds are equal to so sublime an effort.

These facts, with many others I could cite, prove that if the Egyptian priests were culpable for having concealed the light from a people whom it was their duty to instruct, we should not condemn them with too much rigour. For in these distant ages, when men spoke only by symbols, idolatry made a rapid progress, and it was almost impossible to destroy it, without overthrowing all religion. Recollect the gods of Laban stolen by Rebecca. These idols were hieroglyphics. Laban, who had probably lost the key of their real signification, adored them, because he had received them from his ancestors.

The

The same circumstance occurred in Egypt, where the hieroglyphics became the deities of the people, as soon as they had lost the comprehension of their real meaning. The sole means of extinguishing the superstition would have been by destroying them; but the priests, in making such a sacrifice, must have annihilated all their knowledge, and above all, their absolute controul over the minds of men. Now, if there are examples of a few individuals who have been generous enough to renounce the charms of dominion, from the pure dictates of humanity, we never yet have seen a body of men capable of so noble an act of virtue.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R LXXII.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE HIEROGLYPHICS.

*Hieroglyphics, the first-written language of man. Their antiquity more remote than the deluge. The meaning of them entirely lost under the princes of the lower empire. The recovery of it would render us acquainted with the language of the Coptis, or ancient vulgar Egyptian, by which we might attain to a knowledge of the sacerdotal dialect, used for explaining the hieroglyphics, and which is found on Egyptian monuments. A journey might likewise be attempted to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, inhabited by an Egyptian colony, which may have preserved their ancient language, their books, and the knowledge of hieroglyphics.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**HIEROGLYPHICS**, Sir, are the first written language of mankind. They are imitative

imitative and allegorical characters. They differ from letters in this, that the latter paint the thoughts by strokes and sounds, while the former represent them by figures. Their antiquity approaches the era of the deluge, if it be not prior to it; for the human race possessed the arts and sciences before that disaster, and since they were carved on stone, some of these monuments may have escaped the general ruin. Clemens of Alexandria, reckons a great number of books ascribed to *Thoth*, that is to say, approved by the academies, and published under that title. He even gives an account of some of them. The first, says he, contained the sacred hymns; the second, rules for the lives of Kings; the four following treated of astronomy, and the observations of the Egyptians; ten others contained the science of hieroglyphics, geography, and cosmography. A like number composed the code of laws, the religion, and the discipline of the priests. Lastly, the remaining six formed a complete treatise on medicine.

These works have undergone the fate of



many others, which a barbarian, whose name must be ever odious to posterity, made use of for six months to heat the baths of Alexandria; but the chief part of the Egyptian books were only copies. The originals remain engraven in a thousand places on the marbles of the temples, the obelisks, and the walls of the subterraneous passages. These are the monuments which the learned of all nations should endeavour to read. Manethon, a high-priest and sacred Egyptian writer, drew thence the history he wrote, under the reign of the Ptolemies. About three centuries after, Hermapion decyphered the obelisk of Heliopolis, transported by Augustus to the capital of the Roman empire. Since that author, no other has possessed the knowledge of hieroglyphics, or, if any one has been so gifted, his works have not reached us. Ammianus Marcellinus, who flourished under the Emperor Julian, declares, that in his time these characters were unintelligible to the Romans. Are there then no means of tearing off the veil that covers them, and of explaining the facts which they contain?

The



The man who should make this discovery would acquire immortal honour, by restoring to the arts, to science, and to history, so many discoveries now lost to the world. I do not pretend to this sublime effort, but shall content myself with exposing such ideas as the study of the ancients, and the frequently-repeated view of the monuments of Egypt, have given birth to, in my mind.

We know that the priests invented the letters which they called sacerdotal, and by means of which they translated the hieroglyphics: they were in universal use in the temples, and it was in those letters they wrote every thing respecting religion and the sciences. This partial dialect was intermediate between the hieroglyphics and the common language of the country, which fortunately is not lost; for the fact is, that it still exists in the books of the Coptis, with Greek and Arabic translations. It is to be found in a great number of manuscripts scattered through Egypt, and in the European libraries. In order to arrive, by means of it, at the knowledge of the sacer-

dotal dialect, we must discover either alphabets or passages common to the two languages. Now, we discover on the walls of the temples, and the souterrains, certain letters interspersed amongst the hieroglyphics, different from all those we are acquainted with, and which form probably part of the sacerdotal dialect. These are the characters we should endeavour to comprehend; for they would give us the key of the hieroglyphics, of which they are either the continuation or the interpretation. Perhaps some learned man, perfectly well versed in the Coptic, the Arabic, and the Hebrew, who would dedicate some years to the study of the monuments of ancient Egypt on the spot, might accomplish this noble enterprize §.

The

§ The scriptures furnish many proofs that the Jews brought the hieroglyphics with them out of Egypt, as well as the worship of the sun.—Ezekiel, in his vision, chap. viii. verses 9, 10, and 16, says, “ And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and beheld every form of creeping thing, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed on the wall



The following is another reflection with which I have been greatly struck, since I have travelled in this country. The Am-  
monians

“ wall round about.”---And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house, and behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east; and they worshipped the sun towards the east.

The Bishop of Clogher, in 1753, published a Journal from Grand Cairo to *Mount Sinai*, and back again, translated from a manuscript written by the Prefetto of Egypt, in company with the Missionaries *de propaganda fide* at Grand Cairo; spoken of by Dr. Pocock, and wherein mention is made of *great numbers* of ancient unknown characters in the wilderness of Sinai, at a place well known by the name of *Gebel-el-Mokatab*, or the *Written Mountains*. Likewise of the second stone struck by Moses, as related in the twentieth chapter of Numbers, is still lying there. The celebrated Mr. Edward Wortley Montague made this journey a few years since, expressly to view these objects, but declared himself *greatly disappointed* at finding them every where *interspersed* with figures of men and beasts, which convinced him that they were *not* written by the Israelites. With great deference to so ingenious an observer, is it not almost evident that these are neither more nor less than the Egyptian hieroglyphics; and that, from the passage above cited  
from



monians were an Egyptian colony. The priests who gave Jupiter Ammon his celebrity, had the same religion, and possessed the same knowledge with those of Egypt. Their God has ceased to utter his oracles, but his temple may still subsist; the country around it being extremely fertile, must be inhabited. This tribe not having experienced the revolutions which have overturned every thing in Egypt for upwards of two thousand years, may have retained its customs, its worship, and its native language. It is probable that the arts and sciences, no longer fostered by celebrity, have fallen into decay; but tradition may have preserved their memory. Sanchoniathon

from Ezekiel, as well as the Egyptian education of Moses, they *may have been* written by the Israelites, and that the characters *interspersed* with the figures of men and beasts, are the sacerdotal characters or dialect mentioned by our author? Mr. Montague had certainly no reasonable cause of *disappointment* at finding these stones covered with unknown characters; for what else was to be expected? But these very curious and highly interesting monuments are not for that reason the less deserving the attention of the learned, whether they be of Israelite or Egyptian origin.——[Translator.]

affirms

affirms that he derived his knowledge from the monuments of Egypt, and the books of the Ammonians. These books might still be found in the heart of the country which gave them birth, and possibly in the sanctuary of that ancient temple, protected by immense deserts. It should be towards this memorable spot, therefore, that a learned man should bend his course with any hope of success. The way that leads to it is beset with dangers. Alexander, followed by a numerous retinue, and by camels laden with water and provisions, was on the point of perishing with thirst. One of the armies of Cambyfes remained buried under the sands, and not a single soldier who composed it ever again beheld his country. But what is not an intrepid individual capable of performing, enlightened and enflamed by the love of science? Until some well-informed European, in short, shall have visited the temple of Ammon; until he has communicated to enlightened nations the treasures or the ruins it contains, it is natural to imagine that it is surrounded by an ancient Egyptian colony, who speak the mother tongue, and  
who

who have preserved the science of hieroglyphics. But what leads us to believe that this tribe is not extinct, is, that *the Oasis* which I have traced on the chart, are still inhabited in our days, and that the Bey of Girgê sends to the Oasis, which corresponds with that town, a Cachef to govern it. A traveller who should venture to traverse the deserts which separate the *Oasis* from the banks of the Nile, must infallibly find there monuments hitherto unknown, and infinitely curious.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER



## L E T T E R LXXIII.

*To Mr. LEMONNIER, Physician to the KING  
of FRANCE, First Physician to MONSIEUR,  
and MEMBER of the ACADEMY of SCI-  
ENCES.*

PLAN OF AN INTERESTING VOYAGE,  
AND WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN PER-  
FORMED.

*To take a survey of the great lake of Menzale  
in a boat. To examine the ruins in its  
isles. To visit Pelusium, Farama, the  
Oasis; to Siéne for the wells of the solstice,  
and to ascertain the ancient observation of  
the Egyptians. To pass through the in-  
terior parts of the Imen, with the view of  
procuring information and manuscripts.  
To go to Mecca; to stay there during the  
pilgrimage, and to bring thence and from  
Medina the works and information that  
are unknown in Europe. To travel over  
both*

*both Arabias, Petræa and Deserta; and after remaining some time at Damas to return to Europe.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairô.

**M**ANY things still remain, Sir, to be verified in Egypt. The following is the project I propose to the man who is desirous of being eminently useful to the arts and sciences, and to procure most valuable information for his country.

To survey in a boat the great Lake of Menzalé; to sound its outlets into the Mediterranean; to touch at the Isle of Tanis, where, according to the testimony of Arabian writers, and the natives of the country, there are vast ruins and antique marbles; to navigate to the extremity of the lake; to visit the remains of Pelusium, and of Farama, where the Arabian geographers describe a tomb, which must be that of the great Pompey.

To descend the canal of Sebennytyus, now called *Samanout*, as far as the borders of  
Lake

Lake Baurlos; to search for the ruins of the ancient Butis, where Herodotus places the sanctuary of Latona composed of the astonishing block of granite, the description of which I have given from that historian.

To discover the ruins of Naucrates, and of Sais, situated in the environs of Faoué, and those of Phacusa and Bubastis, where the famous canal of the Ptolemies passed.

To make a treaty with a tribe of wandering Arabs in order to penetrate to the Oasis of Ammon, at no great distance from Lake Mæris, and thence to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, so celebrated in antiquity; where there are hopes of recovering the ancient language of Egypt, and possibly the books which served to decypher the hieroglyphics.

To visit the three Oasïs, and describe the people and the monuments they contain, and which are lost to the world.

To stop eight or ten days at Sienna to discover the well of the solstice, and to verify the admirable observation of the ancient Egyptian priests, who, when the sun de-  
scribed



scribed the Tropic, saw his entire image at noon reflected on the water, which covered the bottom of this astronomical well. For eighteen hundred years past no European has verified any of these circumstances, or visited the places I have mentioned. These researches, however, suppose a man versed in antiquity, and thoroughly acquainted with the manners, the religion, and the language of the Arabs; such a man would not content himself with these limits to his travels. He might embark on the Red Sea in the capacity of a Mahometan merchant, survey all its ports, remain some months at Moka, where he would meet with precious manuscripts, then repair to Sannaa, the ancient capital of the Homerite Kings, who governed Yemen in the time of the Ptolemies; visit the interior parts of that rich country; join one of the caravans, and arrive at Mecca. He might remain there under the pretext of religion and of commerce; examine the library begun long before Mahomet; he might purchase, or procure copies of the most interesting manuscripts; and, after observing the worship,

the

the trade, and the monuments of that city, the antiquity of which is coeval with Ismael, he might set off with the caravan for Damascus, and repose himself after his fatigues in that beautiful capital of Syria, where he would procure likewise a great number of scarce books, &c. &c. &c.

The learned man who should succeed in this journey, the difficulties and the perils of which are innumerable, would furnish Europe with an absolutely new history of the nations of Arabia; for the interior of that country is as little known as the forests of New Zealand. He would procure a great quantity of interesting discoveries for natural history and geography, and might possibly have the good fortune to restore to Tacitus, to Livy, and to Diodorus, the complement of their immortal works, for they have all been translated by the Arabs.

After I had given to the publick a *translation of the Koran*, and *the life of Mahomet*, full of enthusiasm for the sciences, I did propose to undertake this journey. My project met with obstacles which prevented me from carrying it into execution, and



which gave me much uneasiness. But we must submit to the law of necessity. From that time I have totally abandoned the thoughts of it, and I confess that at present I should not have the courage to undertake it, because I know from experience the perils of such an enterprize, and that after a few years residence in my native country, to the climate of which I am again habituated, my health probably would not be proof a second time to the destructive heats of Africa and Arabia. But I hope that some European, inflamed with the love of glory, and wealthier, or more favoured than me, will immortalize himself by collecting the information and the manuscripts I have mentioned; and above all, by procuring for enlightened nations the unknown history of the people of Yemen, of Mecca, of Medina, and of the interior parts of Arabia.

Such is the knowledge I have been able to obtain by five years travels in the eastern world, and by the study of the ancients. May you, Sir, who, in the charming retirement, which your labours and your talents have enriched with all the rare plants of the world,



world, and a collection of valuable books, who afforded me the leisure necessary to arrange these Letters, published under the auspices of an august Prince, who honours you with his esteem; may you, Sir, derive some pleasure from their perusal, and regard them as a testimonial of my gratitude.

I have the honour to be,

With respect, SIR,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

SAVARY.

END OF THE LETTERS ON EGYPT.

the collection of valuable books  
who lived in the last century to  
the present time. The first part  
contains of an account of the books  
which were purchased by the  
Society in the year 1700, and  
to the present time. The second  
part contains a list of the books  
which were purchased by the  
Society in the year 1700, and  
to the present time.

I have the honor to be

Yours most obedient servant

John Smith

London

Printed by J. Smith















