

course with them in the way of commerce. The hatred and contempt which they entertained for others was returned tenfold upon themselves, for there is no debt so certainly and so liberally repaid as contempt; and hence we may reasonably suspect exaggeration in the picture which the ancient writers have drawn of their manners and morals. Under the influence of this caution, I have endeavored to describe them with impartiality, and believe I have assigned them as much merit as they truly deserve. I shall remark, in its proper place, the strong resemblance which, in many points, they bear to an Asiatic nation, known to Europeans only in modern times—I mean the Chinese.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE PHENICIANS—Alphabetic Writing—Sanchoniatho—Navigation—Tyre.

AMONG the ancient nations who first showed a considerable degree of civilization and advancement in the useful arts, the Phœnicians deserve particular notice. It seems to rest on as good authority as can be brought for the origin of any of the useful arts, that it is to this eastern people that the world is indebted for the invention of writing, and for the first attempts at commercial navigation. I do not think the hypothetical reasoning of M. de Voltaire has much weight when he argues that this people, being the earliest nation which practised commerce, must have first found the expediency of using certain arbitrary characters for the purpose of carrying on their traffic, and keeping regular accounts. The Mexicans and Peruvians were acquainted with navigation, and practised commerce, and were, in other respects, highly polished and refined; yet they knew nothing of writing. The fact of the Phœnicians having very early attained to the use of writing seems to rest on better evidence than hypothetical reasoning. It seems to be agreed among the best informed writers, that the fragments of Sanchoniatho, though their antiquity has been vaunted by Porphyry and Philo considerably beyond the truth, are yet to be regarded as the composition of the earliest of the profane writers, and of a much more ancient date than any works of a Greek author. Sanchoniatho is generally supposed to have been contemporary with Joshua, who died 1443 years before the birth of Christ,

and about 500 years before the cities of Attica were united under Theseus. What remains of the works of this author are some fragments preserved by Eusebius, which were translated from the Phœnician language into Greek by Philo of Byblos. They give an account of the genealogy of the Phœnician gods; of Cœlus and of Saturn, and other deities afterwards adopted by the Greeks; and of the cosmogony or origin of the world;—accounts which Sanchoniatho says he collected from the most ancient historical monuments. The authenticity of these fragments has been questioned, and they have been supposed to have been forged by Porphyry from enmity to the Christian religion, and a desire to show that the pagans could boast of writings of equal antiquity with the Books of Moses. But it has been well observed, in answer to this supposition, that if Porphyry, or any other person, had made the forgery for such a purpose, they would not have fabricated a mass of nonsense and absurdity, which would throw ridicule and disgrace on any system it was meant to support. Holding those fragments, therefore, as authentic, they prove that alphabetic writing was in use among the Phœnicians many ages before the Greeks had the smallest acquaintance with it.*

To the Phœnicians, all antiquity has joined in attributing the invention of navigation; or, at least, it seems an agreed point that they were the earliest among the nations of antiquity who made voyages for the sake of commerce. The Canaanites (for it is by that name that the Phœnicians are known in Scripture) were a powerful people in the days of Abraham. Their situation, occupying a narrow country on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and confined on all quarters towards the land by the surrounding tribes, naturally induced them to turn their attention to navigation. In the days of Abraham, we learn with some certainty that they had sailed to the coast of Greece; for Inachus, whose daughter Io they carried off from that country, is generally supposed contemporary with Abraham. When we come down to the time of the Hebrew Judges, we find the Phœnicians so far advanced as a commercial people as to be able to send colonies to distant quarters, and to form settlements for trade both on the European and Asiatic coasts. Among their first settlements were those of Cyprus and Rhodes. They then passed into Greece, into Sicily, and Sardinia, and thence into the southern parts of Spain. They did not confine their voyages to the Mediterranean Sea, but, passing the straits, established themselves in the Isle of Gades, and built a settlement anciently named Gadir, now Cadiz. Stretching southwards from the straits, they formed settlements

* See Gouquet's elaborate Dissertation on the Origin of Alphabetic Writing, "Orig. des Loix," t. i. l. ii. c. vi.; and a Dissertation on Sanchoniatho, by the same author, annexed to the first volume of the same work.

likewise on the western coast of Africa. Strabo informs us that they had made those settlements a short time after the Trojan war.

Sidon and ancient Tyre were among the most illustrious of the cities of antiquity. The latter owed its origin to a colony of the former, and does not seem to have existed in the days of Homer, who makes frequent mention of Sidon, but says nothing of Tyre. In the book of Joshua, Sidon is denominated *the great*; and the triumph of the Israelites, under that illustrious leader, which dispersed the Sidonians, was probably the occasion of their founding the city of Tyre, and transplanting themselves likewise into distant colonies. Among these, the most illustrious was Carthage, which came afterwards to be the most formidable rival of the Roman power; and which, of all the nations whom they finally subdued and overwhelmed, was the only one which had seriously threatened their own destruction.

Carthage was founded by Dido, the daughter of Belus, king of Tyre, 869 years before Christ, and 117 before the foundation of Rome by Romulus. The outlines of its history we shall afterwards briefly consider, when, in the course of the Roman history, we come to treat of the Punic wars.

Ancient Tyre seems to have risen to very great splendor within a short time from its foundation, and to have surpassed its parent state in opulence and extensive commerce. From the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets, we must judge that it was in their time one of the greatest and wealthiest cities of the universe;* and the profane historians accord in this respect with the sacred. Its prosperity, however, was of no long duration. The city was besieged in the year 580 before Christ, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and after a most obstinate resistance was taken in the thirteenth year of the siege, and utterly destroyed by the conqueror. The greatest part of the inhabitants had saved themselves by flight during this protracted war; and they built afterwards the city of New Tyre on an island at no great distance from the site of the ancient; a city which rivalled the former in magnitude and splendor, and the capture of which, by Alexander the Great (332 B. C.) after a siege of seven months, was one of the most brilliant exploits of that mighty conqueror.

The Tyrians were extremely industrious in the practice of many of the useful arts. They carried the working of metals to great perfection. The magnificence of the temple of Hercules at Tyre is celebrated by Herodotus, (l. ii., cap. xlv.) who saw it, and who was particularly struck with two columns, one of molten gold

* Isaiah wrote 768 years B. C., Jeremiah about 200 years afterwards; Ezekiel prophesied about 595 B. C. See Ezek. c. xxvii. and xxviii., where the wealth and commerce of Tyre are described in very glowing colors, and the particulars of its trade and manufactures minutely specified

and the other of emerald, which in the night-time shone with great splendor. The latter was probably of colored glass, as we have the authority of Pliny for attributing to the Phœnicians the invention of the making of glass; and M. Goguet conjectures, with some plausibility, that the column was hollow, and was lighted by a lamp put within it. The Tyrian purple is celebrated by all the ancient authors. The color was the pure juice of a particular kind of shell-fish, and being produced in very small quantities, came thence to be of great value. The moderns are not unacquainted with the fish, but make no use of it, as a richer color is produced at much less expense from the cochineal insect.

The Tyrian merchants were probably the first who imported to the Mediterranean, and thence into Europe, the commodities of India. They wrested from the Idumeans some commodious ports upon the Arabian Gulf, from which they had a regular intercourse with India; and having occupied Rhinocorara in the Lower Egypt, which is the nearest port in the Mediterranean to the Arabian Gulf, they had a short and commodious land carriage for their Indian merchandise, till it was thence re-shipped, and conveyed to Tyre.*

CHAPTER VI.

THE GRECIAN HISTORY.—Earliest period of the History of Greece—The Titans—Cecrops—Chronicle of Paros—Areopagus—Deluge of Deucalion—Council of the Amphictyons—Cadmus—Introduction of Letters.

THE History of Greece presents to an inquisitive mind a various and most instructive field of speculation; and happily, from that period when its annals become truly important, its history has been written by very able authors. The early antiquities of this country are, it is true, so disguised with fables, that it is extremely difficult to discover the truth. Yet, in order to understand and profit by the classical writers, especially the poets, it is necessary to have some acquaintance even with those fables; and we know with considerable precision the period when they cease to mix themselves with facts, and when authentic history commences.

* See a clear and rational account of the origin of the trade between Egypt, Arabia, and India, in Bruce's Travels, b. ii. ch. i.