

Chapter XLII: State Of The Barbaric World.--Part IV.

It was the boast of the Colchians, that their ancestors had checked the victories of Sesostris; and the defeat of the Egyptian is less incredible than his successful progress as far as the foot of Mount Caucasus. They sunk without any memorable effort, under the arms of Cyrus; followed in distant wars the standard of the great king, and presented him every fifth year with one hundred boys, and as many virgins, the fairest produce of the land. [76] Yet he accepted this gift like the gold and ebony of India, the frankincense of the Arabs, or the negroes and ivory of Aethiopia: the Colchians were not subject to the dominion of a satrap, and they continued to enjoy the name as well as substance of national independence. [77] After the fall of the Persian empire, Mithridates, king of Pontus, added Colchos to the wide circle of his dominions on the Euxine; and when the natives presumed to request that his son might reign over them, he bound the ambitious youth in chains of gold, and delegated a servant in his place. In pursuit of Mithridates, the Romans advanced to the banks of the Phasis, and their galleys ascended the river till they reached the camp of Pompey and his legions. [78] But the senate, and afterwards the emperors, disdained to reduce that distant and useless conquest into the form of a province. The family of a Greek rhetorician was permitted to reign in Colchos and the adjacent kingdoms from the time of Mark Antony to that of Nero; and after the race of Polemo [79] was extinct, the eastern Pontus, which preserved his name, extended no farther than the neighborhood of Trebizond. Beyond these limits the fortifications of Hyssus, of Apsarus,

of the Phasis, of Dioscurias or Sebastopolis, and of Pityus, were guarded by sufficient detachments of horse and foot; and six princes of Colchos received their diadems from the lieutenants of Caesar. One of these lieutenants, the eloquent and philosophic Arrian, surveyed, and has described, the Euxine coast, under the reign of Hadrian. The garrison which he reviewed at the mouth of the Phasis consisted of four hundred chosen legionaries; the brick walls and towers, the double ditch, and the military engines on the rampart, rendered this place inaccessible to the Barbarians: but the new suburbs which had been built by the merchants and veterans, required, in the opinion of Arrian, some external defence. [80] As the strength of the empire was gradually impaired, the Romans stationed on the Phasis were neither withdrawn nor expelled; and the tribe of the Lazi, [81] whose posterity speak a foreign dialect, and inhabit the sea coast of Trebizond, imposed their name and dominion on the ancient kingdom of Colchos. Their independence was soon invaded by a formidable neighbor, who had acquired, by arms and treaties, the sovereignty of Iberia. The dependent king of Lazica received his sceptre at the hands of the Persian monarch, and the successors of Constantine acquiesced in this injurious claim, which was proudly urged as a right of immemorial prescription. In the beginning of the sixth century, their influence was restored by the introduction of Christianity, which the Mingrelians still profess with becoming zeal, without understanding the doctrines, or observing the precepts, of their religion. After the decease of his father, Zathus was exalted to the regal dignity by the favor of the great king; but the pious youth abhorred the ceremonies of the Magi, and sought, in the palace of

Constantinople, an orthodox baptism, a noble wife, and the alliance of the emperor Justin. The king of Lazica was solemnly invested with the diadem, and his cloak and tunic of white silk, with a gold border, displayed, in rich embroidery, the figure of his new patron; who soothed the jealousy of the Persian court, and excused the revolt of Colchos, by the venerable names of hospitality and religion. The common interest of both empires imposed on the Colchians the duty of guarding the passes of Mount Caucasus, where a wall of sixty miles is now defended by the monthly service of the musketeers of Mingrelia. [82]

[Footnote 76: Herodot. l. iii. c. 97. See, in l. vii. c. 79, their arms and service in the expedition of Xerxes against Greece.]

[Footnote 77: Xenophon, who had encountered the Colchians in his retreat, (*Anabasis*, l. iv. p. 320, 343, 348, edit. Hutchinson; and Foster's Dissertation, p. liii.--lviii., in Spelman's English version, vol. ii.,) styled them. Before the conquest of Mithridates, they are named by Appian, (*de Bell. Mithridatico*, c. 15, tom. i. p. 661, of the last and best edition, by John Schweighaeuser. Lipsae, 1785 8 vols. largo octavo.)]

[Footnote 78: The conquest of Colchos by Mithridates and Pompey is marked by Appian (*de Bell. Mithridat.*) and Plutarch, (*in Vit. Pomp.*)]

[Footnote 79: We may trace the rise and fall of the family of Polemo, in Strabo, (l. xi. p. 755, l. xii. p. 867,) Dion Cassius, or Xiphilin, (p.

588, 593, 601, 719, 754, 915, 946, edit. Reimar,) Suetonius, (in Neron. c. 18, in Vespasian, c. 8,) Eutropius, (vii. 14,) Josephus, (Antiq. Judaic. l. xx. c. 7, p. 970, edit. Havercamp,) and Eusebius, (Chron. with Scaliger, Animadvers. p. 196.)]

[Footnote 80: In the time of Procopius, there were no Roman forts on the Phasis. Pityus and Sebastopolis were evacuated on the rumor of the Persians, (Goth. l. iv. c. 4;) but the latter was afterwards restored by Justinian, (de Edif. l. iv. c. 7.)]

[Footnote 81: In the time of Pliny, Arrian, and Ptolemy, the Lazi were a particular tribe on the northern skirts of Colchos, (Cellarius, Geograph. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 222.) In the age of Justinian, they spread, or at least reigned, over the whole country. At present, they have migrated along the coast towards Trebizond, and compose a rude sea-faring people, with a peculiar language, (Chardin, p. 149. Peyssonel p. 64.)]

[Footnote 82: John Malala, Chron. tom. ii. p. 134--137 Theophanes, p. 144. Hist. Miscell. l. xv. p. 103. The fact is authentic, but the date seems too recent. In speaking of their Persian alliance, the Lazi contemporaries of Justinian employ the most obsolete words, &c. Could they belong to a connection which had not been dissolved above twenty years?]

But this honorable connection was soon corrupted by the avarice and

ambition of the Romans. Degraded from the rank of allies, the Lazi were incessantly reminded, by words and actions, of their dependent state. At the distance of a day's journey beyond the Apsarus, they beheld the rising fortress of Petra, [83] which commanded the maritime country to the south of the Phasis. Instead of being protected by the valor, Colchos was insulted by the licentiousness, of foreign mercenaries; the benefits of commerce were converted into base and vexatious monopoly; and Gubazes, the native prince, was reduced to a pageant of royalty, by the superior influence of the officers of Justinian. Disappointed in their expectations of Christian virtue, the indignant Lazi reposed some confidence in the justice of an unbeliever. After a private assurance that their ambassadors should not be delivered to the Romans, they publicly solicited the friendship and aid of Chosroes. The sagacious monarch instantly discerned the use and importance of Colchos; and meditated a plan of conquest, which was renewed at the end of a thousand years by Shah Abbas, the wisest and most powerful of his successors. [84] His ambition was fired by the hope of launching a Persian navy from the Phasis, of commanding the trade and navigation of the Euxine Sea, of desolating the coast of Pontus and Bithynia, of distressing, perhaps of attacking, Constantinople, and of persuading the Barbarians of Europe to second his arms and counsels against the common enemy of mankind.

Under the pretence of a Scythian war, he silently led his troops to the frontiers of Iberia; the Colchian guides were prepared to conduct them through the woods and along the precipices of Mount Caucasus; and a narrow path was laboriously formed into a safe and spacious highway, for

the march of cavalry, and even of elephants. Gubazes laid his person and diadem at the feet of the king of Persia; his Colchians imitated the submission of their prince; and after the walls of Petra had been shaken, the Roman garrison prevented, by a capitulation, the impending fury of the last assault. But the Lazi soon discovered, that their impatience had urged them to choose an evil more intolerable than the calamities which they strove to escape. The monopoly of salt and corn was effectually removed by the loss of those valuable commodities. The authority of a Roman legislator, was succeeded by the pride of an Oriental despot, who beheld, with equal disdain, the slaves whom he had exalted, and the kings whom he had humbled before the footstool of his throne. The adoration of fire was introduced into Colchos by the zeal of the Magi: their intolerant spirit provoked the fervor of a Christian people; and the prejudice of nature or education was wounded by the impious practice of exposing the dead bodies of their parents, on the summit of a lofty tower, to the crows and vultures of the air. [85]

Conscious of the increasing hatred, which retarded the execution of his great designs, the just Nashirvan had secretly given orders to assassinate the king of the Lazi, to transplant the people into some distant land, and to fix a faithful and warlike colony on the banks of the Phasis. The watchful jealousy of the Colchians foresaw and averted the approaching ruin. Their repentance was accepted at Constantinople by the prudence, rather than clemency, of Justinian; and he commanded Dagisteus, with seven thousand Romans, and one thousand of the Zani, [8511] to expel the Persians from the coast of the Euxine.

[Footnote 83: The sole vestige of Petra subsists in the writings of Procopius and Agathias. Most of the towns and castles of Lazica may be found by comparing their names and position with the map of Mingrelia, in Lamberti.]

[Footnote 84: See the amusing letters of Pietro della Valle, the Roman traveler, (Viaggi, tom. ii. 207, 209, 213, 215, 266, 286, 300, tom. iii. p. 54, 127.) In the years 1618, 1619, and 1620, he conversed with Shah Abbas, and strongly encouraged a design which might have united Persia and Europe against their common enemy the Turk.]

[Footnote 85: See Herodotus, (l. i. c. 140, p. 69,) who speaks with diffidence, Larcher, (tom. i. p. 399--401, Notes sur Herodote,) Procopius, (Persic. l. i. c. 11,) and Agathias, (l. ii. p. 61, 62.) This practice, agreeable to the Zendavesta, (Hyde, de Relig. Pers. c. 34, p. 414--421,) demonstrates that the burial of the Persian kings, (Xenophon, Cyropaed. l. viii. p. 658,) is a Greek fiction, and that their tombs could be no more than cenotaphs.]

[Footnote 8511: These seem the same people called Suanians, p. 328.--M.]

The siege of Petra, which the Roman general, with the aid of the Lazi, immediately undertook, is one of the most remarkable actions of the age. The city was seated on a craggy rock, which hung over the sea, and communicated by a steep and narrow path with the land. Since the approach was difficult, the attack might be deemed impossible: the

Persian conqueror had strengthened the fortifications of Justinian; and the places least inaccessible were covered by additional bulwarks. In this important fortress, the vigilance of Chosroes had deposited a magazine of offensive and defensive arms, sufficient for five times the number, not only of the garrison, but of the besiegers themselves. The stock of flour and salt provisions was adequate to the consumption of five years; the want of wine was supplied by vinegar; and of grain from whence a strong liquor was extracted, and a triple aqueduct eluded the diligence, and even the suspicions, of the enemy. But the firmest defence of Petra was placed in the valor of fifteen hundred Persians, who resisted the assaults of the Romans, whilst, in a softer vein of earth, a mine was secretly perforated. The wall, supported by slender and temporary props, hung tottering in the air; but Dagisteus delayed the attack till he had secured a specific recompense; and the town was relieved before the return of his messenger from Constantinople. The Persian garrison was reduced to four hundred men, of whom no more than fifty were exempt from sickness or wounds; yet such had been their inflexible perseverance, that they concealed their losses from the enemy, by enduring, without a murmur, the sight and putrefying stench of the dead bodies of their eleven hundred companions. After their deliverance, the breaches were hastily stopped with sand-bags; the mine was replenished with earth; a new wall was erected on a frame of substantial timber; and a fresh garrison of three thousand men was stationed at Petra to sustain the labors of a second siege. The operations, both of the attack and defence, were conducted with skilful obstinacy; and each party derived useful lessons from the experience of

their past faults. A battering-ram was invented, of light construction and powerful effect: it was transported and worked by the hands of forty soldiers; and as the stones were loosened by its repeated strokes, they were torn with long iron hooks from the wall. From those walls, a shower of darts was incessantly poured on the heads of the assailants; but they were most dangerously annoyed by a fiery composition of sulphur and bitumen, which in Colchos might with some propriety be named the oil of Medea. Of six thousand Romans who mounted the scaling-ladders, their general Bessas was the first, a gallant veteran of seventy years of age: the courage of their leader, his fall, and extreme danger, animated the irresistible effort of his troops; and their prevailing numbers oppressed the strength, without subduing the spirit, of the Persian garrison. The fate of these valiant men deserves to be more distinctly noticed. Seven hundred had perished in the siege, two thousand three hundred survived to defend the breach. One thousand and seventy were destroyed with fire and sword in the last assault; and if seven hundred and thirty were made prisoners, only eighteen among them were found without the marks of honorable wounds. The remaining five hundred escaped into the citadel, which they maintained without any hopes of relief, rejecting the fairest terms of capitulation and service, till they were lost in the flames. They died in obedience to the commands of their prince; and such examples of loyalty and valor might excite their countrymen to deeds of equal despair and more prosperous event. The instant demolition of the works of Petra confessed the astonishment and apprehension of the conqueror. A Spartan would have praised and pitied the virtue of these heroic slaves; but the tedious warfare and alternate

success of the Roman and Persian arms cannot detain the attention of posterity at the foot of Mount Caucasus. The advantages obtained by the troops of Justinian were more frequent and splendid; but the forces of the great king were continually supplied, till they amounted to eight elephants and seventy thousand men, including twelve thousand Scythian allies, and above three thousand Dilemites, who descended by their free choice from the hills of Hyrcania, and were equally formidable in close or in distant combat. The siege of Archaeopolis, a name imposed or corrupted by the Greeks, was raised with some loss and precipitation; but the Persians occupied the passes of Iberia: Colchos was enslaved by their forts and garrisons; they devoured the scanty sustenance of the people; and the prince of the Lazi fled into the mountains. In the Roman camp, faith and discipline were unknown; and the independent leaders, who were invested with equal power, disputed with each other the preeminence of vice and corruption. The Persians followed, without a murmur, the commands of a single chief, who implicitly obeyed the instructions of their supreme lord. Their general was distinguished among the heroes of the East by his wisdom in council, and his valor in the field. The advanced age of Mermeroes, and the lameness of both his feet, could not diminish the activity of his mind, or even of his body; and, whilst he was carried in a litter in the front of battle, he inspired terror to the enemy, and a just confidence to the troops, who, under his banners, were always successful. After his death, the command devolved to Nacoragan, a proud satrap, who, in a conference with the Imperial chiefs, had presumed to declare that he disposed of victory as absolutely as of the ring on his finger. Such presumption was the

natural cause and forerunner of a shameful defeat. The Romans had been gradually repulsed to the edge of the sea-shore; and their last camp, on the ruins of the Grecian colony of Phasis, was defended on all sides by strong intrenchments, the river, the Euxine, and a fleet of galleys. Despair united their counsels and invigorated their arms: they withstood the assault of the Persians and the flight of Nacoragan preceded or followed the slaughter of ten thousand of his bravest soldiers. He escaped from the Romans to fall into the hands of an unforgiving master who severely chastised the error of his own choice: the unfortunate general was flayed alive, and his skin, stuffed into the human form, was exposed on a mountain; a dreadful warning to those who might hereafter be intrusted with the fame and fortune of Persia. [86] Yet the prudence of Chosroes insensibly relinquished the prosecution of the Colchian war, in the just persuasion, that it is impossible to reduce, or, at least, to hold a distant country against the wishes and efforts of its inhabitants. The fidelity of Gubazes sustained the most rigorous trials. He patiently endured the hardships of a savage life, and rejected with disdain, the specious temptations of the Persian court. [8611] The king of the Lazi had been educated in the Christian religion; his mother was the daughter of a senator; during his youth he had served ten years a silentary of the Byzantine palace, [87] and the arrears of an unpaid salary were a motive of attachment as well as of complaint. But the long continuance of his sufferings extorted from him a naked representation of the truth; and truth was an unpardonable libel on the lieutenants of Justinian, who, amidst the delays of a ruinous war, had spared his enemies and trampled on his allies. Their malicious information

persuaded the emperor that his faithless vassal already meditated a second defection: an order was surprised to send him prisoner to Constantinople; a treacherous clause was inserted, that he might be lawfully killed in case of resistance; and Gubazes, without arms, or suspicion of danger, was stabbed in the security of a friendly interview. In the first moments of rage and despair, the Colchians would have sacrificed their country and religion to the gratification of revenge. But the authority and eloquence of the wiser few obtained a salutary pause: the victory of the Phasis restored the terror of the Roman arms, and the emperor was solicitous to absolve his own name from the imputation of so foul a murder. A judge of senatorial rank was commissioned to inquire into the conduct and death of the king of the Lazi. He ascended a stately tribunal, encompassed by the ministers of justice and punishment: in the presence of both nations, this extraordinary cause was pleaded, according to the forms of civil jurisprudence, and some satisfaction was granted to an injured people, by the sentence and execution of the meaner criminals. [88]

[Footnote 86: The punishment of flaying alive could not be introduced into Persia by Sapor, (Brisson, de Regn. Pers. l. ii. p. 578,) nor could it be copied from the foolish tale of Marsyas, the Phrygian piper, most foolishly quoted as a precedent by Agathias, (l. iv. p. 132, 133.)]

[Footnote 8611: According to Agathias, the death of Gubazos preceded the defeat of Nacoragan. The trial took place after the battle.--M.]

[Footnote 87: In the palace of Constantinople there were thirty silentiaries, who were styled hastati, ante fores cubiculi, an honorable title which conferred the rank, without imposing the duties, of a senator, (Cod. Theodos. l. vi. tit. 23. Gothofred. Comment. tom. ii. p. 129.)]

[Footnote 88: On these judicial orations, Agathias (l. iii. p. 81-89, l. iv. p. 108--119) lavishes eighteen or twenty pages of false and florid rhetoric. His ignorance or carelessness overlooks the strongest argument against the king of Lazica--his former revolt. * Note: The Orations in the third book of Agathias are not judicial, nor delivered before the Roman tribunal: it is a deliberative debate among the Colchians on the expediency of adhering to the Roman, or embracing the Persian alliance.--M.]

In peace, the king of Persia continually sought the pretences of a rupture: but no sooner had he taken up arms, than he expressed his desire of a safe and honorable treaty. During the fiercest hostilities, the two monarchs entertained a deceitful negotiation; and such was the superiority of Chosroes, that whilst he treated the Roman ministers with insolence and contempt, he obtained the most unprecedented honors for his own ambassadors at the Imperial court. The successor of Cyrus assumed the majesty of the Eastern sun, and graciously permitted his younger brother Justinian to reign over the West, with the pale and reflected splendor of the moon. This gigantic style was supported by the pomp and eloquence of Isdigune, one of the royal chamberlains. His wife

and daughters, with a train of eunuchs and camels, attended the march of the ambassador: two satraps with golden diadems were numbered among his followers: he was guarded by five hundred horse, the most valiant of the Persians; and the Roman governor of Dara wisely refused to admit more than twenty of this martial and hostile caravan. When Isdigune had saluted the emperor, and delivered his presents, he passed ten months at Constantinople without discussing any serious affairs. Instead of being confined to his palace, and receiving food and water from the hands of his keepers, the Persian ambassador, without spies or guards, was allowed to visit the capital; and the freedom of conversation and trade enjoyed by his domestics, offended the prejudices of an age which rigorously practised the law of nations, without confidence or courtesy. [89] By an unexampled indulgence, his interpreter, a servant below the notice of a Roman magistrate, was seated, at the table of Justinian, by the side of his master: and one thousand pounds of gold might be assigned for the expense of his journey and entertainment. Yet the repeated labors of Isdigune could procure only a partial and imperfect truce, which was always purchased with the treasures, and renewed at the solicitation, of the Byzantine court. Many years of fruitless desolation elapsed before Justinian and Chosroes were compelled, by mutual lassitude, to consult the repose of their declining age. At a conference held on the frontier, each party, without expecting to gain credit, displayed the power, the justice, and the pacific intentions, of their respective sovereigns; but necessity and interest dictated the treaty of peace, which was concluded for a term of fifty years, diligently composed in the Greek and Persian languages, and attested by the seals

of twelve interpreters. The liberty of commerce and religion was fixed and defined; the allies of the emperor and the great king were included in the same benefits and obligations; and the most scrupulous precautions were provided to prevent or determine the accidental disputes that might arise on the confines of two hostile nations. After twenty years of destructive though feeble war, the limits still remained without alteration; and Chosroes was persuaded to renounce his dangerous claim to the possession or sovereignty of Colchos and its dependent states. Rich in the accumulated treasures of the East, he extorted from the Romans an annual payment of thirty thousand pieces of gold; and the smallness of the sum revealed the disgrace of a tribute in its naked deformity. In a previous debate, the chariot of Sesostris, and the wheel of fortune, were applied by one of the ministers of Justinian, who observed that the reduction of Antioch, and some Syrian cities, had elevated beyond measure the vain and ambitious spirit of the Barbarian. "You are mistaken," replied the modest Persian: "the king of kings, the lord of mankind, looks down with contempt on such petty acquisitions; and of the ten nations, vanquished by his invincible arms, he esteems the Romans as the least formidable." [90] According to the Orientals, the empire of Nushirvan extended from Ferganah, in Transoxiana, to Yemen or Arabia Faelix. He subdued the rebels of Hyrcania, reduced the provinces of Cabul and Zablestan on the banks of the Indus, broke the power of the Euthalites, terminated by an honorable treaty the Turkish war, and admitted the daughter of the great khan into the number of his lawful wives. Victorious and respected among the princes of Asia, he gave audience, in his palace of Madain, or Ctesiphon, to the ambassadors

of the world. Their gifts or tributes, arms, rich garments, gems, slaves or aromatics, were humbly presented at the foot of his throne; and he condescended to accept from the king of India ten quintals of the wood of aloes, a maid seven cubits in height, and a carpet softer than silk, the skin, as it was reported, of an extraordinary serpent. [91]

[Footnote 89: Procopius represents the practice of the Gothic court of Ravenna (Goth. l. i. c. 7;) and foreign ambassadors have been treated with the same jealousy and rigor in Turkey, (Busbequius, epist. iii. p. 149, 242, &c.) Russia, (Voyage D'Olearius,) and China, (Narrative of A. de Lange, in Bell's Travels, vol. ii. p. 189--311.)]

[Footnote 90: The negotiations and treaties between Justinian and Chosroes are copiously explained by Procopius, (Persie, l. ii. c. 10, 13, 26, 27, 28. Gothic. l. ii. c. 11, 15,) Agathias, (l. iv. p. 141, 142,) and Menander, (in Excerpt. Legat. p. 132--147.) Consult Barbeyrac, Hist. des Anciens Traites, tom. ii. p. 154, 181--184, 193--200.]

[Footnote 91: D'Herbelot, Bibliot. Orient. p. 680, 681, 294, 295.]

Justinian had been reproached for his alliance with the Aethiopians, as if he attempted to introduce a people of savage negroes into the system of civilized society. But the friends of the Roman empire, the Axumites, or Abyssinians, may be always distinguished from the original natives of Africa. [92] The hand of nature has flattened the noses of the negroes, covered their heads with shaggy wool, and tinged their skin with

inherent and indelible blackness. But the olive complexion of the Abyssinians, their hair, shape, and features, distinctly mark them as a colony of Arabs; and this descent is confirmed by the resemblance of language and manners the report of an ancient emigration, and the narrow interval between the shores of the Red Sea. Christianity had raised that nation above the level of African barbarism: [93] their intercourse with Egypt, and the successors of Constantine, [94] had communicated the rudiments of the arts and sciences; their vessels traded to the Isle of Ceylon, [95] and seven kingdoms obeyed the Negus or supreme prince of Abyssinia. The independence of the Homerites, [951 1] who reigned in the rich and happy Arabia, was first violated by an Aethiopian conqueror: he drew his hereditary claim from the queen of Sheba, [96] and his ambition was sanctified by religious zeal. The Jews, powerful and active in exile, had seduced the mind of Dunaan, prince of the Homerites. They urged him to retaliate the persecution inflicted by the Imperial laws on their unfortunate brethren: some Roman merchants were injuriously treated; and several Christians of Negra [97] were honored with the crown of martyrdom. [98] The churches of Arabia implored the protection of the Abyssinian monarch. The Negus passed the Red Sea with a fleet and army, deprived the Jewish proselyte of his kingdom and life, and extinguished a race of princes, who had ruled above two thousand years the sequestered region of myrrh and frankincense. The conqueror immediately announced the victory of the gospel, requested an orthodox patriarch, and so warmly professed his friendship to the Roman empire, that Justinian was flattered by the hope of diverting the silk trade through the channel of Abyssinia, and of exciting the forces of

Arabia against the Persian king. Nonnosus, descended from a family of ambassadors, was named by the emperor to execute this important commission. He wisely declined the shorter, but more dangerous, road, through the sandy deserts of Nubia; ascended the Nile, embarked on the Red Sea, and safely landed at the African port of Adulis. From Adulis to the royal city of Axume is no more than fifty leagues, in a direct line; but the winding passes of the mountains detained the ambassador fifteen days; and as he traversed the forests, he saw, and vaguely computed, about five thousand wild elephants. The capital, according to his report, was large and populous; and the village of Axume is still conspicuous by the regal coronations, by the ruins of a Christian temple, and by sixteen or seventeen obelisks inscribed with Grecian characters. [99] But the Negus [9911] gave audience in the open field, seated on a lofty chariot, which was drawn by four elephants, superbly caparisoned, and surrounded by his nobles and musicians. He was clad in a linen garment and cap, holding in his hand two javelins and a light shield; and, although his nakedness was imperfectly covered, he displayed the Barbaric pomp of gold chains, collars, and bracelets, richly adorned with pearls and precious stones. The ambassador of Justinian knelt; the Negus raised him from the ground, embraced Nonnosus, kissed the seal, perused the letter, accepted the Roman alliance, and, brandishing his weapons, denounced implacable war against the worshipers of fire. But the proposal of the silk trade was eluded; and notwithstanding the assurances, and perhaps the wishes, of the Abyssinians, these hostile menaces evaporated without effect. The Homerites were unwilling to abandon their aromatic groves, to explore a

sandy desert, and to encounter, after all their fatigues, a formidable nation from whom they had never received any personal injuries. Instead of enlarging his conquests, the king of Aethiopia was incapable of defending his possessions. Abrahah, [9912] the slave of a Roman merchant of Adulis, assumed the sceptre of the Homerites,; the troops of Africa were seduced by the luxury of the climate; and Justinian solicited the friendship of the usurper, who honored with a slight tribute the supremacy of his prince. After a long series of prosperity, the power of Abrahah was overthrown before the gates of Mecca; and his children were despoiled by the Persian conqueror; and the Aethiopians were finally expelled from the continent of Asia. This narrative of obscure and remote events is not foreign to the decline and fall of the Roman empire. If a Christian power had been maintained in Arabia, Mahomet must have been crushed in his cradle, and Abyssinia would have prevented a revolution which has changed the civil and religious state of the world.

[100] [1001]

[Footnote 92: See Buffon, *Hist. Naturelle*, tom. iii. p. 449. This Arab cast of features and complexion, which has continued 3400 years (Ludolph. *Hist. et Comment. Aethiopic.* l. i. c. 4) in the colony of Abyssinia, will justify the suspicion, that race, as well as climate, must have contributed to form the negroes of the adjacent and similar regions. * Note: Mr. Salt (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 458) considers them to be distinct from the Arabs--"in feature, color, habit, and manners."--M.]

[Footnote 93: The Portuguese missionaries, Alvarez, (Ramusio, tom. i. fol. 204, rect. 274, vers.) Bermudez, (Purchas's Pilgrims, vol. ii. l. v. c. 7, p. 1149--1188,) Lobo, (Relation, &c., par M. le Grand, with xv. Dissertations, Paris, 1728,) and Tellez (Relations de Thevenot, part iv.) could only relate of modern Abyssinia what they had seen or invented. The erudition of Ludolphus, (Hist. Aethiopica, Francofurt, 1681. Commentarius, 1691. Appendix, 1694,) in twenty-five languages, could add little concerning its ancient history. Yet the fame of Caled, or Ellisthaeus, the conqueror of Yemen, is celebrated in national songs and legends.]

[Footnote 94: The negotiations of Justinian with the Axumites, or Aethiopians, are recorded by Procopius (Persic. l. i. c. 19, 20) and John Malala, (tom. ii. p. 163--165, 193--196.) The historian of Antioch quotes the original narrative of the ambassador Nonnosus, of which Photius (Bibliot. Cod. iii.) has preserved a curious extract.]

[Footnote 95: The trade of the Axumites to the coast of India and Africa, and the Isle of Ceylon, is curiously represented by Cosmas Indicopleustes, (Topograph. Christian. l. ii. p. 132, 138, 139, 140, l. xi. p. 338, 339.)]

[Footnote 9511: It appears by the important inscription discovered by Mr. Salt at Axoum, and from a law of Constantius, (16th Jan. 356, inserted in the Theodosian Code, l. 12, c. 12,) that in the middle of the fourth century of our era the princes of the Axumites joined to

their titles that of king of the Homerites. The conquests which they made over the Arabs in the sixth century were only a restoration of the ancient order of things. St. Martin vol. viii. p. 46--M.]

[Footnote 96: Ludolph. Hist. et Comment. Aethiop. l. ii. c. 3.]

[Footnote 97: The city of Negra, or Nag'ran, in Yemen, is surrounded with palm-trees, and stands in the high road between Saana, the capital, and Mecca; from the former ten, from the latter twenty days' journey of a caravan of camels, (Abulfeda, Descript. Arabiae, p. 52.)]

[Footnote 98: The martyrdom of St. Arethas, prince of Negra, and his three hundred and forty companions, is embellished in the legends of Metaphrastes and Nicephorus Callistus, copied by Baronius, (A. D 522, No. 22--66, A.D. 523, No. 16--29,) and refuted with obscure diligence, by Basnage, (Hist. des Juifs, tom. viii. l. xii. c. ii. p. 333--348,) who investigates the state of the Jews in Arabia and Aethiopia. * Note: According to Johanssen, (Hist. Yemanae, Praef. p. 89,) Dunaan (Ds Nowas) massacred 20,000 Christians, and threw them into a pit, where they were burned. They are called in the Koran the companions of the pit (socii foveae.)--M.]

[Footnote 99: Alvarez (in Ramusio, tom. i. fol. 219, vers. 221, vers.) saw the flourishing state of Axume in the year 1520--luogomolto buono e grande. It was ruined in the same century by the Turkish invasion. No more than 100 houses remain; but the memory of its past greatness is

preserved by the regal coronation, (Ludolph. Hist. et Comment. 1. ii. c. 11.) * Note: Lord Valentia's and Mr. Salt's Travels give a high notion of the ruins of Axum.--M.]

[Footnote 9911: The Negus is differently called Elesbaan, Elesboas, Elisthaeus, probably the same name, or rather appellation. See St. Martin, vol. viii. p. 49.--M.]

[Footnote 9912: According to the Arabian authorities, (Johannsen, Hist. Yemanae, p. 94, Bonn, 1828,) Abrahah was an Abyssinian, the rival of Ariathus, the brother of the Abyssinian king: he surprised and slew Ariathus, and by his craft appeased the resentment of Nadjash, the Abyssinian king. Abrahah was a Christian; he built a magnificent church at Sana, and dissuaded his subjects from their accustomed pilgrimages to Mecca. The church was defiled, it was supposed, by the Koreishites, and Abrahah took up arms to revenge himself on the temple at Mecca. He was repelled by miracle: his elephant would not advance, but knelt down before the sacred place; Abrahah fled, discomfited and mortally wounded, to Sana--M.]

[Footnote 100: The revolutions of Yemen in the sixth century must be collected from Procopius, (Persic. 1. i. c. 19, 20,) Theophanes Byzant., (apud Phot. cod. lxxiii. p. 80,) St. Theophanes, (in Chronograph. p. 144, 145, 188, 189, 206, 207, who is full of strange blunders,) Pocock, (Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 62, 65,) D'Herbelot, (Bibliot. Orientale, p. 12, 477,) and Sale's Preliminary Discourse and Koran, (c. 105.) The

revolt of Abrahah is mentioned by Procopius; and his fall, though clouded with miracles, is an historical fact. Note: To the authors who have illustrated the obscure history of the Jewish and Abyssinian kingdoms in Homeritis may be added Schultens, *Hist. Joctanidarum*; Walch, *Historia rerum in Homerite gestarum*, in the 4th vol. of the Gottingen Transactions; Salt's Travels, vol. ii. p. 446, &c.: Sylvestre de Sacy, vol. i. Acad. des Inscip. Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliter*; Johannsen, *Hist. Yemanae*; St. Martin's notes to Le Beau, t. vii p. 42.--M.]

[Footnote 1001: A period of sixty-seven years is assigned by most of the Arabian authorities to the Abyssinian kingdoms in Homeritis.--M.]