XXIV. *An Account of the Caves of Cannara, Ambola, and Elephanta, in the East Indies; in a Letter from Hector Macneil, Esq. then at Bombay, to a Friend in England, dated 1783. Communicated by the Rev. Mr. Gregory, F.A.S.*

Read June 29, 1786.

THE caves of Salfet and Elephanta have of late attracted the notice of the virtuosi at this place, and are now the general topic of conversation.

As nothing has hitherto appeared on this subject, except a short and imperfect description of the cave at Elephanta, I shall attempt to give you some idea of what filled me with astonishment during a late excursion to Salfet, undertaken chiefly with a design to explore those ancient monuments of genius and superstition.

The island of Salfet lies in the same latitude with Bombay, and is separated from it only by a narrow arm of the sea at the N. W. extremity of the island. It is considerably larger than Bombay, and excels it as much in beauty as it does in all kinds of animal and vegetable productions, which are found here in great abundance and perfection. The principal town is Tarmah, at which place the island may be said to join the Continent, being separated only by a small inlet of the sea, which at low water admits of your passing over on foot without any in-

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convenience.

convenience. Tarmah formerly belonged to the Portuguese, who built the present fort, a place of considerable strength, and lately in the hands of the Mahrattas, from whom we took it at the commencement of the war with that nation, but not without some loss, as four hundred grenadiers were killed in the attack before it capitulated.

Accompanied by some gentlemen of the place, I set out from Tarmah early in the morning for the caves of Cannara; a spot as singular for the production of art, as for the lonely romantic scenes of nature that surround it. To this place, which is at the N. W. part of the island, the governor and most of the gentlemen of Bombay go annually, on a party of pleasure, to hunt the wild boar, and royal tiger, both of which are found here in great plenty, the woods and thick jungles [a] affording excellent shelter for beasts of prey. For near three miles round the caves, the country, from its not having hitherto been cleared, is a continued wilderness, beautifully diversified with hill and dale, rocks and murmuring rills. The variety likewise of tree and shrub is peculiarly striking, and furnishes a noble source of entertainment to the lover of nature. The mango-tree, one of the richest and most grateful in India, grows here in such plenty, that you meet with it every twenty or thirty yards. The foliage of this tree is thick and umbrageous, and of the deepest green, and when the fruit, which is of the finest golden colour, is in season, you may easily conceive what a charming object is presented to the eye in a country where the heat renders fruits and shade so desirable. In our journey on foot (for the narrowness and ruggedness of the road obliged us to leave our Palanquins above two miles from the caves) I had an opportunity for an instant of seeing and hearing the Mangoe-bird, so remarkable for the vivid tints of its plumage, particularly that which

[a] A kind of small Bamboo.

resembles

resembles the colour of the fruit, from which it takes its name. The notes of this beautiful bird, though simple, were plaintive and melodious. One of the gentlemen, with the true spirit of a sportsman, soon put an end to my pleasure by firing at it, but without effect; a circumstance I could not but regret, as we never afterwards had an opportunity of seeing another. Proceeding up a gentle, though rugged ascent, we about noon arrived at the caves, or in other words, at the base of a steep hill, about a quarter of a mile in circumference, composed of a solid mass of rock, out of which all the caves are formed. From the base to the top of this rock cannot be less than one hundred yards perpendicular height; you ascend a considerable part of the way by different flights of steps cut out of the rock, which likewise lead to a variety of caves, that like so many stories and rooms of a large house occupy the different parts of the mountain, till you arrive at the summit, which commands a charming prospect of the adjacent country.

On my first approach to this singular and astonishing scene, I was filled with new wonder at every step; palaces, statues, giants, monsters, and deities seemed as if starting from the bowels of the earth to open day. From the appellation of *cave*, I was previously led to conceive that I should be obliged to explore my way through dark and subterraneous passages cut in the rock; judge then my surprise when, instead of these, I found myself in a kind of street, where, on one hand, a range of lofty domes ornamented with porticos, pillars, arches, and human figures burst upon the eye at one view, and presented a scene more like enchantment than reality. It would be an endless task to me, and I am afraid a tiresome one to you, were I to describe the different caves through which we passed, and which almost entirely surround the mountain. I shall therefore confine myself to a description of the grand cave or *temple*, which indeed surpasses

surpasses all the others, as much in extent as in beauty and ornament.

The entrance to this wonderful excavation is by two princely gateways, highly ornamented with a variety of figures now almost quite effaced by the hand of time. The first of these leads to an open court, of about twenty feet square, with two pillars, on which are represented, in basso relievo, a lion and a tiger. To the right are two urns, executed in a very neat manner, and perfectly fresh. At the opposite end of this court is an apartment cut out of the rock, in which are five human figures in alto relievo, two of which are much larger than the life, with a number of small figures, like angels, hovering over them; a variety of other figures, in the attitude of devotion, surround the pedestal on which the two large ones already mentioned stand. The other gate leads to what in this country is called a *veranda* or *feranda*, which is a kind of piazza, or landing place, before you enter the hall or inner apartments. This generally surrounds the whole house; and, from its being open at the sides, affords the coolest, and consequently the most pleasant place to sit or to walk in during the heats of the day. These verandas are both above and below, according to the construction of the house. The one we have just now mentioned extended no farther than the breadth of the cave, or great hall, and might be about twenty-eight feet in length, and fifteen in breadth. You enter it by two pillars ornamented with a vast number of female figures nearly effaced. Two large windows perforate the outer wall of this veranda, which, with the entrance, give light and cheerfulness to the whole. At each end, in a kind of nich, stand two immense male figures in alto relievo, nearly of the same dimensions, and in similar attitudes and dress. The height of these gigantic statues, as nearly as I could judge by the measurement of a long pole, was about twenty-two or twenty-three feet,

feet, and (except the shoulders which appeared to me rather too broad) the whole figure is very well proportioned. The little finger measured exactly fifteen inches; the length of the foot from the heel thirty-five inches, the extended hand from the wrist thirty-seven inches, the leg from the foot four feet three inches and a half, the thigh five feet, and from the pedestal to the upper part of the kneepan five feet nine inches. The attitude of these figures is erect: the right arm extended nearly parallel to the side; the hand open, with the palm uppermost; the left arm raised in an easy elegant position to the top of the shoulder, where the hand holds the end of a garment which descends from the left breast almost to the feet in loose folds, whence it seems to be brought round the back to the left shoulder, where it is secured as already described. The countenances of both these figures are placid and grave, and except the nose, which is handsome, approaching something to the Cafres, particularly in the under lip, which, like that of all the other figures, is thick and prominent; the eye downcast, the forehead low, the face broad, and the whole colour resembling much more the English than the Gentoo. The heads of both were ornamented with an infinite number of small curls, but whether intended as a representation of natural hair, or as a crown or cap, I could not positively determine: the ears were large, in which were ear-rings of a monstrous size, pendent to and apparently resting on the shoulders. Round the head of each a variety of small figures, in an incumbent posture, hold something in their hands resembling flowers and festoons, many of which are elegantly executed.

On each side of the door leading to the great hall (which, like the others, faces the east) two groups of male and female figures principally occupy the opposite side of the veranda which fronts you on your first entrance. These groups consist each of
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two males and two females, which, from their attitudes, and the different instruments in their hands, I should suppose to be dancers. The first group on the left, or S. W. end of the veranda, represents a female, holding something which I could not make out, in her right hand above her shoulder; her left arm extended round the back of the male, whose right elbow rests on the curve of the woman's arm. The man holds in his right hand an instrument similar to that held by the woman, and raised in the same manner above the shoulder. To the left of the man another woman holds in her right hand, pendent to her side, something resembling a bell or cymbal, her left arm like the other, round the back of the man on her left, who is nearly in the same position with the other. The dress of the female consists of a kind of cap, flat to the head, with very large earrings resting on the shoulder. They are naked to the middle, round which is a cloth or garment tied, which descends behind about the middle of the thigh: the ends of the garment tied fold over the parts of generation; the legs remain bare; the ankles and wrists ornamented with large rings or *bangles* single and double, the only part of dress that is similar to the present fashion of the inhabitants of India. The breasts of these, like all the other female figures are remarkably large and globular, the belly prominent, and the lower part of the waist unnaturally small. The men are likewise naked to the hips, with a garment or cloth similar to that of the females tied in a knot at the left hip, the ends of which hang near half down the thigh, the parts of generation seemingly exposed, but from the ravages of time I could not be positive. The heads of each are highly ornamented with a kind of bonnet or cap, on the right side of which an additional ornament is affixed resembling a bunch of flowers. The second group consists of the same number of figures male and female, and in much the same attitude and dress,

dress, with this difference, that from the places being reversed, the left arm of the man embraces the woman with the hand resting on her left shoulder; the position of the man's legs likewise differs in this respect, that, instead of the left foot being turned out in a horizontal direction, both feet remain parallel to each other. The countenances of the figures in these groups cannot now be distinguished so as to form a just idea of their expression. From the attitudes, however, which are evidently amorous, and some remaining traces of feature, we are authorised to suppose they were animated and expressive of joy, though indeed all the other figures in the veranda seem to contradict the supposition. Immediately above the two groups just described, another row of figures, extending nearly the whole length of the veranda, sit cross-legged in the attitude of devotion, with the hand, like many of the figures in the other caves, in a particular position, which I afterwards discovered was the act of counting the beads of a rosary.

On the left of the large figure at the N. W. end of the veranda stands, in a nich, a small female figure in a pensive, melancholy attitude; the head inclined to the left shoulder; the eye downcast; the right hand holding the instrument already mentioned, the left hanging in a negligent manner by her side. Near to her on the left, in another nich, stands a male figure bending a little forward in the attitude of advice or persuasion; the head ornamented with a kind of crown terminating in a point; his right hand extended, the forefinger and thumb holding a string of beads; the left hand, like most of the other figures, holds the folds of a garment over the left shoulder. On the right of the large figure, in a nich, stands a male figure, his right hand open and pendant to his side, his body inclined a little to the left, and his countenance highly expressive of sorrow. At the other end of the veranda, immediately opposite, stands a

male figure, almost similar in attitude and appearance. There are a number of other figures in this veranda, but so defaced by time that I could make nothing of them. From what has already been described, you may however form some idea of the uncommon labour bestowed on these pieces of sculpture cut out in alto-relievo from a rock of the hardest nature, many of which figures, at this distant period, appear as fresh and entire as if just from the hands of the artist. But the most extraordinary instance of human labour and art remains yet to be described, namely, the cave or grand hall of this beautiful excavation.

The entrance to this magnificent apartment is at a spacious door cut through the wall that forms the inner side of the veranda already mentioned. Over this door, and above the top of the veranda, at the height I should suppose of near thirty feet from the ground, are five large windows or doors cut out so as nearly to illuminate the whole cave. The center window of these five is an arch or complete semicircle, the extreme height of which I think cannot be less than nine or ten feet. The other four are of the usual parallelogramic form, carried down as low as the floor of the upper veranda, or in other words the top of the lower one. On entering the great hall there is a passage of about four feet, that goes quite round between the walls and the colonade of pillars, which, to the number of thirty-four, ornament this spacious chamber, and support the incumbent weight of the mountain. The first four extend from right to left in a straight line, the two first of which are regular octagons, without base, or capital; the other two have seven equal sides with the eighth projecting half the diameter of the pillar. On the left side of the hall are eleven pillars different from any known order, the pedestals and capitals ornamented with a variety of small figures in basso relievo, representing principally elephants

elephants with men and women riding on their backs, very well executed, but much decayed; the eighth pillar has a tree, with an open book at the root. On the right of the hall there are only six pillars with capitals and bases; they are likewise highly ornamented; but the figures almost intirely effaced; the first pillar, however, furnishes us with the representation of a tiger, a horse, and two men, executed in so masterly a manner, that we cannot help ascribing particular excellence to the rest. The tiger is couchant, and just ready to seize on his prey; but the terror and attitude of the horse is equal to any thing of the kind I ever saw; one of the men seems as if rushing in between the horse and danger, his countenance and attitude highly expressive of fortitude. The other pillars, thirteen in number, are plain octagons, and surround the circular extremity of the hall, where a large solid mass of stone, in form of a pagoda, or mausoleum, stands immediately in the center. All round this pagoda, like those now found in the country, are holes cut to contain lamps used during particular ceremonies. The length of the hall, from each end of the colonade, is above sixty feet, and about twenty in breadth; the full dimensions of the whole, including the passage beforementioned, must therefore be sixty-eight by twenty-eight. The height, from the ground to the highest part of the roof (which is arched in a most masterly style), cannot be less than forty feet. Quite round the walls, where the roof commences, there are places cut out of the rock as if to support the ends of beams or rafters; and from the regular marks all over the roof, it is pretty evident it was formerly covered with wood, perhaps curiously carved like the pagodas every where found in India. Immediately under these are two rows of square holes that likewise extend quite round, exactly parallel to each other, in which the ends of pieces of timber still

It is impossible to speak decisively on these appearances. From what has been just mentioned, it is clear that some wooden work must have projected from the walls all round the apartment; and this supposition is still strengthened by the formation of the whole excavation. From the large semicircular window or door in front being exactly in a line with the holes, it is natural to conclude that there must have been a communication between this place and the upper veranda; nor can I help thinking that a communication likewise took place between the under and upper stories, though not the smallest traces of it are any where to be found. To suppose that the upper part of this hall was floored would, I think, be a bad compliment to those who have furnished us with such instances of taste and genius, as it must have intirely destroyed the grandeur of the whole, and wrapt the under part, with all its beauties, in utter darkness. I am therefore rather inclined to think, that a wooden gallery extended quite round, and that the communication between the under and upper stories must have been by a wooden stair-case either from without or from some part of the hall. Be this as it may, the grand cave of Cannara must ever be considered by the man of taste as an object of beauty and sublimity, and by the antiquary and philosopher as one of the most valuable monuments of antiquity.

Having partly quenched my thirst of curiosity at this inexhaustible fountain, and examined the three adjoining caves (which are likewise curious relics of genius and devotion); we repaired to the other parts of the mountain, through an astonishing number of excavations of various forms and dimensions. Many of these are between fifty and sixty feet square, decorated with pillars and verandas; but all different from the four other caves, being low in the roof, with few or no statues. They are almost all furnished with a well of excellent water each,

each, cut into the rock, generally at the end of the verandas, or some inner apartment secured from the rays of the sun, which renders it delightfully cool and grateful in a country like India. These excavations, as I before remarked, have communications to each other by steps cut in the sides of the rock, and extend to the opposite side of the stream that partly surrounds the base of the mountain, and which during the rainy season, I should suppose, is swelled into a considerable and rapid river. Most of these caves consist of one large apartment, with a number of small ones of different dimensions adjoining; which circumstance, together with many others, convinces me that this could not have been a place of mere worship, as is generally supposed, but the regular and fixed habitation of a set of people who perhaps lived here for ages. The different caves through which we passed (and these were far from constituting the whole number) might contain some thousands of inhabitants without any inconvenience, if occupied in the same manner as the present habitations of the people in this country. That such an immense number of excavations, divided into a variety of different apartments, and carefully supplied with such plenty of water, were executed merely for the purpose of religious worship, is, I must confess, to me incredible. Besides, few of these caves, except the four already mentioned, bear the most distant marks of devotion; those indeed give evident proofs of it, particularly the three which, with the grand cave, form a street or row on your first entrance, and which greatly excell all the others in magnificence, ornament, and beauty. They have each a pagoda (the invariable mark of worship in this country), round which a vast number of male and female figures either kneel or stand in a suppliant posture; their eyes downcast, their countenances melancholy, with hands folded to their breasts, or counting a string of beads. All these figures occupy the front or the veranda

randa of the cave, and strike the eye forcibly on the first approach. They are extremely well worth the attention of the curious; but, as my time was limited, and the grand cave becoming an object of more importance, I contented myself with a particular inspection of that only.

After exploring the different caverns of this wonderful rock, and viewing from the summit the beauties of the surrounding country, we returned to the grand cave, where we were happy to find our servants arrived with the provender. The cloth was instantly laid in the south window of the veranda, which furnished a table, if not the most polished, perhaps the most ancient in the world. Exercise, good spirits, keen appetites, and novelty of situation, gave new charms to the feast; the cold fowls, ham, and fallad, seemed better than any thing of the kind we had met with before; while good wine, excellent water, and social mirth, crowned the most delicious banquet I ever enjoyed. After dinner some of the company went to sleep, and others to the woods for sport. I snatched the opportunity to make the few remarks which I now send you, and which I heartily regret are so inadequate to the subject. They however may serve as the outlines of a beautiful picture, which you may easily shade and colour by the help of a little imagination.

Returning to Tannah, we remained a few days viewing the different curiosities about the place, and then set off for *Ambola*, a village about half way between Tannah and the other extremity of the island, at which place the gentlemen of Salfet have erected a small neat chamber, for the accommodation of those who go to see the cave. During our passage thither, through a country delightfully wooded, and diversified with hill and dale, we were met by above a hundred girls, carrying on their heads to market baskets of dried fish, which in this country are called *bumbeloes*. These girls were much handsomer than any I had
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formerly seen in India, and appeared to me different in feature from the inhabitants of Bombay. Their colour was of a deeper and more shining black; their faces rounder, and infinitely more animated, and their persons exquisitely formed, might have vied in every thing but colour with the most perfect models. Their dress was nearly the same as that of the other natives, but none of them had any of those ornaments in the nose, which never fail to disgust the eye of an European, particularly on his first arrival in the country. On their near approach, I was a good deal surprized at their sudden flight, which was soon explained by the conduct of our rascals of palanquin bearers, who seized on the fish as lawful prize, and, notwithstanding the cries and remonstrances of the poor girls, took by force a certain quantity from every basket they could seize upon. I was knight-errant enough to jump out of my palanquin in defence of injured beauty; and would have certainly chastised those infringers of true chivalry, had I not been informed that custom had sanctified the act, and that the tax now levied was a constant perquisite of those gentlemen of the road. At one o'clock we arrived at Ambola, and immediately proceeded to the cave, which is not distant above half a mile.

The entrance to the cave of Ambola is neither dignified with the objects that present themselves on your first approach to the caves of Cannara, nor beautified by the romantic scenes that surround them. The ascent to this cave is hardly perceptible; the rock, out of which the excavation is made, being in magnitude very inferior to that at Cannara, and indeed little more than what affords materials for one immense cavern which nearly occupies the whole. The entrance, however, or west door of this cave, must have been in its original state very different

ferent indeed from its present appearance. Many evident marks of grandeur still remain to support this opinion, and at the same time to impress us with a very high idea of its magnificence and uncommon ornament. All that now appears are the mouldering remains of six pillars on each side, and two large figures at each end of a veranda or portico that leads to the door of the cave, but so completely obliterated, that no just idea can be formed of their original structure. It is evident, however, that extraordinary pains must have been taken in ornamenting this veranda. A variety of small figures in alto and basso rilievo occupy every part of it, particularly the door and two windows which perforate the west wall of the cave, and which are the only inlets of light from that quarter. From this veranda you descend a few steps into the body of the principal cave, which, from its gloom and magnitude, strikes you on your entrance with a solemn awe. This cave is a perfect square of ninety feet, adorned with twenty pillars which support the roof fifteen feet from the walls, and consequently form another square of seventy-five feet within the colonade. In the center of this square is another of fifteen feet, exactly in a line with the doors of the cave that lead from west to east. This small square has four doors that enter from each side: in the middle is one of those pagodas or mausoleums already mentioned, with a bell, the usual appendage to all the Gentoo places of worship, and invariably rung by each person on his entrance. There are a number of figures round this square, particularly on each side of the door facing the east, among which are some of a monstrous appearance, with several of those deformed dwarfs so generally met with in this cave and that of Elephanta. The height of the cave cannot be more than fourteen or fifteen feet; the north side is a dead wall, the south is perforated by two windows and three spacious doors that lead to a veranda, which extends from east to west,

west, one hundred and ten feet in length, and fifteen in breadth. This veranda is adorned with twelve pillars which support the roof, and which with the doors and windows, particularly the center door, are highly ornamented with emblematical groups of figures in basso relievo, nearly obliterated. An open space of about thirty or forty feet here divides this part of the rock from that to the southward. The east and west extremities, however, at each end of the veranda are not separated, and form a very remarkable track cut in the side of the opposite rock. I am inclined to think that a kind of roof or communication formerly joined the two. Facing the veranda, and in the same level, is a range of small caves cut out of the southern part of the rock, extending the whole length of the veranda, and perforating the east end. In these caves are a number of figures in alto relievo, mostly monstrous; among whom are some of those *Swammies* found in all the Gentoo pagodas, particularly that with the underparts of a man, and a head resembling that of an elephant.

From the east side of the large cave you enter, by a large door, another cave thirty feet by twenty-two with six pillars. On each side of the door are two large male figures nine feet in height, which, though much mutilated by folly, and defaced by time, bear evident marks of just proportions and no contemptible execution. They are both naked to the middle, round which is a broad chain with a garment under it, which descends in easy folds near the knees, and ties in a knot at the left hip, the ends of which descend almost as low as the ankle. From the left shoulder to the right hip across the breast like a sash, are a number of small chains conjoined so as to form a belt which increases in breadth till it meets what appears a large collection of a garment descending in loose folds to the ground. The right arms of both these figures are partly broken off, but

from the position of one of the elbows, and some of the arm that remains, it is evident that the right hand was raised up to the shoulder, and I suppose held the end of the garment in the same manner as the figures at Cannara, with this difference, that there it was the *left hand*. The heads of each are ornamented with crowns; the hair falling in a number of curls over the neck; large ear-rings pendant to the shoulders, and necklaces seemingly of curious workmanship, so broad as to descend considerably down the breast. They have likewise bangles on both the ankles and the wrists, with an ornament tied round the upper part of the left arm [something resembling the bracelets of the ancients]. The figure on the left side of the door has his left hand resting on a dwarf, round the arms and body of which a number of snakes seem to twist. The dwarf, as far as I could judge, represents a figure loathsome and disgusting; the head large, the face broad and apparently bloated; the belly swollen, and the legs and thighs deformed, and disproportionably short to the rest of the body. To the left of the other figure, is a monster with two heads nearly of the same size with the dwarf. From the ravages of time and several marks which plainly indicate studied mutilation, all the parts of the large figures from the pelvis downward are so much defaced as to exclude all enquiry. Of their proportions in general we can easily judge; of their countenances nothing can be known. Above these figures, and occupying the west side of the cave last mentioned, are five groups of other figures in alto relievo, which though much decayed, still leave such marks of excellence, and display perhaps such characteristic strokes of a people, that I cannot prevail on myself to pass them over in silence.

The first group in the center and immediately over the door, represents a man sitting cross-legged with a crown on his head, and flowing curls. In his left hand he holds a sceptre or mace;

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in his right, a rosary of beads : on each side of him sit two old men of a most striking expression of countenance in the attitude of devotion ; their beards long and terminating in a point, their eyes lifted up, and their hands raised to their breasts, with a seeming fervour and enthusiasm. Two little boys with their hands clasped kneel by their side. The two next groups to the right and left represent a number of female figures finely executed, two of whom support each an angel hovering over the head of the man with the sceptre in his hand. These two women are in stature taller than the rest, the breasts like all the others, large and perfectly globular ; the lower parts of the waist uncommonly small with bellies prominent, or rather a remarkable hollow in the epigastric region ; their attitudes perfectly elegant and easy. Their proportions on the whole may be called just, and the execution a capital piece of sculpture. All these figures appear quite naked ; a small cincture round the waist resembling a chain being the only ornament or covering on any part of the body.

The last group to the right of the door is much obliterated ; the only figures discernible and remarkable are a male and female, with their right hands joined and hanging down below their waists. They both appear to be laughing ; the woman's left hand is placed betwixt her breasts, her head and face turned to the man with amorous expression. She appears to be quite naked : but the man is ornamented with a number of strings or shreds of cloth round different parts of his body, particularly his legs and thighs. His figure is easy and graceful, his left hand resting in a becoming manner on his left hip. Behind the woman, to the right, a female figure, with two faces, sits in the manner of the country, with the back part of her left hand touching the woman's posteriors ; her right hand grasps her right knee. To the left of

the man is one of those dwarfs already described. The rest of the figures were too much decayed to be distinguished. The last group, to the left, represents a man, much larger than the rest, sitting crossed-legged, a crown on his head with flowing curls; his head inclined to the left in a thoughtful position. This figure has four arms and four hands, the only one of the kind in these caves. One of the right arms is extended across the body as if to receive something; the other arm is placed nearer the back, the hand of which holds something, round which a large snake is twisted in a variety of folds. One of the left hands is turned up in an elegant position, and takes hold of something I could not distinguish, but which appeared to be of a triangular form; the other seizes one of the horns of a bull or cow very well executed. A small figure in the back ground near the top of the group has hold with both hands of a female's arm, the hand of which seizes the other horn of the bull. A little below two female figures, the one in a sitting, the other in a reclining posture, are executed in a style equally elegant and singular. The sculptor indeed seems to have excelled himself in the execution of these two figures, which in ease, attitude, and symmetry would not perhaps disgrace the genius of Michael Angelo. A male figure to the right standing with something in his hand resembling a long wand, finishes this group, which is by much the most perfect and beautiful of the whole.

From this cave, which opens by a door to the east, you enter an open space in the rock, which by a flight of steps leads to another cave larger than the former, the pillars of which are almost quite decayed. In this cave there is one of those Swamies already mentioned, painted or smeared over as they all are with some substance of a fiery red colour, and still worshiped by the Gentoo inhabitants of Ambola. Several winding passages cut through the rock, lead from this cave to the top, in which
passages

passages there are wells or chambers of water, and another monster or swammie something similar to the former. This part of the rock communicates with the other quite round the space just mentioned, and forms a large semicircular hole or window cut in the front of the rock facing the east, and which has no connection with any of the caves below. I should suppose there must have been other communications, though no vestige remains to support the supposition; but indeed too few vestiges remain to form a just idea of the magnificence and beauty of this amazing excavation, the extreme length of which, from west to east, cannot be less than two hundred feet. Time, or perhaps some bad quality in the stone, has rendered it now but the skeleton of its former grandeur; and though we view with astonishment such stupendous monuments of antiquity, and admire such efforts of labour and ingenuity, we still retire with a sigh, impressed with the folly of human pride, and the instability of all its boasted greatness. The most extraordinary art has here been exerted to render the work of man superior to the ravages of time. A new world seems to open by dint of labour into the bowels of the earth. The most magnificent domes and princely apartments rise by the chisel through masses of the most flinty hardness. The utmost luxuriance of fancy is exerted to beautify and adorn the whole, and no doubt to transmit a work of excellence to the admiration of the latest ages. The time however comes, when these, like all other human phantoms, vanish; when the object of our fondest wishes moulders into dust, and when even the people, who struggled so hard for immortality, are not only forgotten, but perfectly unknown.

“ Oh sons of earth, attempt ye still to rise
“ By mountains piled on mountains to the skies?
“ Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
“ And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.”

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Some time elapsed before I had an opportunity of seeing Elephanta. This small island is not above one mile in length; it lies about four or five miles to the N. E. of Bombay, and takes its name from the figure of an elephant cut out of stone, near a landing place at the S. W. end in your way to the caves. From this, you proceed about half a mile up a pretty steep ascent, when you come in sight of the sea to the N. W. and then turning to the left up a rugged path you arrive at the summit of the hill or rock from which the caves are formed, and which, like Canara, is concealed from your view by thick woods till you are within a few yards of the entrance. The principal door or entrance to this excavation, unlike the rest, faces the *north*. It bears evident marks of great ornament, but time and particularly human folly have rendered it together with every other part of the cave a very imperfect picture of its former beauty. It is difficult to write with any degree of temper on the dismal mutilations of this princely cavern, the stone of which is of such a durable nature as to have in a great measure baffled the ravages of time. Most of the figures appear still as fresh as if just from the chisel, and had it not been for the ingenuity of human madness, the caves of Elephanta would at this hour have been not only a valuable key to many inexplicable appearances in the other caves, but a noble monument of ancient architecture and sculpture. But what the hand of time has not been able to deface, the blind zeal of bigots and the childish tricks of fools have very nearly destroyed. During the power of the crown of Portugal in this country, no small attention was paid to the extermination of idolatry, and amongst the other objects of abhorrence that presented themselves to the prejudiced eye of superstition, was the cave of Elephanta. Whilst this curious, though inexplicable piece of antiquity remained, true religion no doubt was considered as in danger. Figures strange and monstrous

monstrous in their appearance could not have been formed, but for the purpose of idolatry, nor such immense caverns cut into the bowels of the earth, but through the influence of the Devil, and for the diabolical intent of offering up human sacrifices at his shrine. Various attempts, it is said, were made to mutilate and deface these damnable objects of disgust; but as the magnitude of the figures and uncommon hardness of the stone baffled the efforts of the godly, cannon were at length painfully dragged up the hill, and pointed against what Heathens would have defended at the hazard of their lives. These are the effects of enthusiasm, and perhaps may claim the pity of mild philosophy as the lamentable productions of ignorance, and a disordered imagination. But what shall we say of those, who neither fired by bigotry, nor actuated by the rage of making proselytes, have wantonly displayed their ingenuity in lopping off heads, legs and arms from many of the most curious statues; and unable to do any more mischief by mutilation, have humourously besmeared, bedaubed, and bepainted every figure in the cave, wisely leaving their names behind them, as testimonies of their profession, and the most satisfactory proofs of their stupidity and Gothic barbarism. Such has been the conduct of Britons, and for the greater glory of the nation, let me also observe of those heroes too who grace our fleets and armies in India, and who, while others repair to the cave of Elephanta as a rare and valuable curiosity, generally make parties there, for no other purpose than to feast, get drunk, and act ridiculously.

The great hall, or principal chamber of the cave of Elephanta, which you enter immediately on your crossing the veranda to the north, is one hundred and twenty-nine feet in length, and ninety-four in breadth. It is adorned with four rows of pillars from north to south, six in each row. These pillars like those at the other caves are of no known order, though

though they approach something nearer the Doric than any other. They have all architraves with a capital resembling a round cushion, pressed flat as if by the incumbent weight of the roof. From the capital half way down, the pillar is fluted; thence it projects by way of base quadrilaterally to the bottom, five feet nine inches in length; the rest of the pillar to the capital is about five feet; the height of the capital, one foot six inches; the circumference eighteen feet, the architrave nine inches in height, above which, joining the roof, another ornament like a cornice projects, and is about a foot in height. These pillars are at the distance of fifteen feet from each other, and being but little decayed make a noble appearance. The height of the roof is fourteen feet nine inches, and, unlike the others, has three doors or communications; one to the east, and two to the west, all of which are as high as the roof, and lead to two verandas, where two open squares separate the rock, and enlighten the whole excavation.

Immediately fronting the entrance or north door of the great hall, at the south end, and in a nich extending twenty feet in breadth, the eye is caught by an astonishing male figure or bust, consisting of three faces or rather heads; four arms and hands, and a part of the body as low as the extremity of the breast bone. This prodigious mass occupies the whole nich, the top of the highest crown almost reaching to the roof of the cave. The three faces front three different quarters, north, east, and west. The middle one, or that fronting the north, seems to be the principal, the crown or cap being much more ornamented, and of a greater height than the other two. From the following measurement of this face, which I with difficulty accomplished, you may form some idea of the whole mass, which I can assure you is an object not only of sublimity but of terror. The length of the face from the
place

place where the crown rests on the head to the chin, is four feet and a half; the breadth from ear to ear, six feet eight inches; the under lip is six inches thick: one of the fingers measured very near four feet in length, and of a proportionable thickness. The expression of these three faces is different. That which we have just mentioned is (like most of the figures in all the caves) one of those mild placid heavy countenances, from which you have little to expect and little to fear. The one facing the west expresses pleasure, having a faint smile on the countenance, but otherwise very little animated. The third face, fronting the east, is rather monstrous, the forehead is contracted, the lips a little open with the tongue thrust between them, the eye staring, and the whole countenance expressive of disgust and anger: on the side of the crown of this head a death's head is represented. These three heads though all joined in one mass are perfectly distinct, each having a crown with hair descending in ringlets down the shoulders and back. The crown of the middle face fronting the entrance is, as I observed before, considerably higher than the other two, and resembles in shape a grenadier's cap, ornamented in a most extraordinary manner. A necklace of curious workmanship and uncommon breadth descends half way down the breast. The body appears to be quite uncovered. One of the right arms of this immense figure is quite intire, the hand of which holds a *cobra capilla* or hooded snake of an enormous size, and exceedingly well executed: the head and neck are exactly in the position of that reptile when roused; the hood extended, the body twisting round the arm, and down the right side. The hand is all that remains of the other right arm, which likewise holds a large hooded snake which is represented with a crown on its head. The hand of one of the left arms holds something resembling a bunch of flowers; the other a kind of fruit, in shape not unlike a pumpken. I forgot to ob-

serve that the figure fronting the east had whiskers, the only one which bore this mark of modern fashion.

To the right of this bust in another nich is a female figure at full length, inclining a little to the right with four arms. This figure has no right breast, the left is remarkably large, and of the same globular form with all the rest; the hand of one of the right arms has hold of the horns of a bull finely executed, the other hand holds a cobra capella in a position uncommonly easy. One of the left arms is raised in a graceful manner to the shoulder, the hand of which holds by the thong a shield or target inverted, the convex part turned towards the shoulders; the other left arm is extended down the left thigh, the hand of which grasps something, which from its mutilated state cannot be discovered. The left arms of this amazonian figure are ornamented with double bracelets or bangles round the wrists, and a ring on each finger; the right arms have only one bangle on the wrist, and a ring on the little finger. Behind the bull is the head of an elephant with a number of small figures in basso relievo, apparently sitting, on his neck and shoulders.

On the left of the large bust, in another nich, is a male figure at full length, his left hand resting, or rather pressing, on the head of one of those deformed dwarfs already described, which, by the position of the body, and expression of the countenance, seems to experience torture; in his right hand, like all the other dwarfs, there is a snake, which twines in a variety of folds round his arm and body. The large figure, from the belt or string across his left breast and shoulder, seems to be of the Bramin cast. A number of figures present him with a variety of offerings, one of which is a fish. At his feet is a male figure kneeling, with his eyes raised up in the attitude of supplication. This last figure is the only complete slave found among these pieces of sculpture. It is cut out of the rock, so as to be detached

tached from the wall, and to have its back parts all displayed, which are equally well executed with those of the other figures in alto relievo. There is a knife in a sheath at its right side. In this nich like all the others, there are an infinite number of small figures in alto and basso relievo round the sides and top, but so much decayed through time, and so crowded together, as to render description impracticable. These groups are all emblematical, and must have been executed with astonishing labour. One representation very common in them is one figure sitting astride on the shoulders of another, with the legs hanging down before. Several other male figures at full length, and from thirteen to fourteen feet in height, occupy the west side of the grand cave, and though much mutilated display no contemptible proofs of sculpture and proportion. They however express nothing new or uncommon, and shall therefore for brevity's sake be passed over. Indeed, were I desirous to spin out my description, the cave of Elephanta might furnish ample food for the most ravenous antiquary. Every part teems with human forms; every wall seems to move with life obedient to the will of the artist, who seems

Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blanda

Ducere quo vellet.

Proceeding through the east door you enter the open square already mentioned with a veranda to the south, at the east extremity of which is a dark apartment cut in the rock exactly the breadth of the veranda. In this apartment there is some water, two swammies, and a few figures so much decayed as not to be discernable by the light of a candle. The veranda is fifty-eight feet in length, with four pillars on each side, and a number of figures in alto relievo, the most remarkable of which is a large male statue with four arms. He has a sword by his left side very well executed, and hanging in an easy manner

from a garment twisted round the loins. One of the right hands holds a cobra capella twisted down his arm and side, the other right arm is broken off. One of the left hands presses on a dwarf, round the belly of whom, another cobra capella is twined with the head twisted about to the left groin. The dwarf's situation is singular, and plainly evinces that these represent objects of punishment. On his head and neck is an immense bulk resembling in shape a porter's knot; over which as an additional weight is another circular mass of several feet diameter. The dwarf seems to experience great pain, his body bending under the load, his left hand grasping the cobra capella's tail. The remaining left arm of the large figure is raised up and supports a boy, which like another on the opposite side, bends over head in the attitude of angels. The head of this large figure is remarkable for the hair being in ringlets, wreathed into an infinite variety of forms. At the east end of this veranda is another male figure much decayed, with a dwarf on each side. One of these has his hands folded over his breast in a desponding position; the other holds in his left hand a fruit resembling the custard apple.

The west veranda is nearly the length of the great hall, and runs from north to south. It is decorated with a number of figures all in alto relievo, the most remarkable and entire of which are those at each end. At that to the north, on the right hand as you enter the first door leading to the veranda is a large nich, in which a very extraordinary figure is cut out, and which though shamefully mutilated, still attracts the attention of the curious. This figure has eight arms; his body very much inclined to the left with his legs folded under him, but too much mutilated to distinguish their real position. Two of the arms are raised up, and support a kind of canopy over head, above which are a number of figures sitting cross-legged in the attitude
of

of devotion. One of the right hands holds a sword of justice, the other a bell, both of which are finely executed. A pedestal rests upon, or is supported by one of the left hands, on which pedestal a small figure almost destroyed, appears with an inclination of body nearly horizontal. This small figure I have since been informed was less mutilated some years ago, and plainly represented a child with the head downwards as if intended for sacrifice. The whole is thought to be a representation of the judgment of Solomon, though I must confess I can see nothing to authorize the conjecture. The large figure indeed has a sword in one hand, and a child in another; but if this piece of sculpture was intended as a representation of Solomon's admirable decision, where are the two women by whose conduct he was to detect imposition, and where have we ever heard that Solomon had *eight hands and eight arms*? A group of figures at the opposite end of the veranda is too singular to be passed over in silence; with this I shall conclude my description of Elephanta.

This group is in a nich on the left as you enter the south door of the veranda; it is much less injured than any of the rest, and as it expresses passion becomes therefore more valuable. A large male figure at full length, and seemingly of the Bramin cast, stands by the side of a female; his eyes cast down, and the whole countenance expressive of a timid expectation. The countenance of the female denotes perplexity and distress, her eyes downcast, her head hanging to the left, and her body evidently declining from the man. At her back is a male figure, his right hand resting in an affectionate manner on her arm, a little below the shoulder; his head averted inclining to the right, and his countenance still more expressive of sorrow than the woman's. It appears to me as if this figure, while he feels sensibly for the woman's distress, urges her to what seems repugnant

pugnant to her inclination. In the same nich round the sides are a number of other figures, which from their employments seem to be domestics, one in particular (a male) holds in both hands something resembling a vase or urn; his hair is in five regular curls, with a cap on his head, very different in elegance from the ornamented crowns of the other figures. To the right of the man stands a female with the same instrument held over her right shoulder, which is so often found in the hands of female figures here, and in all the other caves, and which from the effects of time I never could particularly distinguish before. It is composed of a small taper shank with a large bushy substance interwoven at the end, and hanging loosely down the back over the right shoulder. The appearance comes nearer a ship's swab than any thing else I know, and from what is at present used in the country, I should suppose it represents the instrument for brushing away the flies. From the west veranda you enter an open space of about sixty feet square, the south side of which is excavated into a kind of cistern that extends a great way into the rock, and is still supplied with water as far as the eye can trace. At the extremity or west end of this extensive cave is another apartment similar to that at the west end, in which are likewise several swammies and monstrous figures almost obliterated.

I have now given you as plain and succinct an account of the different excavations in the vicinity of Bombay as I could, and though I cannot flatter myself with having drawn a picture by which you can form a just idea of the original, the facts I have communicated may however enable you to judge of the uncommon labour bestowed on those subterraneous abodes, and the time that must have necessarily been taken in excavating and arranging the whole, and in beautifying and enriching every part with such an incredible variety of ornaments. Compared

pared with these, the works of modern hands dwindle into the mere amusements of children; nor can we view such stupendous caverns cut out of solid rocks, and moulded into such a variety of forms, without subscribing our opinion to a bold assertion that such laborious productions must have been the work of ages. Wherefore these Herculean labours were undertaken, or by whom they were executed, are facts not now to be ascertained; being long since buried in the womb of time. History affords not the most glimmering light to explore this dark passage of antiquity, and even tradition has not transmitted the most trivial circumstance to supply us with a rational conjecture on the subject. Many and various are the opinions formed, but none of them carries the smallest conviction along with it. The judgment is constantly bewildered amidst the *contradictory proofs* produced by the very representations we mean to examine; and while we seize with ardour on circumstances that seem to favour an hypothesis, some intruding witness unluckily starts up and overturns the whole system. Thus, for instance, should we ascribe these surprising labours to the Gentoos, no similarity either in *feature* or in *dress* to the present race of that people is any where to be found! If to the Egyptians or Ethiopians, whom they seem to resemble most: whence the objects of worship in these caves so dissimilar to those of that nation, namely the elephant, cow, and swammie, all of which are worshipped in India, and universally found in every Gentoos pagoda? To perplex us still more, on the side of one of the doors that lead to the grand cave at Elephanta, is a long inscription in the *Persian* character, but importing nothing that throws the least light on the subject. As to the dress of all the figures in the different caves, it bears no resemblance to either Gentoos, African, Persian, or Arabian. The bangles and ear-rings are the *only* ornaments that come near modern fashion; and what is something

something extraordinary, the most ancient part of dress, the *turban*, is no where to be found, or any thing that bears the most distant resemblance of it. Every thing, however, convinces us, that these figures must have represented some particular people, and that they must have all been the work of the same nation. The same flat, broad, good-natured, heavy countenance, with the thick under lip; the same dress, the same attitudes, and nearly the same ornaments reign throughout, particularly in the larger and most ostensible figures. With regard to feature, it must be allowed that it approaches much nearer the Ethiopian than any other people; and considering the early taste for sculpture that prevailed amongst the ancient Egyptians, the many examples of similar excavations found in that country, the wandering disposition of the people, and their ambition to diffuse their arts and sciences over the globe; an ingenious theorist, with such materials alone, might build no contemptible structure. He might perhaps still add something to its solidity by maintaining, that the excavations already described must have been the work of some set of men long since extinct in India; that in supposing them of Gentoo origin, the veil of obscurity should instantly drop, since it can hardly be imagined that so total a change in dress and feature should take place among any set of men, or that those who, from time immemorial, have inhabited India, should now not only be ignorant of the institutions of their forefathers, but altogether strangers to the origin of works so vast in the undertaking, and so particularly calculated for national purposes. That however capricious or fluctuating the modes of fashion may be, the human countenance seldom or never undergoes material changes, but is the invariable guide by which we trace not only national feature, but family resemblance. That if the sculptors of the different caves were able to execute
such

Such a number of figures whose countenances so nearly resemble each other, it is a pretty clear proof that they could have, with the same ease, represented the national feature of any people whatever; and that, if these figures are to be considered as certain prototypes of any set of Gentoos now existing, it must be a set of Gentoos different in feature and in dress from any hitherto found in the peninsula of India.

These observations, however apparently incontrovertible, tend little to solve the difficulty. On the other hand, much might be advanced to prove the impossibility of these excavations being the work of Egyptians, and at the same time to support the opinion of a Gentoo origin. Were we to give the utmost latitude to theory and fancy, the idea of their being the work of Egyptians must fall to the ground. We shall trace the ancient Chaldeans (whom we shall likewise admit to be the Egyptian root) from the banks of the Euphrates to the banks of the Nile. We shall allow that, in this progress, they occupied the whole continent of Arabia for a considerable time; and that, after penetrating Ethiopia by the Erythrean gulf, they at last got possession of Egypt, and the whole coast of Africa on the Mediterranean, even to the Atlantic Ocean. We shall go so far as to suppose that this people in their peregrinations visited and settled a colony in Salsét, and that they resided there many years, and by some unaccountable event became extinct, or migrated to other countries. After giving these latitudes (and I think they are pretty large), it by no means proves the excavations in question to be the workmanship of these ancient sculptors. On the contrary, solid and substantial objections occur to overturn any such supposition; objections that arise not from either theory or whim, but from the law of nature, and the history of mankind. Among the various changes in nations, from barbarism to civilization, religion always is the

most immutable. The human mind shrinks with horror from the smallest change in matters accounted sacred, and the removal of a block, or a stone, has often been attended with more bloody wars than the destruction of a city.

That the Chaldeans were idolaters is true; but their objects of worship were certainly different from any thing we meet with in the caves of Salfet or Elephanta; and, notwithstanding many appearances to the contrary, I am still inclined to think, that these caves must have been the work of Gentoos, and that for the following reasons:

In the first place, though we find little or no similarity between the general formation of these subterraneous abodes and the present Gentoo places of worship, we perceive a striking resemblance in many particulars. Though their pagodas are not excavated in rocks, they are, however, all highly ornamented with figures and carving, which, whether in stone or in wood, generally occupy every part of the external surface of the building. In the second place, though their objects of worship are neither so numerous nor so astonishing as those found in the different caves, there are many almost exactly alike, namely, the Swammies with the Elephant's head, and those figures with four, six, and eight arms, invariably found in every pagoda. Thirdly, the *sanctum sanctorum* has the same mark in both, i. e. the large stone in the form of a mausoleum; and, lastly, the same representation of favorite animals, some of which are peculiar to the country. Independent of these striking resemblances we find many of the figures at Elephanta with the bramin's string over the breast and shoulder, not to mention the bangles and large ear-rings, which, though parts of the present Gentoo dress, are likewise worn by both Moors and Persees. But, perhaps, the strongest proof that can be adduced in favour of a Gentoo origin, is the present race of that people still wor-
shipping

shipping in the caves of Ambola and Elephanta. Of all the different casts in India, the Gentoo is the most completely fettered with religious prejudices, and the most sedulous in preserving their sanctuaries, and even their houses, from the pollution of strangers. It can hardly then be imagined that a set of people, so very tenacious of their purity in matters of such seeming importance, should repair to any cave for the purposes of divine worship, without an assurance that such cave was originally intended for that particular use. The Gentoos, however, seem to know as little of the matter in dispute as any other sect; nor can any man be found who can explain the meaning of a single figure, or explore the emblematical sense of a single groupe. These observations naturally occurred in treating a subject which you must allow to be curiously inexplicable. If they tend nothing to unravel the mystery, they cannot add to its obscurity; if they afford the smallest light to guide or encourage the learned in further researches, the writer of the present little Essay must account himself highly rewarded.

HECTOR MACNEIL.

N O T E S,

Principally by a Friend of the Author.

P. 151.

“On the situation of the Island Salfet we may observe it is remarkable that almost all nations have consecrated islands to the Deities, and have made them the peculiar scenes of religious adoration. The British Druids had chosen Mona, or Anglesey, as the principal residence of their order. See Tacit. Annal. cap. xxx. lib. 14. Rowland's Mona illustr. passim. Dionysius Periegetes, ver. 570. mentions a cluster of Islands in the German Ocean, opposite to Britain, to which the wives of the Amnitæ repaired annually to celebrate the *orgia*, or rites of Bacchus. Most of the small islands in the neighbourhood of Greece and Asia Minor were consecrated to particular Deities: Delos to Apollo; Cythera, to Venus; Samos, to Juno; Chios, to Bacchus; Rhodes, to the Sun, &c. The famous Temple of Jupiter Ammon, in Africa, was situated on a beautiful verdant spot, resembling an island, in the middle of a vast sandy desert. See Herodot. lib. II. cap. xlii. Diod. Sic. lib. XVII. p. 588. ed. Steph. Quint. Curt. lib. IV. cap. vii. The temple of the Sun, at Palmyra, was similarly situated. See Wood's Ruins of Palmyra. The temple of Canopus, at the Canobic mouth of the Nile, was built on an island; and all over Egypt many temples were raised on islands, in the midst of their artificial lakes. Nearchus, Alexander's admiral, mentions several of these sacred islands in his account of his voyage along the coast of the Indian Ocean. Even the Christians adopted the same practice. It appears therefore highly probable, that the Island of Salfet was one of those sacred retreats to which the ancient Hindoos repaired to pay their devotions to the Deities of the country.”

“The cavern at Salfet faces the East.”

“All the heathen temples fronted the East. The sun being the grand object of religious worship among the Zabians, or worshipers of *the Host of Heaven*, all prostrations were performed towards the East. The
chc-

choruses which danced and sung the hymns in the Heathen temples began their motions from the East. Among the Greeks and Romans lucky omens proceeded from the East.—In opposition to this practice, both the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple fronted the West.”

“In utter darkness.” p. 260.

“The Adyta, or Holy of Holies, of the Heathen temples, were always dark, except when illuminated with flambeaus, &c. The statue of the Deity was lodged there, to conceal it from the view of the vulgar and profane. The sacred mysteries were performed there, sometimes by torch-light, sometimes in the dark. The grand hall, therefore, being the *penetrable*, or *Holy of Holies*, might actually be without windows for the admission of light.”

This remark, though ingenious, is not satisfactory; for, should we even suppose the grand hall to have been the adytum of ancient worshippers, and that from the appearance of the wooden work, together with the lamp-holes cut round the pagoda, this place was actually excluded from any other light than that of artificial illumination, we can neither account for the intention of executing, with so much apparent labour, the three large windows above, nor the innumerable ornaments which decorate every pillar below.

“The figures occupy the front of the Veranda.” p. 261.

“It was an universal practice, among the Orientals, to pourtray the figures of their Deities on the walls of their temples. See Ezekiel, VIII. 16. The Egyptians, though clumsy statuaries compared with the Hindoos, had the statues of their Deities placed in niches in the walls of their temples, as appears from Herod. lib. II. and Diod. Sic. lib. I. passim.

“Of the Dwarfs, mentioned p. 264, we may observe that these beings seem to have sprung up in the Persian romances, which every where abound with them. They are the creatures of Oriental imagination, and were introduced into our books of chivalry from the East, in consequence of our correspondence with these people during the Crusades.”

P. 279.

“ I do not imagine, either that the Indians derived the model of the caves from the Egyptians, or that this people ever over-ran, much less planted, colonies on the coast of India. The expedition of Sesostris is the mere produce of Egyptian vanity. At the same time, the Egyptians in the most early ages were averse to commerce. They dreaded the sea above all things, and called it Typhon, or the evil genius. See Plutarch de Iside et Osiride passim.

“ The Indian statues are handsomely executed. The Egyptian statues were clumsy, monstrous, and inartificial. This was owing to an Egyptian law, making it capital to introduce any innovation in the music, pictures, and statues, which belonged to religion. See Plato de legibus, lib. II. p. 789. In consequence of this prohibition, the music of the Egyptians continued rude and barbarous; and the arts of painting and statuary were absolutely stationary for a vast series of years, i. e. from the foundation of their monarchy, to the æra of the Lagidæ. This circumstance furnishes a strong presumption that the Hindoos did not copy from the Egyptians.

“ There is, however, another nation from which it is probable that both the Egyptians and the Hindoos took their model. The Ethiopians were early a great and a flourishing people. They were, in particular, celebrated for their piety and religion. Homer every where dignifies them with the title of the *justest of men*, the *most devout of men*, and, upon every occasion, sends his divinities to revel and carouse with the Ethiopians. Accordingly, Diodorus Siculus, lib. III. init. informs us, that this people pretended that they were the first who taught mankind how to honour the gods; the rites and ceremonies to be observed in sacrificing; the manner of conducting pomps and processions in honour of the Gods, &c. on which account their piety and justice was highly celebrated all over the world. They maintained that the Egyptians were their colonists; Ib. p. 101. ed Steph. that the customs and institutions established among them were the same with theirs; that many of the figures of their statues were actually of the Ethiopian cast; and that
the

the sacred letters of the Egyptians were the vulgar characters of the Ethiopians. For this see also Heliod. Ethiop. lib. IV. p. 174. Indeed the learned are in general agreed that the Egyptians were actually a colony of Ethiopians; and this is the more probable, as it is morally certain that the Lower Egypt was in the earliest ages quite overflowed by the sea, which rendered it inaccessible on that side. This hypothesis, in itself highly probable, is in a manner demonstrated by the author of Rech. Philosoph. sur les Egypt. et les Chinois, Berlin 1773. That the Egyptians imitated the Ethiopians in statuary, &c. cannot therefore be accounted surprising, nor will it appear altogether chimerical, that the inhabitants of certain parts of India copied likewise after this ingenious people, when the following circumstances are attended to.

“ That there were two nations of Ethiopians, the one in Africa, the other in India, appears from various authorities. Homer mentions it often. See also Strabo, lib. I. p. 35. Casaub. ib. p. 35. 101. 103. et pass. p. 33. Herod. lib. VII. cap. 70. Pausan lib. I. p. 81. where the historian mentions one characteristic difference between the African and Indian Ethiopians, namely, that the former had curled, and the latter lank hair. Euseb. Chron. p. 12. mentions an Ethiopia which looks towards the Indies. Arrian, Hist. Ind. p. 322. observes, that the inhabitants of the sea coast of India differed very little in their appearance from the Ethiopians of Africa, being of the same dark complexion, but without woolly hair. See also Pomponius Mela. lib. 3. cap. 7. p. 43. Iarchus of India tells Apollonius Philostratus, vit. Apol. p. 123. that the Ethiopians were actually an *Indian* nation. Euseb. Chron. p. 26. observes, that some Ethiopians, leaving their *native* country on the banks of the Indies, came and settled in Egypt. Apollonius of Tyanea, finding that the Ethiopians spoke highly of the Indians, told them, that they were themselves originally Indians. See Philostr. p. 227. And Nilus the Egyptian tells Apollonius, that the Indians were of all people in the world the most knowing; that the Ethiopians were a colony from them; and that they inherited the wisdom of their forefathers.”

These quotations seem to prove, not only that the Ethiopians must have anciently colonized a great part of the sea-coast of India, but that they had mingled so intimately with the inhabitants of these parts as to have become at last the same people. How far this may account for that resemblance

resemblance to Ethiopian feature found in the different caves, is submitted to the consideration of the learned. It is further remarked, by the ingenious gentleman who has favoured the author with these observations, that the round breasts, and the symptoms that distinguish the waists of the female, are still discernible in the sex among the modern Abyssinians. We are however still in the dark. For, should we ascribe these excavations to the Ethiopians *previous* to their mingling with the natives, whence, or wherefore, the objects of *Gentoo* worship? if after a *complete incorporation* (a circumstance that still requires farther proof), whence invariably the Ethiopian feature, and a dress different from either Ethiopian or Gentoo? To say that this *might* have been the ancient dress of the supposed mungrel breed, is begging the question. That a people similar in dress and in feature to the representations in the different caves once existed, is what I have little doubt of; but till such time as experience or chance point out a resemblance to certain feature and *costume*, we labour in vain to remove the veil by forming hypotheses. The Ethiopians indeed might have long inhabited the greatest part of the sea-coast of India from the river Indus to Cape Comorin. They were themselves a colony of Cushites who inhabited the East and S. E. coast of Arabia [*a*], and the navigation across the red sea to Ethiopia was short and easy. But it is not the sea coast alone where excavations and sculpture in rock are met with. India, I have been informed, can produce many, if not of equal workmanship with those described in the present essay, at least equally astonishing for the extent of the excavations, and the magnitude of the statues [*b*]. That the ancient Indians

[*a*] See Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. I. cap. 7. p. 11. l. 16. ab ima pag. ed. Gr. Basil. informs us, that the Ethiopians were the descendants of Cush, and that all the people in Asia even in his time called that people *Cushim*. The language of the Ethiopians was a kindred dialect of the Hebrew, Chaldean, Arabian, Phœnician. See Walton's Prolegom. Gale's Court of the Gentiles, vol. I. lib. 1. cap. 11. p. 90. par. 12. Bochart Can. lib. 1. cap. 15. Hottengeri Smegma ling. Orien. lib. 1. cap. 5. p. 81. Accordingly a vast number of names of countries, nations, cities, islands, rivers, mountains, &c. over all India every where occur in ancient writers, which to a person versed in these languages will at once appear to belong to one or other of them. To the learned gentleman already mentioned, I am also indebted for this note.

[*b*] At Gualcor there are figures in alto relievo cut out of rock, many of which I am informed are above seventy feet in height. Gualcor lies in 69. E. long. 25. 45. N. lat.

possessed

possessed talents sufficient for such ingenious undertakings, appears evident from the testimonies of various writers. “All the antient authors (says the writer of these notes) who mention them, bestow the highest encomiums on their wisdom, religion, policy, ingenuity, and superior skill in arts, sciences, mechanics, &c. [c]. Dionysius, author of the *Periegesis*, or tour round the world, concludes his work with a description of their habits, manners, rites, industry and knowledge executed with such harmony of numbers, and such a glow of imagination as would have done honour to the pen of a Homer.—A good translation of that beautiful passage would deserve high commendation—it begins at ver. 1088. and continues to the end.”

[c] See Diodorus Siculus ed. Steph. lib. 11. p. 15. et seqq. Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 98—108. Ctesiaæ excerpta annexed to Herodotus, p. 656. et seqq. Strabo, lib. 15. p. 689. ed. Casaub. Philostr. vit. Apol. Tyan. ubi supra. Arriani hist. Indica passim. Quint. Curtius Megasthenes, &c.