

which this latter author describes them, and to reduce the gulf in question to the form of a lake, of six leagues in length. It is more certain, that, since that time, things have changed still more. The sand thrown up by the sea and winds have formed, between the island of Pharos and the site of ancient Alexandria, a tongue of land two hundred fathoms in breadth, upon which the modern city has been built. It has blocked up the nearest mouth of the Nile, and reduced the lake Mareotis to almost nothing; while, during the same period, the alluvial matter carried down by the Nile, has been deposited along the rest of the shore, and has greatly increased its extent.

The ancients were not ignorant of these changes. Herodotus says, that the Egyptian priests regarded their country as a gift of the Nile. It is only in a manner, he adds, within a short period, that the Delta has appeared\*. Aristotle observes, that Homer speaks of Thebes as if it had been the only great city in Egypt; and nowhere makes mention of Memphis †. The Canopian and Pelusian mouths of the Nile were formerly the principal ones; and the coast extended in a straight line from the one to the

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\* Herod. Euterpe, v. and xxv.

† Arist. Meteor. lib. i. cap. 14.