

sea, does it not evidently appear that all the country on the west of the Nile would have been buried under this sand before the erection of the cities of ancient Egypt, how remote soever that period may be supposed ; and that in a country so long afflicted with sterility, no idea would even have been formed of constructing such vast and numerous edifices ? When these cities indeed were built, another cause concurred in favouring their prosperity. The navigation of the Red Sea was not then attended with any danger on the coasts ; all its ports, now nearly blocked up with *reefs of coral*, had a safe and easy access ; the vessels laden with merchandize and provisions could enter them and depart without risk of being wrecked on these shoals, which have risen since that time, and are still increasing in extent.

The defects of the present government of Egypt, and the discovery of the passage from Europe to India round the Cape of Good Hope, are therefore not the only causes of the present state of decline of this country. If the sands of the desert had not invaded the bordering lands on the west, if the work of the sea polypi in the Red Sea had not rendered dangerous the access to its coasts and to its ports, and even filled up some of the latter, the population of Egypt and the adjacent countries, together with their product, would alone have sufficed to maintain them in a state of prosperity and abundance. But now, though the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope should cease to exist, though the political advantages which Egypt enjoyed during the brilliant period of Thebes and Memphis should be re-established, she could never again attain the same degree of splendour.