

tercourse subsisting between the Ionians and the Phœnicians.\* According to the views which, since Champollicn's great discovery, have been generally adopted regarding the earlier condition of the development of alphabetical writing, the Phœnician as well as the Semitic characters are to be regarded as a phonetic alphabet, that has originated from pictorial writing, and as one in which the ideal signification of the symbols is wholly disregarded, and the characters are considered as mere signs of sounds. Such a phonetic alphabet was, from its very nature and fundamental character, *syllabic*, and perfectly able to satisfy all requirements of a graphical representation of the phonetic system of a language. "As the Semitic written characters," says Lepsius, in his treatise on alphabets, "passed into Europe to Indo-Germanic nations, who showed throughout a much stronger tendency to define strictly between vowels and consonants, and were by that means led to ascribe a higher significance to the vowels in their languages, important and lasting modifications were effected in these syllabic alphabets."† The endeavor to do away with syllabic characters was very strikingly manifested among the Greeks. The transmission of Phœnician signs not only facilitated commercial intercourse among the races inhabiting almost all the coasts of the Mediterranean, and even the northwest coast of Africa, by forming a bond of union that embraced many civilized nations, but these alphabetical characters, when generalized by their graphical flexibility, were destined to be attended by even higher results. They became the means of conveying, as an imperishable treasure, to the latest posterity, those noble fruits developed by the Hellenic races in the different departments of the intellect, the feelings, and the inquiring and creative faculties of the imagination.

The share taken by the Phœnicians in increasing the elements of cosmical contemplation was not, however, limited to the excitement of indirect inducements, for they widened the domain of knowledge in several directions by independent inventions of their own. A state of industrial prosperity, based on an extensive maritime commerce, and on the enterprise manifested at Sidon in the manufacture of white and colored

\* See the passages collected in Otfried Müller's *Minyer*, s. 115, and in his *Dorier*, abth. i., s. 129; Franz, *Elementa Epigraphices Græcæ*, 1840, p. 13, 32, and 34.

† Lepsius, in his memoir, *Ueber die Anordnung und Verwandtschaft des Semitischen, Indischen, Alt-Persischen, Alt-Ægyptischen und Æthiopischen Alphabets*, 1836, s. 23, 28, und 57; Gesenius, *Scripturæ Phœnicæ Monumenta*, 1837, p. 17.