

made acquainted with the periodic prevalence of the monsoons through their colonies on the Persian Gulf, and their intercourse with the inhabitants of Gerrha, must have visited the western coasts of the Indian Peninsula. Christopher Columbus was even persuaded that Ophir (the El Dorado of Solomon) and Mount Sopora were a portion of Eastern Asia, the *Chersonesus Aurea* of Ptolemy.* As it appears difficult to form an idea of Western India as a fruitful source of gold, it will, I think, scarcely be necessary to refer to the "gold-seeking ants" (or to the unmistakable account given by Ctesias of a foundery in which, however, gold and iron were said, according to his account, to be fused together),† it being sufficient to direct attention to the geographical proximity of Southern Arabia, of the island of Dioscorides (the Diu Zokotora of the moderns, a corruption of the Sanscrit Dvipa Sukhatara), cultivated by Indian colonists, and to the auriferous coast of Sofala in Eastern Africa. Arabia and the island last referred to, to the southeast of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, may be regarded as affording intermediate links of connection between the Indian Peninsula and Eastern Africa for the combined commerce of the Hebrews and Phœnicians. The Indians had,

reared by the priests in the sanctuary of Hera. From a passage in Eustathius (*Comm. in Iliad*, t. iv., p. 225, ed. Lips., 1827) on the sacredness of peacocks in Libya, it has been unjustly inferred that the *ραῶς* also belonged to Africa.

* See the remarks of Columbus on Ophir and el Monte Sopora, "which Solomon's fleet could not reach within a term of three years," in Navarrete, *Viages y Descubrimientos que hicieron los Españoles*, t. i., p. 103. In another work, the great discoverer says, still in the hope of reaching Ophir, "the excellence and power of the gold of Ophir can not be described; he who possesses it does what he will in this world; nay, it even enables him to draw souls from purgatory to paradise" ("llega a que echa las animas al paraíso"), *Carta del Almirante, escrita en la Jamaica*, 1503; Navarrete, t. i., p. 309. (Compare my *Examen Critique*, t. i., p. 70 and 109; t. ii., p. 38-44; and on the proper duration of the Tarshish voyage, see Keil, *op. cit.*, s. 106.)

† *Ctesiae Cnidii Operum Reliquiæ*, ed. Felix Baehr, 1824, cap. iv. and xii., p. 248, 271, and 300. But the accounts collected by the physician at the Persian court from native sources, which are not, therefore, altogether to be rejected, refer to districts in the north of India, and from these the gold of the Daradas must have come by many circuitous routes to Abhira, the mouth of the Indus, and the coast of Malabar. (Compare my *Asie Centrale*, t. i., p. 157, and Lassen, *Ind. Alterthumskunde*, bd. i., s. 5.) May not the wonderful story related by Ctesias of an Indian spring, at the bottom of which iron was found, which was very malleable when the fluid gold had run off, have been based on a misunderstood account of a foundery? The molten iron was probably taken for gold owing to its color, and when the yellow color had disappeared in cooling, the black mass of iron was found below it.