

from the earliest time, made settlements in the eastern part of Africa, and on the coasts immediately opposite their native country; and the traders to Ophir might have found, in the basin of the Erythrean and Indian Seas, other sources of gold besides India itself.

Less influential than the Phœnicians in extending the geographical sphere of our views, and early affected by the Greek influence of a band of Pelasgian Tyrrhenians, who invaded their country from the sea, the Etruscans present themselves to our observation as a gloomy and stern race. They carried on no inconsiderable inland trade to distant amber countries, through Northern Italy and across the Alps, where a *via sacra** was protected by all the neighboring tribes. The primitive Tuscan race of the Rasenæ appears to have followed almost the same road on their way from Rætia to the Padus, and even further southward. In accordance with our object, which is always to seize on the most general and permanent features, we would here consider the influence which the general character of the Etruscans exercised on the most ancient political institutions of Rome, and through these on the whole of Roman life. It may be said that the reflex action of this influence still persists in its secondary and remote political effects, inasmuch as, for ages, Rome stamped her character, with more or less permanence, on the civilization and mental culture of mankind.†

A peculiar characteristic of the Tuscans, which demands our special notice in the present work, was their inclination for cultivating an intimate connection with certain natural phenomena. Divination, which was the occupation of their equestrian hierarchical caste, gave occasion for a daily observation of the meteorological processes of the atmosphere. The *Fulguratores*, observers of lightning, occupied themselves in investigating the direction of the lightning, with "drawing it down," and "turning it aside."‡ They carefully distinguished

* Aristot., *Mirab. Auscult.*, cap. 86 and 111, p. 175 and 225, Bekk.

† *Die Etrusker*, by Otfried Müller, abth. ii., s. 350; Niebuhr, *Römische Geschichte*, th. ii., s. 380.

‡ The story formerly current in Germany, and reported on the testimony of Father Angelo Cortenovis, that the tomb described by Varro of the hero of Clusium, Lars Porsena, ornamented with a bronze hat and bronze pendant chains, was an apparatus for collecting atmospheric electricity, or for conducting lightning (as were also, according to Michaelis, the metal points on Solomon's temple), was related at a time when men were inclined to attribute to the ancients the remains of a supernaturally-revealed primitive knowledge of physics, which was, however, soon again obscured. The most important notice of the rela