

curately described by Ehrenberg), and the so-called balsam of Mecca (the *Balsamodendron Gileadense* of Kunth). These products constituted an important branch of commerce between the contiguous tribes and the Egyptians, Persians, and Indians, as well as the Greeks and Romans; and it was owing to their abundance and luxuriance that the country acquired the designation of "Arabia Felix," which occurs as early as in the writings of Diodorus and Strabo. In the southeast of the peninsula, on the Persian Gulf, and opposite the Phœnician settlements of Aradus and Tylus, lay Gerrha, an important emporium for Indian articles of commerce.

Although the greater part of the interior of Arabia may be termed a barren, treeless, and sandy waste, we yet meet in Oman, between Jailan and Basna, with a whole range of well-cultivated oases, irrigated by subterranean canals; and we are indebted to the meritorious activity of the traveler Wellsted for the knowledge of three mountain chains, of which the highest and wood-crowned summit, named Dschebel-Akhdar, rises six thousand feet above the level of the sea near Maskat.* In the hilly country of Yemen, east of Loheia, and in the littoral range of Hedschaz, in Asyr, and also to the east of Mecca, at Tayef, there are elevated plateaux, whose perpetually low temperature was known to the geographer Edrisi.†

The same diversity of mountain landscape characterizes the peninsula of Sinai, the Copper-land of the Egyptians of the old kingdom (before the time of the Hyksos), and the stony valleys of Petra. I have already elsewhere spoken of the Phœnician commercial settlements on the most northern portion of the Red Sea, and of the expeditions to Ophir under Hiram and Solomon, which started from Ezion-Geber.‡ Arabia, and the neighboring island of Socotora (the island of Dioscorides), inhabited by Indian colonists, participated in the

quently found growing on the vast grassy plains (llanos) of Calaboso, in South America. *Icica*, like *Boswellia*, belongs to the family of *Burseraceæ*.

The red pine (*Pinus abies*, Linn.) produces the common incense of our churches. The plant which bears myrrh, and which Bruce thought he had seen (Ainslie, *Materia Medica of Hindostan*, Madras, 1813, p. 29), has been discovered by Ehrenberg near el-Gisan in Arabia, and has been described by Nees von Esenbeck, from the specimens collected by him, under the name of *Balsamodendron myrrha*. The *Balsamodendron Kotaf* of Kunth, an *Amyris* of Forskaal, was long erroneously regarded as the true myrrh-tree.

* Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, 1838, vol. i., p. 272-289.

† Jomard, *Etudes Géogr. et Hist. sur l'Arabie*, 1839, p. 14 and 32.

‡ See *ante*. p. 136.