

thousand years ago, as lost in the night of ages, we may form some estimate of the minimum of time which a people such as the Egyptians must have required to emerge slowly from primeval barbarism, and reach, long before the first Olympiad, so high a degree of power and civilisation.

Sir George Cornwall Lewis, in his recent 'Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients,'* says, that 'taking into consideration all the evidence respecting the buildings and great works of Egypt extant in the time of Herodotus, we may come to the conclusion that there is no sufficient ground for placing them at a date anterior to the building of the temple of Solomon, or 1012 B.C.' The same author has reminded us that Homer, in the Iliad, speaks of 'Egyptian Thebes, with its hundred gates, through each of which two hundred chariots went forth to battle,' and that we may form an idea of the size which the great poet intended to ascribe to Thebes in Egypt, from the fact that Thebes in Bœotia was supposed to have only seven gates. Homer is believed to have flourished about eight centuries before the Christian era. At so early a period, therefore, the magnificence of Thebes had attracted the attention of the Greeks. But in the opinion of Egyptologists, there were great cities of still older date than Thebes; as, for example, Memphis, which, from the names of the kings on the oldest monuments now extant there as compared with those in Thebes, is inferred to go back to remoter times. As to the speculations of Aristotle, in his 'Meteorics' (1, 14), that Memphis was probably the less ancient of the two, because the ground on which it stood was nearer the Mediterranean, and would therefore, at a later period, be first redeemed from a watery and marshy state, this argument, if it were available, would give an extremely high antiquity to both cities, seeing the small progress which the delta and alluvial deposits of the Nile

* London, 1862, p. 440.