

1430. THE NAVIGATION OF THE ANCIENTS WAS EMINENTLY
A COASTING ONE.

"The chief characteristic of the navigation of the ancients was this; that it continued at all times to be a coasting navigation. The sailors of antiquity never quitted the land, except when constrained to do so by some unavoidable necessity, such as the violence of currents, or when the passage from one coast to the other was of the shortest duration. It is the general opinion that they were compelled to adhere to the land for want of the mariner's compass; but the true reason must be sought in the scantiness of their geographical knowledge, which embraced only three parts of the world. . . . It is certain that a coasting navigation is not only subject to greater difficulties and dangers than any other; but has the property in consequence of forming at all times the most expert seamen. Is it not true that at the present day the Newfoundland fisheries and the coal trade form the best mariners of England? . . . It would be a most unwarrantable inference, therefore, to conclude that because the nations of antiquity confined themselves to coasting voyages of small extent, they were therefore deficient in maritime experience and skill. It was by the prosecution of such voyages that the Portuguese found their way to the East Indies" (*Heeren on the Politics, &c. of African Nations*, Oxford, 8vo, 1838, vol. i. pp. xciii. xciv; see also xcv.)

1. I do not know what authority Prichard (*Analysis of Egyptian Mythology*, 8vo, 1838, p. 376) can have for saying "the Egyptians had little intercourse with foreigners, and all their navigation was confined to sailing up and down the Nile."
2. A. W. Schlegel (*Preface to Prichard's Egyptian Mythology*, p. xxi.) says, "It appears from the code of Menu that the ancient Indians were not so averse to navigation as is often supposed."
3. And great doubt is thrown by Humboldt on Heeren's assertion, particularly in reference to the Greeks. This profound inquirer thinks (*Cosmos*, edit. Otté, 1848, vol. ii. p. 507) that the expressions of Hesiod merely afford evidence of his individual opinion; and "on the other hand the most ancient legends and myths abound in reference to distant expeditions by land and sea."
4. Wellsted (*Travels in Arabia*, 8vo, 1838, vol. i. p. 41) "witnessed the timidity and irresolution of Arab mariners," and see also *ART.* 1873.