

THE PHŒNICIANS.

HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION.

If we examine the map, we shall notice that direct commerce between Egypt and Assyria was obstructed by the deserts of Arabia. Syria was the country which connected their civilizations, and which



Foundations of the Acropolis at Balbek.

borrowed its own civilization from its two great neighbors. The peoples of Syria were naturally the mediators and merchants engaged in exchanging the products of the Nile valley and of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. Especially the Phœnicians of the Syrian coast were active in this exchange; and, looking out over the waters of the Mediterranean, they were tempted to engage in the transport of Egyptian and Assyrian

luxuries to the then uncivilized peoples of Greece, of Italy, and still remoter countries.

The Phœnicians were experts in the manufacture of a dye—the Tyrian purple—made from a small shell-fish. Each shell-fish yielded a drop of liquid, and the dye had to be manufactured where the shell-fish were dredged. The supply of shell-fish had become exhausted on the coast of Syria. It was still plentiful on the shores of Greece. Here, then, the Phœnicians established factories and