

naturally lead the human mind to inquire—were the black tribes of Africa always thus persecuted? Did mankind always wage war with their fellow-creatures of another colour?

The interior of Africa was little known to the ancients—still less than it is to the moderns; indeed, so much was it wrapt in mystery that very little of truth can be rationally assumed to attach to their fablings. Was the extensive system of predatory warfare and of slavery practised in those early periods of its history by the strong and the warlike against the weak and the defenceless, which has been so long prevalent in modern times? We have no means of ascertaining; but this we know—at least we may almost certainly pronounce—that the Greek and Roman Republics of ancient Europe would have scorned to have kidnapped her unfortunate sons in the way that modern Christian Europe has done. Had the New World, with its boundless arenas of soil and fertile climate, been known to them, and had they possessed Colonies there, would they have periodically covered the Atlantic with their slave-ships, laden with wretches doomed to misery and degrading servitude in their newly-acquired possessions in the western continent? Their known clemency towards their slaves furnishes evidence to the contrary.

Strabo and Herodotus are almost the only authors of antiquity who have transmitted us any accounts of the interior of this continent. Agatharchidas, also, another ancient writer, has left us some fablings respecting Africa, but nothing authentic concerning its inhabitants. Strabo has delivered us seventeen books on the geography of the ancient world, in which he tells us very little about the actual existing state of this central region of our globe. Of these only a portion of one is devoted to Africa, and the information which the great geographer had communicated was marvellously scant. Herodotus, the venerable father of history, gained some knowledge of this continent during his sojourn in Egypt, and he imparts such information to his readers and posterity in his usual agreeable style. Before the Romans had jurisdiction in Africa, the sole possession of the north-western parts was in the hands of the Carthagenians; but their knowledge scarcely extended to the confines of the Great Desert. Their information, therefore, and consequently that of the Romans who borrowed it of them, concerning the nation that existed in equatorial latitudes, must have been slight indeed. It is therefore to the Parnassian that we must chiefly look for our imperfect knowledge of these countries. The research and inquiries of Herodotus in this quarter of our globe were active and unremitting during his sojourn in Egypt; but he had not the means of always ascertaining the absolute truth of what he narrates. On the subject of Africa, we find him, in his 4th Book (Melpomene) thus arranging its topography: we give his own words (of course through the medium of translation):—"The Africans," he says, "who inhabit the sea-coast are termed Nomades. The more inland parts of Africa beyond these abound with wild beasts; remoter still is one vast sandy desert, from Egyptian Thebes to the columns of Hercules. Penetrating this desert to the space of ten days' journey, vast