

and surmounted with a circle, the symbol of God, to characterize Providence, which governs this important operation. More commonly, instead of a column, they made use of a pole terminated like a T, or crossed with one or more transverse pieces. They were often contented with one small cross, which put upon a vessel or elsewhere might signify the increase of the water.

It is certain that the *mikias*, or column, marked as above stated to signify the progress of the water, became in Egypt the *ordinary sign of the deliverance from evil*. They hung it on the necks of sick persons, and put it into the hands of all *beneficial deities*.

They painted the devastation made by the overflowing water under the figure of a dragon, of a crocodile, a hippopotamus, or a water monster which they called *Ob*, that is, swelling, an overflowing, and which they afterwards called *Python*, the enemy; this change of name from *Ob* to *Python* had reference to the deadly effects of the *miasmata* arising from the stagnant waters left upon the low lands after the retiring of the inundation. Ovid, the celebrated Latin poet, makes the serpent *Python* spring from the steams of the mud which the deluge had left upon the earth; and in this he is plainly making an allusion to *Typhon* whose name is the same by a simple transposition. In making *Python* spring from the slime of the deluge, does not the poet point out thereby the noxious steams which rise in Egypt after the waters of the Nile have subsided? In fine, when he says *Apollo* slew him with his arrows, does he not conceal under this emblem the victory of *Orus* over *Typhon*, or at least the triumph of the sunbeams over the vapors of the Nile? *Python*, says *Bailey*, is derived from *python*, Gr., to purify. The serpent *Python's* being slain by *Apollo* (that is the Sun,) dispersing the vapors by his arrows (that is, the sunbeams,) slew the serpent. The convenience of that language which rendered itself intelligible to the eyes, and in some sense made animals and even stones themselves to speak, by degrees became more common. It was extended to everything. The symbolical writing soon served as the rule of morals as well as the regulation of husbandry. It was made use of to perpetuate among the people the knowledge of the most important truths, and to inculcate their principal duties.

The character of the Egyptian writing designed to signify God, was not a simple flame or blaze, as was the general usage of the East, but a circle, or rather a sun. They added to the circle or solar globe, several marks or attributes, which served to characterize so many different perfections. For instance, in order to indicate that the Supreme Being is the author and preserver of life, they annexed to the circle sometimes two points of flame, but more commonly one or two serpents. This animal was always, among the Egyptians, as in other countries, the sym-