

The Introductory Discourse.

not only among themselves, but in several parts of *Asia*, where they are still call'd *Chuseans*. *Egypt*, call'd *Mesre* from another son of *Cham*, who bore that name, is still known by it. Besides these, scarce any will be found that have names of such antiquity, nor does it belong to this work to enquire so nicely into the original of those countries. Let it suffice, that the posterity of *Cham* first peopled *Africa*, of which we are now to speak.

The *Egyptian* kings were the first we have any account of in that part of the world, and of them the scripture makes mention; and *Josephus*, *Herodotus*, *Diodorus Siculus*, and others have writ much. The next great state we find there, was the commonwealth of *Carthage*, which was very potent; and the kings of *Numidia* were also considerable in those days; but both the aforesaid kingdoms and the commonwealth were subdu'd by the *Romans*, and continu'd subject to the emperors till the fifth century, when *Gensericus*, king of the *Vandals*, pass'd over out of *Spain* into *Africa*, and there laid the foundation of the kingdom of the *Vandals*; which continu'd till the year 534, when the renown'd general *Belisarius* recover'd that country from *Gilimer* the sixth and last king of those people.

In the year 647, the *Arabs*, call'd *Agarenians* and *Saracens*, being *Mahometans*, enter'd *Africa*, from *Arabia Felix*, in the reign of the emperor *Honorius*, and fill'd it with their race and sect. The *Turks* have since made themselves absolute masters of *Egypt*, and a great part of *Barbary* is tributary to them. The kings of *Spain* and *Portugal* have possess'd themselves of several towns along the coast, some of which they still hold. But this relates only to the northern part of *Africa*, lying along the *Mediterranean*; the southern parts were but little, or not at all known to the ancients. Let us proceed to the description.

Two thirds of *Africa* lying under the torrid zone, the heats are there very violent, and they are increas'd by the nature of the country; for most of the middle parts being sandy, the reflection of the sun makes them the more insupportable. All those vast sandy regions are little inhabited, as scarce producing any thing for the support of life, nor affording water. Besides, where the sand affords any thing for living creatures to subsist on, it swarms with multitudes of ravenous wild beasts, as lions, leopards, tygers, panthers, ounces, wild cats, and prodigious venomous serpents, and the waters are full of crocodiles. There are also camels, dromedaries, buffaloes, horses, asses, and many other sorts of creatures.

In the more fertile parts, the cattle are large and fat; in the barren, poor and small.

There is great variety of excellent fruit and plants, some very wholesome, and others of a poisonous nature; of which latter sort the *Adad* is singular, for one dram of it is immediate death. In several parts there are mines of gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, crystal, salt, and quarries of marble and other sorts of stone. Of all the regions of *Africa*, *Barbary* is the best and most convenient to live in, tho' *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* are more renowned. *Barbary* is not only the best, but the most populous part of *Africa*; as most properly situated for trade, and abounding in corn. It is that part, which lies all along the *Mediterranean* from the Ocean to *Egypt*, and contains the ancient *Mauritania*, *Africa* properly so called, and part of *Lybia*. At present there are in it, the kingdoms of *Fez* and *Morocco*, on the west; and to the eastward of them, *Tremessen*, *Tunis*, *Algier*, *Tripoli*, and *Barca*.

The most considerable rivers in *Africa* are, the *Nile*, the *Niger*, and the *Zaire*; of which two last, I shall have occasion to speak in the description of *Nigritia*, or the *Lower-Ethiopia*.

I will not enter upon the several divisions of *Africa*, in the time of the *Romans*, and of *Ptolemy*, who liv'd at *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, in the second century; for then very little of the interior part of it was known, as appears by the many fabulous accounts of it set forth by authors of those times, so full of absurdities, that they are not worth taking notice of. *Ptolemy* goes no farther than 24 degrees of south latitude along the coast, where he places his *Prassum Promontorium*, now call'd cape *Corrientes*, in the province of *Chicanga*, south of *Sofala*; but says nothing of it farther southward, either on the east or west sides, being fully persuaded that the inhabitants beyond that were utterly savage and inhuman, and therefore call'd them *Anthropophagi Ethiopes*, that is, man-eating *Ethiopians*. About the year 1486, *Bartholomew Diaz*, a *Portuguese*, sail'd round the cape of *Good-Hope*, and by that means made us fully acquainted with the utmost extent of *Africa*.

Several geographers much more modern than *Ptolemy* knew little more of that part of the world; and *John Leo Africanus*, who lived in the year 1526, notwithstanding the great care he pretends to have taken, did not succeed in his division; for he makes but four parts, which are *Barbary*, *Numidia* or *Biledulgerid*, *Lybia*, and *Nigritia*, by the *Arabs* call'd *Beled Ala Abid*.

One of the best modern general divisions of *Africa*, is that which makes four parts of it, viz. the countries of the *Whites*, wherein are comprehended *Egypt*, *Barbary*, *Numidia* or *Biledulgerid*, and *Zabara*, or the *Deserts*. Secondly, the country of the *Blacks*, or