

the paintings and representations of her catacombs, attest at once the greatness of her Pharaohs, and the fact that she possessed political institutions, and a high degree of civilization fifteen centuries or more before the Christian era.

This sea was a silent witness to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua; and it contributed actively to the building of Solomon's Temple, when it conveyed the cedar of Lebanon "in flotes to Joppa." It made the hardy and adventurous Phœnician a child of the sea, and gave him the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Without the Mediterranean, there could have been no voyage of the Argo, and consequently no Medea to occupy the pen of Euripides. If the Mæonian bard had sung at all, he must have sung of other themes than the Iliad and Odyssey, had not this water furnished wide-ruling Agamemnon with the means of transporting his troops to Troy.

The Mediterranean enabled the colonizing Greek to cover the islands of the Ægean, and the coasts of Asia Minor, with Grecian settlements; and at Mount Athos, at Salamis, and at Mycale, it assisted Grecian valor in rolling back the hordes of Asiatics, which the injured pride of the Persian kings led them to send against the mother country. It conveyed Dido and her fellow-fugitives to Carthage, and rendered the latter so great and powerful that it could cope with Rome for the mistressship of the world. And, under Providence, this sea, by the part it played in the Punic wars, had no small share in deciding that the love of freedom, the spirit of independence, the stern maintenance of law and justice, which underlay and exalted the Roman character, and not the low, sordid, unprincipled policy that actuated and degraded Carthage, should then prevail, and ultimately pervade Western Europe. Thus the Mediterranean is interesting for the influence it exerted on the history, the condition, and the commerce of the most civilized of ancient nations, which, as we have seen, dwelt along its shores. And if, in modern times, this sea has dwindled in importance, if commerce has, in a great measure forsaken this—the cradle of its young energies, it is because mankind have spread to newer and more extensive regions, and their intercourse can no longer be confined to limits so narrow.