

Royal ever revisit "the glimpses of the moon," it might find some difficulty in realizing (if ghosts can realize) how Cowley in the flesh could speak in 1742 so boastfully of the part played by the English in that most devilish of all traffics, the trade in fellow-creatures. Says he, treating of Nigritia, "The Negro Trade is in this Country of great Consequence. The English have in a Manner monopolized it, and transport great Numbers of them to their Plantations in the West Indies." On the supposition, however, that any of the captured darkies were of the blood-royal in Benin, they might have regarded their deportation as a real god-send, for we read that in this country, "The King keeps 1,000 Wives. Out of the Sons he has by them, the Number of which commonly is very large, he nominates one for his Successor, but the rest of his Brethren are obliged to go and hang themselves." It was, perhaps, in view of a similar condition of affairs elsewhere, that there originated the beautiful though brief prayer, "Oh, king, live forever!" Who knows, indeed, that the burden of our own national anthem may not be traced to some such source?

The capital of our empire, according to the work before us, would only make a fair suburb of "Cairo, or Grand Cairo, which is not only the largest City in Egypt, but in the whole World. . . . It is 48 Miles in Circumference; it has 24,000 Streets, and almost as many Mosques. The Number of Inhabitants are reckoned to be seven Millions. . . ." As Steven Van Brammelendam, of Amsterdam, would say "they must have been a very *churchical* people."

Woorali poison, so much talked of during recent times, would seem to have been fully equalled a hundred and fifty years ago, in Nubia, for "This Country produces a subtle and incurable Poison, one Grain of

which is able to kill ten Men in half an Hour; an Ounce is sold for 100 Ducats." In the presence of such a fearfully virulent toxicant, one can only feel thankful that the price was so high, and that in Nubia ducats were probably of rare occurrence.

When we reach Abyssinia, it is an agreeable disappointment to find our authority an unbeliever in Prester John, and actually informing us that "according to the modern Accounts this was only a Chimæra, the Inhabitants not having known, or so much as heard of, that Name." After reading such a demurrer we can more readily believe that the Abyssinians possessed two fine libraries, and that one of these at Axum contained "Manuscripts of *Enoch*, *Abraham*, *Solomon*, and *Esdras*, written with their own Hands."

"Of the Kingdom of Monomugi" it may assist us in fixing the locality to know that "the famous Mountains of the Moon are not far from it," and it was presumably in the neighbourhood of the said mountains that the "Dragons and other wild Creatures which abound in this Country" found a retreat. "The People in General are Idolators," says Mr. Cowley, which is scarcely more astonishing than if he said they were lunatics.

When describing the empire of Monomotopa, with its "30 Kingdoms," the translator remarks "it would be to little Purpose to enumerate all their Names," and here, for the first time, we fully agree with him. The capital, he says, "is built of Stone, two Stories high, for which it is admired by all the rest of the Nation; no other Town is built like it, the Houses being mere Huts, patched up with Wood and Clay. . . . The Apartments of the Emperor's Palace are furnished with the finest Tapestries and Ivory Branches, which are hung up by Chains of Gold. . . . The Emperor governs with an Abso-