

**NOTES ON THE NORTHERN
ATLANTIC FOR THE
USE OF TRAVELLERS**

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Notes on the Northern Atlantic for the Use of Travellers by Richard Brown

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RICHARD BROWN

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PREFACE.

HAVING often, in crossing the Atlantic, sought in vain for information upon many subjects which naturally excite the curiosity of travellers, especially on their first voyage, it occurred to me that I might possibly render some slight assistance to future travellers by collecting, from authentic sources, such facts as might be useful to them under similar circumstances. With this object in view I carefully perused the works of several eminent writers on the navigation and physical geography of the Atlantic, from which, and from some other sources, I have compiled the following notes, adding such remarks as suggested themselves in the course of my inquiries. If I

have succeeded in placing the result before my readers in such a form as to induce them to devote their attention to the study of some of the interesting phenomena submitted in the following pages, I shall consider myself amply repaid for the time occupied in collecting and arranging the materials for this little book.

R. B.

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NOTES
ON
THE NORTHERN ATLANTIC.

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of the Atlantic by the Phœnicians—Their voyages to Tarshish—Form settlements in Cyprus, Rhodes, Sicily, &c.—Establish a colony at Gades—Their voyages to Britain—Greeks found the city of Syracuse—Establish the colony of Massilia—Visit Gades—Call the great ocean the Atlantic—Carthaginians form settlements in Spain—Monopolise the trade with Britain—Send expeditions along the coast of Africa and to the north of Britain—Romans settle in Spain—Visit and sail round Britain—Reach the *Ultima Thule* of the Greeks.

THE *Phœnicians*—the Canaanites of Scripture—were, according to the testimony of ancient writers, the inventors of navigation, and the first people who made voyages for trading purposes in the Mediterranean. The enterprising merchants of Tyre, ‘the Queen of the Sea,’ formed settlements in Cyprus, Rhodes, the Isles of the Grecian Archipelago, Sicily and Tartessus (modern Andalusia). Enjoying a monopoly of the commerce of

the Mediterranean, they carried on a lucrative trade with Tartessus, exchanging the products of the East for its gold, silver, copper, lead, and iron. This region, one of the most fertile of the ancient world, is called *Tarshish* in the Old Testament, and according to the Book of Genesis, chap. x., ver. 4, was peopled by the descendants of Japhet. As the knowledge of the existence of this country could only have been derived from the reports of the Phœnicians, they must have visited Tarshish, according to the chronology generally accepted, 1450 years before the Christian era, or about the same time that their country was conquered by the Israclites.

In their progress to the westward, the Phœnicians at length reached the Straits of Gibraltar and passed through into the Atlantic. Sailing along the coast in a north-westerly direction they discovered an excellent harbour where they established a colony to which they gave the name of *Gades* (Cadiz). According to Strabo, the colony of Gades was established 290 years before the foundation of Carthage, or in the twelfth century B.C.; consequently, if they had visited Tarshish in the year 1450 B.C., they must have been more than 200 years in the immediate vicinity of the Straits before they ventured to pass through into the open ocean. Once embarked on the waters of the Atlantic, they showed

no lack of courage in prosecuting their discoveries, having sailed as far as the Scilly Isles in a northern, and the Cape de Verde Islands in a southern, direction.

There is no mention in history of the date of the discovery of the Scilly Islands,¹ nor of the way by which the Phœnicians approached them. As there is no record of their having had any communication with the inhabitants of Gaul, it is probable that, having reached Cape Ortegal—the northern extremity of Spain—the adventuresome traders stood boldly out to sea, steering by the Polar star, with which they were acquainted, until they arrived at the Scilly Islands. An active trade was long maintained between the islands and the colony of Gades, from whence the Phœnicians transported large quantities of tin, copper, and lead to Tyre—the great mart from which the Eastern nations derived their supplies of these valuable products.² *Midacritus* was the first civilised man that ever visited Britain and carried a cargo of tin from thence to Tyre or Sidon. The Phœnicians con-

¹ The Scilly Islands were afterwards called the *Cassiterides* by the Greeks—a name supposed to have been derived from the Arabic word *Kastira*, signifying tin.

² ‘The British tin mines mainly supplied the glorious adornment of Solomon’s Temple; and hence also came the chief material of the armour of the kings and chieftains of heroic Greece.’—Creasy’s *History of England*, 1869.