

The second river is called PHISON, and it goes through India, circling all the land of Evilach, and is said to go down

A quel Re dà tributo e sta soggetto,  
Perch' è in poter di lui dal cammin dritto  
Levare il Nilo e dargli altro ricetto,  
E per questo lascià subito affitto  
Di fame il Cairo e tutto quel distretto.  
Senapo detto è dai suddetti suoi;  
Gli diciam Presto o Preteianni noi."—*Orl. Fur.*, xxxiii, 116.

The question will be found discussed in *Ludolf* (i., c. viii, § 76-92, and *Comment.*, pp. 130-132) *Num Rex Habessinorum Nilum divertere possit ne in Ægyptum fluat?* He refers to the Saracenic history of El Macini, in which we find it related that in the time of Michael, Patriarch of the Jacobites of Alexandria (who was elected in the year 1089, and ruled for nine years), "the Nile became excessively low, wherefore (the Sultan) Mostansir sent him (Michael) up to Ethiopia with costly presents. The king of the country sent out to meet him and received him with reverence, asking wherefore he had come. And he then set forth how the great deficiency of the Nile in Egypt was threatening destruction to that land and its people. The king upon this ordered the cut that had been made to divert the waters to be closed, so that the water might again flow towards Egypt, seeing that the Patriarch had come so far on that account. And the Nile rose three cubits in one night, so that all the fields of Egypt received ample water and could be sown. And the Patriarch returned with much credit to Egypt, and was loaded with gifts and honours by the Prince Mustansir." (*Histor. Saracen. a Georg. Elmacino*, by *Erpenius*, Lug. Bat., 1625, B. iii, c. 8.) The story is (briefly) noticed in *Herbelot* under the word *Nil*, and is told much as by *Elmacini* from the *History of Egypt* by *Wassaif Shah*, who says the famine had lasted seven years when the report reached Egypt of the Nile's having been diverted (*Notices et Extraits*, viii, p. 47); and also in *De Castro's Voyage of Stephen de Gama*. He says the thing was much talked of among the Abyssinians, and that it secured that people the privilege of passing through Egypt without paying tribute. (*Astley's Voyages*, i., 114.) *Urreta*, a Spanish Dominican writer, of whom *Ludolf* speaks with much contempt, says that the Pope wrote to *Menas King of Ethiopia* to turn off the Nile, and not to mind about the tribute of three hundred thousand sequins which he got from the Turk to keep it open. A certain *Wanzlebius*, having been desired by *Duke Ernest of Saxony* to investigate this matter, reported that the Europeans in Egypt looked on the whole story as an Abyssinian rhodomontade, but afterwards in 1677 he claimed to have found a letter from a king of Abyssinia threatening the Sultan with the diversion of the Nile. It is also noticed by *Ludolf* that *Albuquerque* is stated by his son to have seriously contemplated this diversion, and to have often urged *King Emanuel* to send him miners for the job (*Ludolf*, u.s., and the others quoted above).

The legend is thus told as a fact also by *Simon Sigoli*, who travelled to