

A Friend of mine having desired me to tell him in Writing, what I have heard concerning the petrify'd Town, I shall give him a Relation thereof, as I had it from several Persons, and particularly from a Person of Credit, who went on the Spot, purposely to satisfy himself of the Truth of it; and the Account he gives is as follows.

That the Town lies two Days Journey South from *Ongella*, which is distant from *Tripoli* S. E. seventeen Days March with the Caravans. That when he came to the Town, which is large, and of an orbicular Form, wherein are several spacious, as well as narrow Streets, full of Shops and defended by a very large and magnificent Castle; he saw several petrify'd Trees, in, and about the Town; most of them Olives and Palms, but all turn'd into Stone of a Blue or Ash Colour.

That the Inhabitants are also petrify'd: The Men, whilst following their several Occupations, some with Stuffs in their Hands, others with Bread: In short, all of them in some Action: And the Women with their Infants at the Breast; and others in strict Embraces with Men; all turn'd into Stone. That he entered the Castle by three different Gates, tho' there are more, where he saw a Man petrify'd, lying on a Bed of Stone, as were the very Centinels standing on the Gates, with their Pikes and Javelins in their Hands.

That he also saw several Sorts of Animals, such as Camels, Oxen, Horses, Asses, Sheep, and Birds, all turn'd into Stone, of the Colour abovemention'd.

I was highly pleas'd at this Account given by the Envoy of *Tripoli*, because I take it to be a sufficient Confirmation of the Relation the World had before of that extraordinary Event, to which most People would not give Credit; and took it as a fictitious Story which Authors design'd to impose upon Mankind. Mr *Lucas*, an Author still living at *Paris*, has been under that Suspicion, because in his Travels into *Greece*, *Asia Minor*, and *Africa*, he has insert'd in the second Tome, Page 57, an Account, by which it appears that there is in that Part of *Africa*, called *Cyrenalca*, a whole petrify'd Country. I have not those Travels by me, but will quote that Account given by the Author in his own Words, as I find them transcrib'd by the Authors of the *Bibliotèque Germanique*, Tom. V. Page 110.

WITHIN three Days Journey Westward from *Ongella* (says the Author of the Memoirs communicated to Mr. *Lucas*) and within 8 Journies from *Bingazi*, lies *Rassim*, which signifies in *Arabic*; Head of Poison, or Poisoned Country: That Country is petrify'd, and was formerly inhabited as *Ongella*: There were Forests of Palm Trees and Olive Trees, which are now turn'd or converted into Flint Stones, without having lost or chang'd their Figure. There are still at this Time a great many standing, which are all petrify'd. There is an infinite Number of them. The *Arabians*, Natives of that Country, that I have seen, and Christian Slaves, who have been in those Parts, have assured me to have seen and observed Bodies of Men, Women and Cattle petrify'd, and amongst the latter, a Horse standing on his Fore Feet, that seem'd to be alive.

Perhaps, says the Author of the *Bibliotèque*, some Doubt might be rais'd concerning the Truth of so extraordinary a Fact; but what the Author of a Memoir (inserted by Mr. *Lucas*,) relates only upon the Credit and Authority of others, several Authors, whom we have not Time to consult, assure to have seen with their own Eyes. It were to be wish'd the Author of that Library would have given us the Names of those Authors, that we might have compar'd their Accounts together; but until that Matter is more fully discuss'd, we think fit to refer the Reader to the curious Book of Father *Kircher*, intituled *Mundus Subterraneus*; Printed at *Amsterdam*, Anno 1678; in which he will find an Account of innumerable Petrifications of Animals, Plants, Fruits of all Sorts, Cheese, Bread, and several other Things.

The amazing Petrification of the *African* Town abovesaid, was not unknown to our learned and curious Author, for it is mentioned in the second Tome of his Book, Page 53. The Account he gives therein is very remarkable, and we refer to it; but for the Sake of such of our Readers as have not that Book, we shall insert a short Abstract of it.

I shall only add, (says Father *Kircher*) by Way of Conclusion, a most dreadful Event that happened in our Days, in an Inland Town in *Africa*, whose Inhabitants, Men, Women, Cattle, as also Trees, Household Goods, Corn, and other Provisions, were, by a most wonderful and astonishing Metamorphosis, converted into Stones. This is attested by Persons of Honour and Credit, who assert it for undoubted Matter of Fact. I enquired about it of several *Arabians*, Inhabitants of those Parts, who have unanimously declar'd to me, That the Account I had received was true. Therefore I have thought fit to insert here the Relation of it as I received it from *Habelus*, Vice-Chancellor of the Order of *Malta*.

I have not room to translate, *verbatim*, the Letter from that Vice-Chancellor, but will observe, that it contains in Substance, That in the Year 1634, the Gallies of *Malta* brought in there Five Prizes (on board which were 60 *Ethiopeans*, or *Negroes*) bound from *Tripoli* to *Constantinople*, to be sold there: and that amongst them was a Girl near Ten Years of Age, named *Callurabie*, who at the Time of the writing of the Letter was living, and in the Service of a Person of Note in *Malta*, after having been baptized, and named *Victoria*. That Slave reports, that she was born in the Town or City of *Cucu*, in the Province of *Tongil*, and that when she was Five Years of Age, her Mother's Sister, who lived in the Town or Village of *Biedoblo*, acquainted her Parents, that *Biedoblo*, a Town within the same Distance of *Cucu* as *Biedoblo*, was (in a most dreadful Storm that happened in the Night, in Summer Time, attended with violent Claps of Thunder, and Shocks of an Earthquake,) turned in one Moment into very hard Stone, with all the Inhabitants, Cattle, Trees, and other Things, *Momento in Saxa durissima obriuisse*.

That Slave reports further, That her Parents hearing of this extraordinary Event, went to *Biedoblo*, and took her and her eldest Brother along with them, where they saw this terrible Metamorphosis, and observed that the Inhabitants had preserved the Situation and Posture they were in before they were petrify'd. The same was observed of Horses, and other Animals.

This surprizing Event drawing great Multitudes to *Biedoblo*, the Petty King of *Cucu*, went himself to see that Wonder, and afterwards thought fit to forbid all Persons to go thither, without his Leave. The Slave aforesaid having been an Ocular Witness of the Particulars aforesaid, continued a whole Year after at *Cucu*, where the Petrification of the Inhabitants of *Biedoblo* was the common Discourse of all People. She was afterwards removed to another Place, made a Slave with others, and sold at *Borno* to Merchants, shipped off at *Tripoli*, and taken by the *Matthese* Gallies as aforesaid.

Whoever well examines the Account in *Lucas's* Travels will agree, That the Persons from whom he had it, had in all Probability, seen the Relation, which the Envoy of *Tripoli* copied out of the *Arabick* Manuscript mentioned above, for the two Accounts agree in several Things. And as to the Account communicated to Father *Kircher*, there is no doubt but it is a Relation of the same Fact, with these additional material Particulars. 1. The Name of the Petrify'd Town. 2. Some Circumstances of its Petrification, as the Season of the Year, Thunder, Lightning, and Earthquake, which deserve a particular Attention in the Examination of this Phenomenon. And 3. The Year when that Prodigy happened, which by the Account given by that Slave, seems to have been Anno 1629.

If we had this Account only from the Slave aforesaid, we might question the Truth of it; but the Reader will observe, that a great many other ocular Witnesses are mentioned in the three Accounts above inserted, and that no solid Objections can be made against the Relation given by the Slave, upon Account of her Age; for every Body will find by his own Experience, that we all remember certain remarkable Things that happened in our Infancy, even under that Age.

L O N D O N, January 29.

His Majesty was pleas'd in the Beginning of this Month, to order Letters Patents to pass under the Great Seal of Great-Britain, for creating his Royal Highness Frederick Lewis, (the Prince of Great-Britain, Electoral Prince of Brunswick Lunenburgh, Duke of Cornwall and Rothsay, Duke of Edinburgh, Marquis of the Isle of Ely, Earl of Eltham, Vis-