

geographers knew all the difficulties of this passage, and correctly brought them into connection with the whirlpools of Homer.¹ The poet himself had no definite idea of their situation; he placed them in the far west, like the islands of Æolus and Circe.

Hesiod touches on questions relating to the ocean only in an incidental manner; HESIOD. his general notions on land and sea resemble those of Homer. With Hesiod, the ocean stream is a perfect river.² Hesiod gives a catalogue of rivers flowing from the ocean and Tethys; it appears from several passages that land exists on the other side of the ocean, and that the extreme limit of the world is not the oceanic stream. Thus, with him, the Hesperides are in a land beyond the ocean.³ The giant Geryones lived in the island of Erythea, across the ocean.⁴ "The islands of the blest" are surrounded by the eddies of the sea. The Greeks were not long in abandoning the Homeric idea as to the ocean limit of the world. We may even see in these passages of Hesiod the first traces of some ancient myths, the most celebrated being that of Atlantis, which supposed the existence of inhabited regions beyond the confines of the land bordered by the ocean stream.

Towards the end of the eighth century before our era, the Greeks commenced to EIGHTH CENTURY B.C. employ larger ships in navigation, which permitted them to undertake more distant voyages with less danger; this had a beneficial effect on the progress of oceanography.⁵ It was at this period that the range of geographical knowledge was extended by the establishment of Doric and Ionic colonies on the coasts of Southern Italy and Sicily. Soon afterwards colonists from the city of Miletus penetrated northward to the Pontus Euxinus. At the same time, some wandering pirates reached the delta of the Nile, and, in reward for services rendered by them to the king, commercial relations were established between the Greeks and the kingdom of Psammeticus, Egypt having, up to that date, been closed to all foreigners, as rigidly as were China and Japan down to a recent period.

A few years after the opening up of Egypt, the oracle of Delphi ordered the inhabi- SEVENTH CENTURY B.C. tants of the island of Thera to go forth and found a colony on the Libyan coasts. It is said that such was the ignorance of these islanders, at that period, of all that lay beyond the horizon of their habitual voyages, that no person could be found among them who knew where Libya was to which they were required to send colonists; the expedition was, however, organised a little later, and resulted in the foundation of Cyrene about 631 B.C. It happened about the same time that Colæus, the commander of a ship of Samos, was carried by east winds far to the west. After passing the coasts of Sicily, he traversed the

¹ Strabo, i. 2, 36.

² Τελέητος ποταμοῖο, referring very probably to its circular course, flowing round, and encompassing all things (Hesiod, Theog., vv. 242, 959.).

³ Hesiod, *ibid.*, vv. 215, 216.

⁴ Hesiod, *ibid.*, vv. 287-294. For the whole passage, see Bunbury, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 86.

⁵ Thucydides, i. 13. According to this author the Corinthians were the first to build triremes; the Samians learnt the use of them from the Corinthians as early as 700 B.C. (see Bunbury, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 108).