

other; and in this manner it still appears in the charts of Ptolemy. Since then, the water has been directed into the Bolbitian and Phatnitic mouths; and it is at these entrances into the sea that the greatest depositions have been formed, which have given the coast a semicircular outline. The cities of Rosetta and Damietta, which were built upon these mouths, close to the edge of the sea, less than a thousand years ago, are now two leagues distant from it. According to Demaillet*, it would only have required twenty-six years to form a promontory of half a league in extent before Rosetta.

An elevation is produced in the soil of Egypt, at the same time that this extension of its surface takes place, and the bed of the river rises in the same proportion as the adjacent plains, which makes the inundations of every succeeding century pass far beyond the marks which it had left during the preceding ones. According to Herodotus, a period of nine hundred years was sufficient to establish a difference of level amounting to ten or twelve feet. At Elephantia †, the inundation at present exceeds by seven feet the greatest heights which it attained under Septimus Severus, at the commencement of the third

* Demaillet, Description of Egypt, p. 102,-3.

† Herod. Euterpe, xiii.