

in the sacred record. It seems to have been a great oblong box, somewhat like a wooden granary, three storeys high, and furnished with a roof apparently of the ordinary angular shape, but with a somewhat broader ridge than common ; and it measured three hundred cubits in length, fifty cubits in breadth, and thirty cubits in height. A good deal of controversy has, however, arisen regarding the cubit employed ; some holding, with Sir Walter Raleigh, and most of the older theologians, such as Shuckford and Hales, that the Noachian cubit was what is known as the common or natural cubit, "containing," says Sir Walter, "one foot and a half, or a length equal to that of the human fore-arm measured from the sharp of the elbow to the point of the middle finger ;" others contending that it was the palm-cubit, "which taketh," adds my authority, "one handful more than the common ;" yet others, the royal or Persian cubit of twenty-one inches ; and so on ; for there are, it seems, five several kinds of cubit to choose from, all differing each from the others. The controversy is one in which there is exceeding little footing for any party. I am inclined, however, to adopt, with Raleigh and Hales, the *natural* cubit, for the following reason. The given dimensions of the ark form the oldest example of measurement of which we have any record ; and all, or almost all, the older and simpler standards of measure bear reference to portions of the human frame. There is the span, the palm, the hand-breadth, the thumb-breadth (or inch), the hair-breadth, and the *foot*. The simple fisherman on our coasts still measures off his fathoms by stretching out both his arms to the full ; the village sempstress still tells off her cloth-breadths by finger-lengths and *nails* ; the untaught tiller of the soil still estimates the area of his little field by *pacing* along its sides. Man's first and most obvious expedient, when he sets himself to measure, is to employ his own person as his standard ; and the first or common cubit was a