immediately before it was conquered by Hyder, at which time the natives assert it to have contained 50,000 houses. It afterwards suffered many calamities from Tippoo and the Mahrattas, and now contains scarcely 300 houses ; but it is fast reviving. In the district of Sera, all the villages were strongly fortified ; and frequent famines took place, when the inhabitants were in the practice of plundering each other to support life. The defence of the villages against plunderers was conducted, not by fire-arms, but by throwing stones, in which the inhabitants are very dexte­rous. The town is eighty four miles north from Seringapatam. Long. 76. 55. E. Lat. 13. 37. N.

SERAGLIO, formed from the Persian word *seram,* or Turkish word *serai,* which signifies a house, is commonly used to express the house or palace of a prince. In this sense it is frequently used at Constantinople, where the houses of foreign ambassadors are called seraglios. But it is commonly used by way of eminence for the palace of the grand signior at Constantinople, where he keeps his court, where his concubines are lodged, and where the youth are trained up for the chief posts of the empire.

SERAI, a building on the high road, or in large cities, in India, erected for the accommodation of travellers.

SERAMPEI, a country or district in the interior of the island of Sumatra. It has on the north and north-west Korinchi ; on the east, south-east, and south, Pakalang, Jambce, and Sungei-tenang ; and on the west and south­west, a river and chain of high mountains. It comprehends fifteen fortified and independent villages.

SERAMPOOR, a town in the province of Bengal, and district of Birbhoom, 107 miles west from Moorshedabad. Long. 80. 24. E. Lat. 24. 6. N.

SERAMPORE, a town of Bengal, belonging to theDanes, situated on the west side of the Hooghly river, about twelve miles above Calcutta. Serampore has a pleasing appearance viewed from the river, the houses being tolerably well built, of brick, and whitened ; they have flat roofs, with balconies and Venetian windows, though few of them are more than two stories in height. There is a handsome church, and a bat­tery of twelve pieces of cannon, chiefly for saluting, for the town is without fortifications. The trade which the Calcutta merchants carried on during the war, under cover of the Cal­cutta flag, was very profitable to the Danes who were settled here. The trade which it now carries on with Europe and China is but trifling. It is chiefly supported by mis­sionaries ; and insolvent debtors from Calcutta found here an asylum, from whence they could set their creditors at defiance. The missionaries have here established a printing- press, and printed the Scriptures in various dialects. Dur­ing the short war with the Danes it was taken possession of by the British ; but it was soon afterwards restored. Long. 88. 26. E. Lat. 22. 45. N.

SERANGANI Isles, a group of small islands in the Eastern Seas, about five leagues south of Magindanao, and between the fifth and sixth degrees of north latitude. The largest island is called Hummock Isle, about thirty miles in circumference. The next in size is about twenty-five miles in circumference ; and there is another of somewhat inferior dimensions. This island, which is the most west­erly, is very high and of a conical form, and its northern coast is very bold. It is fertile and well cultivated, and produces most of the tropical fruits, also rice, sugar-canes, pine-apples, mangoes, sour oranges, limes, jacks, plantains, cocoa-nuts, sago, sweet potatoes, tobacco, &c. The ships that pass, trade with the inhabitants for poultry, goats, and other refreshments; and one principal article of trade is bees’ wax. There is a great demand among the natives for white or printed cottons, such as loose gowns or jackets, coloured handkerchiefs, knives, razors, and bar-iron. The inhabitants

are, like almost all the islanders in the Eastern Seas, addict­ed to piracy ; and they have canoes, and also larger boats, armed with small brass cannon, with which they carry on this trade of plunder. The Dutch claimed the sovereignty over these islands, which, however, they seldom exercised.

SERAPH, or Seraphim, spirits of the highest rank in the hierarchy of angels, who are so called from their being supposed to be the most inflamed with divine love, by their nearer and more immediate attendance at the throne of God, and to communicate their fervour to the remoter and inferior orders. Seraphim is the Hebrew plural of seraph.

SERAPION, a physician of Alexandria. He and Phi- linus of the isle of Cos were both scholars of Herophilus, and were founders of the empirical sect, which happened about 287 before Christ.

SERAPIS, in *Mythology,* an Egyptian deity, who was worshipped under various names and attributes, as the tu­telary god of Egypt in general, and as the patron of several of their principal cities. Tacitus informs us, that he was worshipped as a kind of universal deity, that represented Æsculapius, Osiris, Jupiter, and Pluto. He was sometimes taken for Jupiter Ammon, the Sun, and Neptune ; and the honours that were rendered to him at Alexandria were more solemn and extraordinary than those of any other place.

Plutarch and Clemens of Alexandria, as well as Tacitus,@@1 inform us, that whilst the first Ptolemy was employed in for­tifying Alexandria with walls, and adorning it with temples and stately buildings, there appeared to him in his sleep a young man of extraordinary beauty, of a stature more than human, admonishing him to despatch into Pontus some of his most trusty friends, to bring from thence his statue ; as­suring him that the city and kingdom which possessed it should prove happy, glorious, and powerful. The young man having thus spoken, disappeared, mounting up into heaven in a blaze of fire.

Ptolemy discovered his vision to the priests ; but finding them ignorant of Pontus, he had recourse to an Athenian, who informed him that near Sinope, a city of Pontus, there was a temple much resorted to by the natives, which was consecrated to Pluto, where he had a statue, near which stood that of a woman. Ptolemy neglecting the injunc­tions of the apparition, it again appeared to him in a me­nacing attitude ; and the king immediately despatched am­bassadors to the Serapian monarch, loaded with presents. The king of Sinope consented, but his subjects opposed the removal of the statue. The god, however, of his own ac­cord, as we are informed, conveyed himself to the ambassa­dors’ ship, and in three days landed in Alexandria. The statue of Serapis was erected in one of the suburbs of the city, where a magnificent temple was afterwards reared.

The statue of Serapis, according to Macrobius, was of a human form, with a basket or bushel on his head, signify­ing plenty ; his right hand leaned on the head of a serpent, whose body was wound round a figure with three heads, of a dog, a lion, and a wolf ; and in his left hand he held a measure of a cubit in length, as if it were to take the height of the waters of the Nile. The figure of Serapis is found on many ancient medals.

The famous temple of Serapis at Alexandria was destroy­ed by order of Theodosius ; and the celebrated statue of this deity was broken in pieces, and its limbs carried first in triumph by the Christians through the city, and then thrown into a fierce fire kindled for that purpose in the am­phitheatre. As the Egyptians ascribed the overflowing of the Nile, to which was owing the fertility of their country, to the benign influence of their god Serapis, they conclud­ed, that now he was destroyed, the river would no longer overflow, and that a general famine would ensue ; but when they observed, on the contrary, that the Nile swelled to a

@@@, Tacitus, *Hist.* lib. iv. cap. 3 ; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride;* Clemens Alexandrinus in *Protrep.*