Ophir (newspapers)

*Leeds Intelligencer* 18 May 1850

> CALIFORNIA THE OPHIR.—The editor of the *Sunday Times* persists in regarding California as the Ophir of Scripture. He says, in answer to a correspondent:—"In estimating the amount of gold which was brought from Ophir, I find it stated in Kings I. chapter ix., verses 28, that they came to Ophir and took from thence four hundred and twenty talents in gold; but in the Chronicles II. chap. viii. v. 18, it is stated that they took four hundred and fifty talents of gold. How do you account for this discrepancy, and where do you find Ophir?" The talents of Ophir and Jerusalem varied sufficiently to account for the difference; or they may have taken four hundred and fifty talents at Ophir and expended thirty in paying for the service of King Hiram's ships and crews. Archbishop Usher calculates the shekel at 2s. 6d. sterling, and one hundred thousand talents of silver at that rate amounts to £30,250,000 which being multiplied by twelve, the proportion of silver to gold, will give the sum of £435,000,000. The whole expense of building and furnishing the Temple of Solomon, for which this gold was brought from Ophir, was £388,477,315 sterling—more than the national debt of Great Britain. If Ophir was a three years' voyage from the Red Sea, then it was not in Africa or the Indian Ocean, which was within sixty days' journey.—In the oldest maps of California, San Francisco is laid down as the "Golden Gates," which is a Scripture phrase.—We can find no other location but California for Ophir." Antiquarianism has very often shot wider off the mark than this.

*Morning Post* 30 Jan 1851
compared to Chaldea, “the people of Judea” possessed “political, sciential, and artistic insignificance… Solomon had not the means to build the Temple, and his trading with Judaic vessels to Ophir is a pure fiction, directly contrary to the chronicle in the Bible, which affirms that it was ‘the Navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir’… Otherwise they would have been drowned.”
MR. SILLIFANT ON GOLD.

It will be recollected that at the opening of the Spring Sessions, John Sillifant, Esq., the President of the Society, kindly offered to deliver a lecture on "The History of Gold." The announcement was warmly received, and the committee forthwith fixed Monday evening for its delivery. The lecture-room at the Athenæum was filled by a respectable and attentive audience.

Mr. Sillifant was loudly cheered on rising. After a few words of preface, he commenced reading his interesting paper on "The History of Gold." The hon. gentleman confined himself to the early history of the metal, accompanying his facts with moral and appropriate reflections. He said that at a time when new and increasing supplies of gold—the king of metals—were breaking in upon the world from fresh and unexpected sources, the mind was naturally turned to the previous history of the product, and desired to trace out the origin of its discovery. The traveller, who found himself on the banks of some deep and rolling stream, was not satisfied until he had traced it to its source. Like the river stream, gold had its source and origin in the earth, and in its progress it was sometimes extended, sometimes contracted, but the stream was never quite lost. Having alluded to the admiration universally bestowed upon the metal, and the delight evinced by man, in its acquisition, the lecturer observed that it was not a little interesting to observe how the earth’s treasures afforded to society, in its earliest developments, and through succeeding ages, the amount required for its use. Gold recommended itself to man in every state of society—the savage was attracted by its glitter—and the skilful artizan by its being more malleable and ductile than any other metal. When man arrived at that state of civilization, when he not only possessed the necessary but the luxuries of life, he found gold the most convenient and most compendious medium of exchange. It was very early in the world’s history, that they first heard of the existence of gold—it was at that part of the sacred narrative when the earth
world's history, that they first heard of the existence of gold—it was at that part of the sacred narrative when the earth was mentioned as coming fresh from the hands of the Creator, who pronounced it to be very good. They were told "that a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads," and the sacred historian adds that "the name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havillah where there is gold." It was the same country mentioned as the dwelling place of Ishmael, and generally supposed to be Arabia Felix; and the same called Colchis, which was bounded by the river Phasis, and lying to the east of the Euxine Sea—a country celebrated by that enterprising crew, who, in a ship of fifty oars, set out to obtain the golden fleece. It was quite certain that a great deal of gold was found in Colchis, for they were informed that the inhabitants collected the golden grains from the river Phasis, by means of sheep-skins, placed in the stream. He then alluded to the possessions of Abraham, thirteen centuries before the birth of Christ. It was stated that when he and his family went up to Egypt, that they were very rich, both in silver and gold. At this early period, being about 400 years after the Deluge, the possession of the precious metal was considered to be indicative of wealth. The lecturer, "in tracing the stream downwards," adverted to the ancient city of Ninevah, and its golden treasures, and spoke of the interesting discoveries of Layard, who had discovered and unfolded the burial place of this vast city, and relieved it from its cements of sand. He then referred to Babylon, and the vast accumulation of the precious metal in that famed city of ancient times. The god Belus set up in the plains of Dura, was all of pure gold—was forty feet high, and was valued at a thousand Babylonish talents, which amounted to three millions and a half of English money. After mentioning several
lions and a half of English money. After mentioning several other instances of vast gold accumulations, on the authority of Herodotus, the hon. lecturer spoke in glowing terms of the magnificent temple of Solomon, in the building of which vast quantities of the precious metal were used. He referred to the passage where Hiram “sent to Solomon, by the hands of his servants, ships and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to King Solomon.” They were further told that King Solomon made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold, and there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of pure gold, which was fastened to the throne. All this, however, remarked the lecturer was collected only to be swept away at the distance of four centuries. Alluding to Alexander of Macedon, he spoke of the conquests achieved by him, and the accumulation of gold consequent thereon. As an illustration of his wealth, he mentioned that this great conqueror who, died at the age of 32, was buried in a coffin made with pure gold. Travelling onwards from the east to the west, the hon. lecturer referred to Greece, to the golden offerings at the Delphic oracle, (without which it would not speak) and to other instances of gold accumulations and discoveries. He contended that gold, when properly used and distributed, conferred a blessing on mankind; but like other good things, when abused, proved a curse rather than otherwise. For this, as well as for all other blessings, physical, mental, and spiritual, they should give the thanks and the glory to Almighty God, the Author and Giver of “every good thing.” The hon. gentleman was loudly cheered throughout.
Tenasserim, or Notes on the Fauna, Flora, Minerals, and Nations of British Burmah, and Pegu. By the Rev. E. Mason, M. A.—This is,

We have no space for even a slight sketch of the mass of information collected by Mr. Mason, but we would recommend his work to every student of the Burmese language, and every officer who may be employed in that country. It is one of the most valuable works of the kind which has ever appeared in this country, not merely for the complete originality of its information, but also for the talent which has been exhibited in collecting and arranging it. We conclude by extracting a paragraph in which the writer essays to prove that Pegu, called by the Talines, Suburnubhumi, or the land of gold, is the Ophir of Solomon, a supposition which is about as probable as any other which has been advanced. Certainly the ivory, peacocks, and monkeys might have been obtained from the same locality.

"Suvanna-bumme is still the classic Pali name of Sutung. Bumme signifies earth, place or site; and suvanna, gold; so that the name is literally "place of gold." The ancient name of Mauhce, in the delta of the Irrawaddy, was Suvanna-madde, or "river of gold," indicating that Pegu was famous in antiquity for its gold; and gold and silver appear to have been much more abundant than they are now, even three centuries ago. Caesar Frederic writes of the vessel in which he left the country: "Save victuals and ballast, they had but silver and gold, and no other merchandize."

"Josephus says that the country from which Solomon procured his gold was "anciently called Ophir, but now the Aurea Chersonesus, which belongs to India;" and Dr. Tylor observes: "The country designated by Ptolemy the golden Chersonese, is now generally admitted to be Pegu." The Sanscrit form of Suvanna, the name of Sutung, is Suvarna; and this, when the final syllable is dropped, is nearly identical with Souphir; the Greek name of Ophir, newer, certainly, than the Greek to the Hebrew, which we know to be of common origin."
CALIFORNIA.—Quaint and strange are the speculations which the antiquarians indulge in respecting this land of gold; some with no little plausibility set it forth as the Ophir of Scripture, whence the ships of Solomon returned laden with the precious ore for the construction of the temple, and allege the length of the voyage, which was three years and a half, as a strong circumstantial proof. The climate of some portions of the region is said to be salubrious and pleasant, and seeing that a colony is about to be established there, it is probable that a city will grow up on the shores of the Pacific destined to rival even the world-famed ports of the Atlantic coast. Truly, the Americans are a great people; for two thousand years has the auriferous sand sparkled beneath the mocassin of the Indian or the foot of the lazy Spaniard, unobserved, but scarcely has brother Jonathan been fixed in that location when he commences digging and washing an untold revenue from the mountain and the plain. And although in the very nature of things it may be feared that the territory will be baptized in blood, yet, were it possible to draw aside the veil of futurity, we should infallibly see it the residence of a rich and powerful people, a famous port to which the ships of every nation had turned their prows. This is the day of her prosperity, but first cometh a dark night of probation, an advent of fearful records.—Two Years on the Farm of Uncle Sam.
Gold Diggings in Malacca.—Perhaps the most important piece of news which we have to communicate is that the gold diggers, whom we mentioned in our overland of the 3rd inst. as having left Johore and proceeded to Malacca, have been more successful in the latter place, their explorations at the foot of Gunong Ledang or Mount Ophir having resulted in their finding very promising diggings. Gunong Ledang is about two days' journey from Malacca, and is situate in the Johore territory, just beyond the boundaries of the East India Company's possessions. It has long been known as a gold-producing locality, and at one time was extensively worked by Chinese, but for many years has been abandoned, owing to the lawless manner of the Malays, who, being too lazy themselves to work the mines, plundered and murdered the Chinese to such an extent that the latter were forced to quit the spot. The party now at work consists of some seven or eight Europeans, who have about 30 Chinese in their employ, and the quantity of gold obtained by this party is said to be about thirty ounces a day, with every prospect of an increase. Chinese to the number of 150, or thereabouts, are also at work, but we have not heard with what success. The gold obtained by the European party at present is found in a stream flowing from the mountain, but they intend to mine, and some experienced Californian diggers among them anticipate that they will have great success in this, as the appearance of the locality is very promising. By next mail we shall probably be able to give more detailed information regarding the Mount Ophir diggings.—The Singapore Free Press, Jan. 17.
Hints to Intended Gold-diggers and Buyers, and Other Useful Information to Bush Travellers, &c. By G. F. Goble, many years an Explorer in Australia.

Jeffingham Wilson.

Although apparently late in the day, considering the multitude of works which have issued from the pens purporting to give information respecting the auriferous regions at the Antipodes, this little work will be found singularly replete with matters not alone of much interest, but with information which has hitherto not been afforded to the public. Mr. (or Captain) Goble, the author, has had much experience in geological exploration, both in California as well as Australia, but it is in the latter region his energies have been chiefly occupied, it would seem, for some score years past. He is evidently a man of enterprise and scientific acquirements, and if his style cannot be reckoned as amongst the most polished of the day, it has the unquestionable merit of being, though homely, clear and distinct. The little pamphlet is not alone full of instruction, but we may, indeed, add amusement; and the author's disquisitions of the probability that Australia was the old land of Ophir, from whence Solomon drew his treasures, are curious and instructing.
GOLD AND ITS REDUCTION.

The second meeting of the session was held at the Society House, John-street, Adelphi, last evening—Mr. Thomas Hoblyn, F.R.S., presiding.

The minutes of the last meeting having been read by the secretary (Mr. Forster),

Mr. Charles F. Stansbury, after a few introductory observations, proceeded to lay the following paper before the society, "On machines for pulverising and reducing metalliferous ores:"—

"It has often been remarked, as an evidence of the wise care of Providence, that while gold, which possessed a comparatively artificial value, existed but in small quantities and in few localities, iron, the most useful of metals, was distributed in vast quantities in every quarter of the globe, and was everywhere accessible to man. The present appearance of things would seem to throw some doubt over the truth of this remark, which would appear to be more pious than just. The fact is, that gold is found in every quarter of the world, and every day's research opens new fields to the enterprise of the gold-seeker. The authority of a year on this subject is already out of date. California, whose gold fields were opened only six years ago, had hardly successfully asserted its claim to the title of the Eldorado, before she found a powerful rival in your own Australia; and even this seems destined to share attractions with Devonshire and Wales. The most ancient source of the precious metal mentioned in the sacred writings, is 'the land of Havilah, where there is gold,' and of which it is said 'the gold of that land is good.' Of Ophir, we are told that 'they fetched from thence gold and brought it to Solomon;' and that 'Jehoshaphat made ships to go to Ophir for gold,' but we know not with certainty the situation of Ophir; nor have we the means of ascertaining in what form the metal presented itself, or whether the diggers of those ancient days reduced it by means of crushers, cradles, or long-toms. In later times, Africa was long a noted source of gold, which gave a name, indeed, to a large portion of its coast. The metal was found in small particles, known in commerce as 'gold dust,' collected, no doubt, by some rude process of washing, from the sands in the beds of the intermitting streams. The region on the south of the Sahara, as also Sofala and Kordofan, were prolific sources of the precious metal. Sofala has, indeed, by some been supposed to be the ancient Ophir, and was long the chief emporium of the gold brought from the interior. But Africa is now entirely eclipsed by our modern Eldorados. It is said to yield about 5,000 lbs. weight annually. Asia has long been, and
The Early Knowledge of Gold.—The value and knowledge of gold is, first of all, set forth in Scripture. We learn that Moses caused various parts of the sanctuary to be overlaid with gold—the exterior vesture of the ark of the most high—the staves—and the altar of burnt incense; wooden cherubim of the temple, measuring seventeen feet in height; and the carved doors of the oracle were also overlaid with the precious metal. The art of working in gold, in which the Hebrews at the time of Moses were undoubtedly skilled, they are said to have learned from the ancient Egyptians. Two gold regions are mentioned in Scripture, which geographers have vainly endeavoured to fix with certainty; these are Ophir and Tarshish. The ships of Solomon, piloted by Phenicians, took three years to perform the journey to Tarshish and back, importing peacock's feathers, gold, and silver. Ophir, it has been stoutly declared, is the Peru of modern maps; but Tarshish was obviously an Asiatic locality; since, with the gold and silver, Solomon's ships brought home ivory, and other eastern produce.

Tarshish has been explained variously; by some as the general name of the Phenicians for the ocean—by others, as a corruption of the Sanscrit word Tandess, a silver country. Marks of anciently-worked gold mines, however, have been found in various parts of the world. In the gold districts of the Ural and Altai, unmistakable evidences exist of the former presence of ancient miners. In the museum at Bernaul is a stone sphinx, discovered in an extensive excavation for gold, which must have been carried on long ages ago, near the silver mines of the Schlangenberg. This and other relics are conjectured to throw a light upon the passage in Herodotus, where he describes the gold mines (guarded by monsters) of the Eastern Scythians, called the Animaspes. May not these mines have yielded some of Solomon's gold? David purchased the threshing floor of Giah for six hundred shekels of gold.—The Silver Penny.
Maud and Other Poems.

From the Times.

The poets of this generation are more like King David than King Solomon. King David amassed the materials for a gorgeous temple which it was denied him to build. It required the genius of Solomon to rear into a habitation for the Lord of Hosts the treasuries which his father had heaped—the Tyrian purple, the Shittim wood, the cedars of Lebanon, the gold of Ophir, and the brass for those bright lavers which he cast in the clay ground by the Jordan, between Succoth and Zarthan. Like David, our reigning poets spare no pains in gathering from the four winds of Heaven the element of grand passion. All science—even toxicology, embryology, and hippopathology—they traverse in quest of knowledge. Aldobrandus, Hakmyt, and the Talmuds they ransack for curious illustration. New words that appeal us like Frankensteins they create without end; and old words they exhume without scruple from Cotgrave and Ache. They twist and twine with a labour of love the interminable arabesques of metaphysical subtlety. They invent unheard of metres that would have driven Hermann to despair, and demanded a preface with half-a-dozen postscripts from Porson. Exotic similes they pursue as Dr. Hooker pursued the Himalayan jora, and cherish, as Sir William cherishes, the Victoria Regia at Kew. And, after all this preparation, what is the result? Where is the temple? Where is the Solomon to build a temple worthy of a God? Where is the genius, inferior to Solomon, that can raise such a palace as in a single night the genius of the wonderful lamp raised for the nuptials of Aladdin and the Princess Badroulboudour? To speak frankly, we are afraid that the architecture of our poets does not go much beyond the art of piling sentence upon sentence and "building the lofty rhymre."
A very singular report was current in the colony of an attempt about to be made on a very large scale to explore "the Land of Ophir" for gold. The two following paragraphs are from the Graaff Reinet Herald of the 19th June:

"Knowing that Graaff Reinet and other frontier towns are much in want of specie, both gold and silver, I hasten to inform you that I have seen a letter from the Transvaal country, which states that 200 waggons were starting for the extensive goldfields known to exist near Sofala. The Portuguese Government on the eastern or south-eastern coast, not feeling itself sufficiently strong to send an adequate force to the gold regions, have invited the Dutch Boers to join them. Many of us have long known that there exists a country far to the north-east, called by the Kafir tribes 'Ophura,' which is doubtless the Land of Ophir, from whence King Solomon obtained both gold and ivory for the decoration of the Temple at Jerusalem. No man who knows anything of history will deny that much gold has been exported both from the east and west coasts of Africa for ages past. Ivory, gold-dust, and slaves were the principal articles of export from Delagoa Bay, Inhambane, and Quillimane, long before I was born, and are so still. The Boers, with their 200 waggons, are expected back in September or October next, and hope that some portion of their heavy loads of golden ore, or pure metal, will find its way to the Graaff Reinet Bank, where it may be useful. Elephants are known to be very numerous towards Sofala; and should time not allow the farmers to complete their loads of gold, they have resolved to fill up their waggons with ivory. The climate will not permit the Boers to remain in the land of Ophir beyond September.

If we have been favoured with the permission of..."
We have been favoured with the perusal of a couple of letters from Potschelstrooom or Mooi River Dorp, beyond the Vaal River. Amongst other matters they mention, that the Portuguese Government, on the eastern coast, had sent to invite the Dutch Boers to join them in an expedition to certain goldfields, believed to exist in the neighbourhood of Sofala. These goldfields being in the neighbourhood of some powerful Kaffir tribes, the Portuguese feared to go alone, and therefore invited the farmers, upon condition of dividing the profits of the precious metal when obtained. The writer of these letters does not seem over-sanguine about the gold, but believes that at least a large quantity of valuable ivory will be obtained. He states that about two hundred waggons were starting for the locality, and would not return before September next.

The Natal colonists come to the assistance of the men who are exploring these goldfields. They are not only to be assisted with provisions, but with all other necessaries of life. The trip is expected to last about two months.

The trade of the East.—For the antiquity of weaving we have evidence in the Rig Veda, where we read of the rat gnawing the "weaver's thread;" and again in the Code, where the weaver is required to return in the woven fabric a greater weight than he received in the raw cotton; the reason being that he is obliged to keep the threads immersed in rice-water, which necessarily increases their weight. Moist air facilitates weaving, and is indispensable for the finest qualities; it is on this account that Musulpam and Dimeca maintained their pre-eminence, and could only be rivalled in the dry north-west by the contrivances of underground workshops. The strange appearance of an Indian spinning-wheel, made of richly carved wood and bound round by unsightly threads, was explained by the late Professor Cowper, who discovered that the clumsy-looking threads gave a "tension and elasticity" not to be procured in any other way. These wheels are now silenced by the machinery of Manchester, and the time may soon arrive when it will appear incredible that a fabric of ten yards in length and one yard wide should weigh only 8oz. 2dwt., and pass readily through a small ring. Similar to this must have been the "woven air" of Sanskrit literature, and the robe in which a woman exhibited herself in Buddhist story, and was punished for going about unclad. The
dhist story, and was punished for going about unclad. The
muslin had been sent to Kosala as a present from the King
of Kalinga. The products of India are traced to Greece in
the time of Homer, and to Jerusalem in the days of King
Solomon. The genealogy of the words for ivory and
elephant is said to prove that Greece got ivory from India,
through the men of Tyre, in which case the celebrated bed
of Menelans was carved from the tusks of elephants once
roaming in Hindostan. There was no word in Greek for
elephant, and when Herodotus first saw the animal he
called it ivory, using the Sanskrit-derived word by which
the tusks were known in commerce. King Solomon's
apes and peacocks, in like manner, bear Sanskrit-derived names,
and the alnag-wood, of which he made ceilings, screens,
and balconies, is supposed to be the sandal wood of India.
The precious stones of King Hiram's cargo still lie on the
hills to the west of Ajmere, rich in garnets, amethysts,
chrysolites, and metals; and also in the hills of Guzerat,
where agates, mocha-stones, and carnelians are found about
30ft. below the surface of the soil. Nard and bdellium,
calamus and cassia, were also products of India. Nard, or
spikenard, grows in the Himalaya, being a plant with small
hairy roots, compared by the Arabs to ermines' tails;
bdellium is a fragrant gum from Kattiar; calamus, either
the delicious lemon grass, grown in Kew Gardens, or that
which yields the fragrant grass-oil; and the cassia of
Scripture is the tamul of Sanskrit literature. The names
of these products are not the only words which Professor
Lassen remarks as Sanskrit words early introduced into
Hebrew by the means of trade, and the inference is that
the "Ophir" of Scripture must have been in India, and
probably on the Malabar coast, the Sanskrit works in question
bearing terminations characteristic of the Dekkan.
Native navigators are supposed to have shipped the goods
from the Indus to some port to the south of Bombay, whence
they were fetched by the Arabs or Phoenicians.—Life in
Ancient India.
MISSION OF CANTON.


Canton,
2nd February, 1859.

My dear Mother,

A few months ago, I was still with you in our beautiful France, where I received, in the name of our Mission, so many marks of sympathy; here I am now at a distance of fifteen thousand miles from my family, in this poor pagan China, which is henceforth to be my adopted country, the sole theatre of my labours and exertions. Blessed be Divine Providence who has led me, as if by the hand, through the dangers of a long voyage. I thank Him for it with all my heart; but after having fulfilled this first duty, I feel the want of complying with another, which is that of writing to you to acquaint you with the principal circumstances of my voyage, at least from the moment when I again set foot upon this land of Asia, at the extremity of which the place of my residence is fixed. I commence by our arrival at Jaffa, the chief town of Palestine.

Jaffa is known in the sacred Scriptures under the name of Joppa. It was then that the ships were despatched by Solomon, to fetch the gold and silver found on Mount Ogil, one of the mountains of Malasia. But that town has become more celebrated in ecclesiastical history for the sojourn made there by the Apostle St. Peter, and the miracles which he there operated. It was here that he restored to life the pious Tabitha, received the messengers of the centurion Cornelius, and had that vision in which he was shown the vocation of the Gentiles. The house of Simon the Tanner, in which the
Prince of the Apostles lodged, is still in existence on the sea coast; but it has been converted into a mosque, like many other monuments of the land of Israel. On setting foot upon that blessed soil, I thanked the Lord for permitting me also to see that promised land; and I felt something of the sentiments that must have been experienced by our pious and valiant Crusaders, on attaining the ardently desired object of their efforts and desires. We proceeded to the monastery of the Franciscan Fathers, where the pilgrims on their way to the Holy Places meet with teaching hospitality, and there we engaged horses and guides for our projected journey. The time was very short; it was now Wednesday, at eight o'clock in the morning, and on the Friday following at four o'clock in the afternoon, we had to be back again to take the steamer, which was to pass by on its way to Alexandria. We were at a distance of thirty-five miles from Jerusalem: during the brief interval that was granted us, we had to perform the double journey and visit the Holy City; hence, we set out without delay. We had with us my young Chinese, a converted Jew, who had come to visit the country of his ancestors, a janissary and a mule-driver. Our horses, lean and enfeebled, seemed but ill adapted for so rapid a journey as the one we had before us, but we hoped for the best.

"We found Jaffa surrounded, in the immediate neighbourhood, by well-cultivated grounds, gardens abounding in the rich fruits of the East, lemons, oranges, bananas, and dates, and the air was embalmed with the pleasant perfume of an immense variety of flowers. But as we advanced inland, the country lost much of this enchanting aspect; we soon saw nothing but sterile plains, steep mountains, a soil burnt up by the searing rays of the sun, where we could neither rest nor breathe with freedom. Placing our pocket-handkerchiefs over our heads, we tried to brave the sun's rays, and advanced as far as Ramlay, a small town at a distance of about ten miles from Jaffa, and flanked with towers and mosques, which render it visible at a great distance."
Examiner 12 Nov 1859, review of J.E. Tennent on Ceylon; search for Ophir in Open Library.

Manchester Courier 12 May 1860, Cotton Supply Association:

The Rev. J. Lyons Mc.Leod, late consul at Mozambique, spoke of the commercial capabilities of Africa, and its special adaptations for the growth of cotton. Dr. Livingstone had discovered nine different seams of coal on the Zambesi, and perhaps nothing would more conduce to the development of the resources of Africa. England exported to the Cape of Good Hope 700,000 tons of coal yearly, and the Peninsular and Oriental Company expended £600,000 a year for the coaling of their stations at Arden and other eastern depots. To the southward of the Zambesi the whole of the country teemed with mineral productions. Sofala was evidently the Ophir of Solomon, where he obtained an immense quantity of gold and the trees with which he built the house of the Lord. From the same place the Arabs had for centuries taken excellent iron to India. A few experiments like those of Mr. Clegg would do more for opening the resources of Africa and the suppression of the slave trade than all our squadrons. (Hear.) We were spending upwards of £600,000 a year for the suppression of that guilty traffic; but in this 19th century the slave trade ought to be annihilated. (Applause.)

Mr. A. Hickey, from Australia, described the resources of
John Bull 31 Aug 1861, review of Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*

Mr. Müller is more fortunate when he borrows his illustrations from these Eastern languages with which he is so familiar. We will quote a passage which serves at once to indicate his method of investigation and also the value of philology to Biblical criticism and to the study of ancient history:

You remember the fleet of Tharshish which *Solomon* had at sea, together with the navy of Hiram, and which came once in three years, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. The same navy, which was stationed on the shore of the Red Sea, is said to have fetched gold from *Ophir*, and to have brought, likewise, great plenty of algum trees and precious stones from *Ophir*.

Well, a great deal has been written to find out where this *Ophir* was; but there can be no doubt that it was in India. The names for apes, peacocks, ivory, and algum-trees are foreign words in Hebrew, as much as gutta-percha and tobacco are in English. Now, if we wished to know from what part of the world gutta-percha was first imported into England, we might safely conclude that it came from the country where the name, gutta-percha, formed part of the spoken language. If, therefore, we can find a language in which the names for peacocks, apes, ivory, and algum-trees, which are foreign in Hebrew, are indigenous, we may be certain that the country in which that language was spoken must have been the *Ophir* of the Bible. That language is no other but Sanskrit.

He goes on to show that the “foreign words” in question are Sanskrit; and adds—

Now, the place where the navy of *Solomon* and Hiram, coming down the Red Sea, would naturally have landed, was the mouth of the Indus. There gold and precious stones from the north would have been brought down the Indus; and sandelwood, peacocks, and apes would have been brought from Central and Southern India. In this very locality *Ptolemy* (vii. 1) gives us the name of Abiria, above Patiale. In the same locality Hindu geographers place the people called Abhira; and in the same neighbourhood MacMurdie, in his account of the province of Cutch, still knows a race of Abirs, the descendants, in all probability, of the people who sold to Hiram and *Solomon* their gold and precious stones, their apes, peacocks, and sandelwood.

In this way we not only ascertain the locality of *Ophir*, but we find that the people who spoke Sanskrit were inhabiting Central India in the days of *Solomon*.

The kindred character of languages—leading us to a kindred

*Friend of India* 31 Oct 1861 quotes Müller; his “philological argument only adds to the probability of the opinion that India is the Land of Ophir.”

*Examiner* 2 Jan 1862 quotes Montgomery Martin’s new ed. of *The Progress and Present State of British India*: “In past ages gold was extensively obtained in India,” and cites Müller on Ophir.

John Bramston, at the Witham Literary Institution Annual Meeting, praises Müller: “he thought that was an unanswerable argument, and at the same time it gave exercise to their thoughts and to their mind, and it was very pleasant to arrive at a conclusion of the riddle.” *Chelmsford Chronical* 28 Nov 1862.
Malacca alone of the three Straits Stations has a name in history; it being not improbable as we think, that it is the Eastern extremity of what was known as Ophir to the ancient Hebrews, or Sophir to the authors of the Septuagint version, whither the fleets of Hiram and Solomon voyaged on their trading expeditions. In various parts of the First Book of Kings the following notices are given of the productions of Ophir. "And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents." "And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones." "Once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." It is well known that there has been a dispute among the learned as to the situation of Ophir. Some contending that the Eastern part of Africa now called Zanguebar and Mozambique, where there is a region called Fura producing gold, was the Ophir or the Tarshish of the East, Spain being that of the West. Others believe that the district of Oman in Eastern Arabia, where is a place called Al-Ophir, is meant; and others say that India and Ceylon are to be understood. We do not intend to fix on any particular spot and call it Ophir; but we wish to see where the statements of Scripture lead us. The Eastern Africa theory is entirely inconclusive; for although it is said, that the Queen of Sheba (the present country of the Hebshis or Abyssinians and the southern parts of Arabia) came to see Solomon with great stores of gold, precious stones, and spices, it is nowhere said that these, at least the gold and precious stones were the productions of Sheba. As Sheba lay contiguous to the gold regions of Africa and not far from India, it does not seem at all improbable, that she obtained these precious articles by trade with those countries. Though 'apes,' or monkeys and 'ivory,' may be found in abundance in Eastern
Africa, we are not aware that either 'silver' or 'peacocks,' 'almug' trees or gems can be procured there. This theory, then, is inconclusive, together with that which fixes on Oman, for the same reasoning applies to both, and both must be abandoned. We have now only Ceylon and India, to fall back upon. But we would first state that the Hebrew for 'peacocks' might better be rendered parrots; that 'silver' should be translated or understood to be a metal of a pale white colour; and that by 'almug' or 'algum' trees Hebraists generally understand the sandal wood tree, but without much reason; for sandal wood, whether of the red or the yellow variety never grows in such abundance, or to such a size as would allow of 'pillars for the house of the Lord,' or 'terraces,' or 'highways,' being made from it. Sandal wood is generally used for ornamental boxes and other small articles, and even Indian Princes with all their command of the material, leave as monuments of their magnificence nothing larger than doors of sandal wood; but as for making 'pillars,' or terraces,' or 'highways,' it is never dreamt of; first, because the tree would not furnish timber for a 'pillar,' and secondly, its forests would not furnish sufficient quantities of material for either 'terraces' or 'highways.' The uses to which the 'almug' was put gives us the idea of lofty, gigantic trees, which though valuable could be had in abundance. The only reason which has led Hebraists and others to fix upon the sandal-wood tree, is because they know of no other valuable tree in the East; some have indeed thought of the cedar, but this requires no refutation. Now India and Ceylon could have furnished the gems, as well as the 'monkeys,' 'parrots,' and perhaps the 'gold'; for the regions of the Indus (the ancient Havilah) still produce a little of the metal, but what were the valuable almu
produce a little of the metal, but what were the valuable almug trees, which were to be had in such abundance? Before we reply to this question we shall draw attention to the facts that Borneo is eminently a gem-producing country, the largest diamond ever discovered being said to be in the possession of the Sultan of Matar, a principality in South Western Borneo; that richer pearl banks than have ever existed, or do now exist in the Sea of Oman or the waters of Ceylon, are to be found to the East of Borneo in the channels of the great Sooloo Archipelago; that monkeys of innumerable varieties from the orang-otang, that caricature of man, to the meanest and smallest species, people every wood of the Indian Archipelago, so much so that it is often called 'the land of apes and monkeys'; that parrots, loories, cockatoos, birds of paradise, and a hundred other gorgeously dressed varieties are to be found in abundance all over the Archipelago, and that the wide extent of the Archipelago is one vast, inexhaustible gold producing and distributing country. Having brought these facts before the reader we may now state the reasons which lead us to consider the Indian Archipelago, and in it the port of Malacca, as the termination of the voyages of the trading fleets of Hiram and Solomon. Silver (or, as, it may be understood to mean, tin) is nowhere produced in India; but the whole Malayan Peninsula, with its adjacent islands, is one rich tin field. Silver is a very precious metal, and yet it is said to have been as plentiful as 'stones' in Jerusalem. We find an easy explanation of this expression in the fact that the Hebrew word which has been translated silver may be rendered tin, the largest known deposits of which metal are found in the Indian Archipelago. Another production peculiar to the Archipelago is the Camphor
Another production peculiar to the Archipelago is the Camphor tree, one of the most gigantic and lofty of the great trees of the forests, which so densely clothed these islands. The trunk often rises 120 feet before it branches out, with a girth a few feet above the ground of 25 feet. A single trunk would form a most magnificent pillar or column. The timber is so plentiful, that 'terraces' or 'highways' being made of it appears nothing improbable; it is also valuable, being fragrant and lasting. An extensive trade has always been carried on in it. The word 'almug' etymologically leads to the idea of the wood having the appearance of Coral, and 'algum' may show that the wood was either resinous, or produced some resin. It is remarkable that the timber of the camphor tree is resinous in quality, produces the most valuable resin* known, and has a fresh, pale-red tinge much resembling that of the common coral. Here, then, in the camphor tree, we may find the qualities and appearance of the 'almug' or 'algum tree.' The timber called Sapan wood also fulfils many of the conditions of the scripture description of the algum tree. To sum up what we have said:—'gold,' 'silver' (tin), 'ivory,' precious stones,' 'parrots,' 'monkeys,' and 'almug' trees, are mentioned as the articles brought back by the fleets of Hiram and Solomon; Eastern Africa produces 'gold,' 'ivory,' 'monkeys,' and even some 'parrots;' but no 'precious stones,' 'silver' (tin), or 'almug' trees;—Oman produces 'gold' and 'precious stones'; but not the other articles;—India and Ceylon produce 'gold' (in such limited quantities, however, that it would all be required for home use,) 'ivory,' 'precious stones,' 'parrots' (of common varieties and not much worthy of mention,) and 'monkeys;' but
silver' (ليه) or 'almug' trees are not among her productions;—
but, in the Indian Archipelago we find all these articles in the
greatest abundance; it is one, great 'gold' and 'silver' (ليه) field,
mounds of 'ivory' are still found in its forests, in 'precious stones'
it is particularly rich, 'parrots' and 'monkeys' of a hundred rare
varieties enliven its forests, in which one of the loftiest and
most common of trees is the Camphor, and in which the Sapan
wood tree is abundant, in either of which we find the equivalent
for 'almug.' We thus come to the conclusion that Ophir or
Sophir was as indefinite and yet as well defined a term as 'the
East' is with us, and that the articles specified were procured
from different ports all along Southern Asia, the last port on the line being Malacca, which has thus in all probability been the mart of the Archipelago from time immemorial.*

By whom Malacca was first founded is unknown.†

* Josephus expressly says that the Αύρεα Χερσόνης was the Ophir
of Solomon's time. This confirmation of our own conclusion is valuable.
† For the antiquity of the Chinese Trade in the Archipelago see an