

CHAPTER XIV.

REMARKS ON IRRIGATION.

THE ancient prosperity of Cyprus must have been due to artificial irrigation, which ensured a maximum of production, similar to the inundated lands of Egypt. In the latter country the Nile is a "Salvator Mundi," without which Egypt would be a simple prolongation of the Nubian and Libyan deserts, in the absence of a seasonable rainfall. The difference between the great cereal-producing portion of Cyprus and the Delta of Egypt is, that, although the plain of Messaria has been formed chiefly through the action of the Pedias river and other periodical mountain streams, which have deposited a rich stratum of soil during inundations, the rivers are merely torrents, or simple conduits, which carry off the waters of heavy storms, or intervals of rain, and act as drains in conveying the surplus waters during floods; while at other times they are absolutely dry.

If the Nile were controlled by a series of weirs or dams, with sluices to divert the high waters of the period into natural depressions within the desert, to form reservoirs at high levels for the supply of Egypt in seasons of scarcity, the command of the water-supply would be far preferable to the chances of rain in the