

THE
HISTORY
OF
AMERICA.

BOOK I.

THE progress of men in discovering and peo- **B O O K**
pling the various parts of the earth, has been **I.**
extremely slow. Several ages elapsed before they **The earth**
removed far from those mild and fertile regions in **slowly**
which they were originally placed by their Creator. **peopled.**
The occasion of their first general dispersion is
known ; but we are unacquainted with the course
of their migrations, or the time when they took
possession of the different countries which they now
inhabit. Neither history nor tradition furnishes such
information concerning those remote events, as en-
ables us to trace, with any certainty, the operations
of the human race in the infancy of society.

We may conclude, however, that all the early **First mi-**
migrations of mankind were made by land. **grations**
The **by land.**
ocean, which surrounds the habitable earth, as well
as the various arms of the sea which separate one

B O O K region from another, though destined to facilitate the communication between distant countries, seem, at first view, to be formed to check the progress of man, and to mark the bounds of that portion of the globe to which nature had confined him. It was long, we may believe, before men attempted to pass these formidable barriers, and became so skilful and adventurous as to commit themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves, or to quit their native shores in quest of remote and unknown regions.

I.

Navigation and ship-building are arts so nice and complicated, that they require the ingenuity, as well as experience, of many successive ages to bring them to any degree of perfection. From the raft or canoe, which first served to carry a savage over the river that obstructed him in the chase, to the construction of a vessel capable of conveying a numerous crew with safety to a distant coast, the progress in improvement is immense. Many efforts would be made, many experiments would be tried, and much labour as well as invention would be employed, before men could accomplish this arduous and important undertaking. The rude and imperfect state in which navigation is still found among all nations which are not considerably civilized, corresponds with this account of its progress, and demonstrates that in early times the art was not so far improved as to enable men to undertake distant voyages, or to attempt remote discoveries.

As soon, however, as the art of navigation became known, a new species of correspondence among men took place. It is from this æra that

First attempts towards navigation.

Introduction of commerce.

we must date the commencement of such an inter-^{B O O K}
 course between nations as deserves the appellation ^{I.}
 of commerce. Men are, indeed, far advanced in
 improvement before commerce becomes an object
 of great importance to them. They must even have
 made some considerable progress towards civiliza-
 tion, before they acquire the idea of property, and
 ascertain it so perfectly as to be acquainted with the
 most simple of all contracts, that of exchanging by
 barter one rude commodity for another. But as
 soon as this important right is established, and every
 individual feels that he has an exclusive title to pos-
 sess or to alienate whatever he has acquired by his
 own labour and dexterity, the wants and ingenuity
 of his nature suggest to him a new method of in-
 creasing his acquisitions and enjoyments, by dis-
 posing of what is superfluous in his own stores, in
 order to procure what is necessary or desirable in
 those of other men. Thus a commercial inter-
 course begins, and is carried on among the mem-
 bers of the same community. By degrees, they
 discover that neighbouring tribes possess what they
 themselves want, and enjoy comforts of which they
 wish to partake. In the same mode, and upon the
 same principles, that domestic traffic is carried on
 within the society, an external commerce is esta-
 blished with other tribes or nations. Their mutual
 interest and mutual wants render this intercourse
 desirable, and imperceptibly introduce the maxims
 and laws which facilitate its progress and render it
 secure. But no very extensive commerce can take
 place between contiguous provinces, whose soil and
 climate being nearly the same yield similar pro-

B O O K I. **I.** ductions. Remote countries cannot convey their commodities, by land, to those places where on account of their rarity they are desired, and become valuable. It is to navigation that men are indebted for the power of transporting the superfluous stock of one part of the earth to supply the wants of another. The luxuries and blessings of a particular climate are no longer confined to itself alone, but the enjoyment of them is communicated to the most distant regions.

In proportion as the knowledge of the advantages derived from navigation and commerce continued to spread, the intercourse among nations extended. The ambition of conquest, or the necessity of procuring new settlements, were no longer the sole motives of visiting distant lands. The desire of gain became a new incentive to activity, roused adventurers, and sent them forth upon long voyages, in search of countries whose products or wants might increase that circulation which nourishes and gives vigour to commerce. Trade proved a great source of discovery, it opened unknown seas, it penetrated into new regions, and contributed more than any other cause to bring men acquainted with the situation, the nature, and commodities of the different parts of the globe. But even after a regular commerce was established in the world, after nations were considerably civilized, and the sciences and arts were cultivated with ardour and success, navigation continued to be so imperfect, that it can hardly be said to have advanced beyond the infancy of its improvement in the ancient world.

Among all the nations of antiquity, the structure

of their vessels was extremely rude, and their method of working them very defective. They were unacquainted with several principles and operations in navigation, which are now considered as the first elements on which that science is founded. Though that property of the magnet by which it attracts iron was well known to the ancients, its more important and amazing virtue of pointing to the poles had entirely escaped their observation. Destitute of this faithful guide, which now conducts the pilot with so much certainty in the unbounded ocean, during the darkness of night, or when the heavens are covered with clouds, the ancients had no other method of regulating their course than by observing the sun and stars. Their navigation was of consequence uncertain and timid. They durst seldom quit sight of land, but crept along the coast, exposed to all the dangers, and retarded by all the obstructions, unavoidable in holding such an awkward course. An incredible length of time was requisite for performing voyages which are now finished in a short space. Even in the mildest climates, and in seas the least tempestuous, it was only during the summer months that the ancients ventured out of their harbours. The remainder of the year was lost in inactivity. It would have been deemed most inconsiderate rashness to have braved the fury of the winds and waves during winter*.

While both the science and practice of navigation continued to be so defective, it was an undertaking of no small difficulty and danger to visit any remote

B O O K
I.

Imperfection of navigation among the ancients.

* Vegetius de Re milit. lib. iv.

BOOK region of the earth. Under every disadvantage, however, the active spirit of commerce exerted itself. The Egyptians, soon after the establishment of their monarchy, are said to have opened a trade between the Arabian Gulf, or Red Sea, and the western coast of the great Indian continent. The commodities which they imported from the East, were carried by land from the Arabian Gulf to the banks of the Nile, and conveyed down that river to the Mediterranean. But if the Egyptians in early times applied themselves to commerce, their attention to it was of short duration. The fertile soil and mild climate of Egypt produced the necessaries and comforts of life with such profusion, as rendered its inhabitants so independent of other countries, that it became an established maxim among that people, whose ideas and institutions differed in almost every point from those of other nations, to renounce all intercourse with foreigners. In consequence of this, they never went out of their own country; they held all sea-faring persons in detestation, as impious and profane; and fortifying their own harbours, they denied strangers admittance into them^b. It was in the decline of their power, and when their veneration for ancient maxims had greatly abated, that they again opened their ports, and resumed any communication with foreigners.

Of the
Pheni-
cians;

The character and situation of the Phenicians were as favourable to the spirit of commerce and discovery as those of the Egyptians were adverse to

^b Diod. Sicul. lib. i. p. 78. ed. Wesselingii. Amst. 1756. Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 1142. ed. Amst. 1707.

it. They had no distinguishing peculiarity in their manners and institutions ; they were not addicted to any singular and unsocial form of superstition ; they could mingle with other nations without scruple or reluctance. The territory which they possessed was neither large nor fertile. Commerce was the only source from which they could derive opulence or power. Accordingly, the trade carried on by the Phenicians of Sidon and Tyre, was more extensive and enterprising than that of any state in the ancient world. The genius of the Phenicians, as well as the object of their policy and the spirit of their laws, were entirely commercial. They were a people of merchants who aimed at the empire of the sea, and actually possessed it. Their ships not only frequented all the ports in the Mediterranean, but they were the first who ventured beyond the ancient boundaries of navigation, and, passing the Streights of Gades, visited the western coasts of Spain and Africa. In many of the places to which they resorted, they planted colonies, and communicated to the rude inhabitants some knowledge of their arts and improvements. While they extended their discoveries towards the north and the west, they did not neglect to penetrate into the more opulent and fertile regions of the south and east. Having rendered themselves masters of several commodious harbours towards the bottom of the Arabian Gulf, they, after the example of the Egyptians, established a regular intercourse with Arabia and the continent of India on the one hand, and with the eastern coast of Africa on the other. From these countries they imported many valuable commodi-

B O O K ties unknown to the rest of the world, and during
 I. a long period engrossed that lucrative branch of
 commerce without a rival^c.

of the
 Jews;

The vast wealth which the Phenicians acquired by monopolizing the trade carried on in the Red Sea, incited their neighbours the Jews, under the prosperous reigns of David and Solomon, to aim at being admitted to some share of it. This they obtained, partly by their conquest of Idumea, which stretches along the Red Sea, and partly by their alliance with Hiram King of Tyre. Solomon fitted out fleets, which, under the direction of Phenician pilots, sailed from the Red Sea to Tarshish and Ophir. These, it is probable, were ports in India and Africa, which their conductors were accustomed to frequent, and from them the Jewish ships returned with such valuable cargoes as suddenly diffused wealth and splendour through the kingdom of Israel^d. But the singular institutions of the Jews, the observance of which was enjoined by their divine Legislator, with an intention of preserving them a separate people, uninfected by idolatry, formed a national character, incapable of that open and liberal intercourse with strangers which commerce requires. Accordingly, this unsocial genius of the people, together with the disasters which befel the kingdom of Israel, prevented the commercial spirit which their monarchs laboured to introduce, and to cherish, from spreading among them. The Jews cannot be numbered among the nations

^c See NOTE I.

^d Mémoire sur le Pays d'Ophir, par M. d'Anville, Mem. de l'Academ. des Inscript. &c. tom. xxx. 83.

which contributed to improve navigation, or to extend discovery. B O O K
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But though the instructions and example of the Phenicians were unable to mould the manners and temper of the Jews, in opposition to the tendency of their laws, they transmitted the commercial spirit with facility, and in full vigour, to their own descendants the Carthaginians. } of the
Cartha-
ginians ; The commonwealth of Carthage applied to trade and to naval affairs, with no less ardour, ingenuity, and success, than its parent-state. Carthage early rivalled and soon surpassed Tyre in opulence and power, but seems not to have aimed at obtaining any share in the commerce with India. The Phenicians had engrossed this, and had such a command of the Red Sea as secured to them the exclusive possession of that lucrative branch of trade. The commercial activity of the Carthaginians was exerted in another direction. Without contending for the trade of the East with their mother-country, they extended their navigation chiefly towards the west and north. Following the course which the Phenicians had opened, they passed the Streights of Gades, and, pushing their discoveries far beyond those of the parent-state, visited not only all the coasts of Spain, but those of Gaul, and penetrated at last into Britain. At the same time that they acquired knowledge of new countries in this part of the globe, they gradually carried their researches towards the south. They made considerable progress by land into the interior provinces of Africa, traded with some of them, and subjected others to their empire. They sailed along the western coast of that great conti-

B O O K went almost to the tropic of Cancer, and planted several colonies, in order to civilize the natives and accustom them to commerce. They discovered the Fortunate Islands, now known by the name of the Canaries, the utmost boundary of ancient navigation in the western ocean^e.

Nor was the progress of the Phenicians and Carthaginians in their knowledge of the globe, owing entirely to the desire of extending their trade from one country to another. Commerce was followed by its usual effects among both these people. It awakened curiosity, enlarged the ideas and desires of men, and incited them to bold enterprises. Voyages were undertaken, the sole object of which was to discover new countries and to explore unknown seas. Such, during the prosperous age of the Carthaginian republic, were the famous navigations of Hanno and Himlico. Both their fleets were equipped by authority of the Senate, and at public expense. Hanno was directed to steer towards the south, along the coast of Africa, and he seems to have advanced much nearer the equinoctial line than any former navigator^f. Himlico had it in charge to proceed towards the north, and to examine the western coasts of the European continent^g. Of the same nature was the extraordinary navigation of the

^e Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 37. edit. in usum Delph. 4to. 1685.

^f Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 1. Hannonis Periplus ap. Geograph. minores, edit. Hudsoni, vol. i. p. i.

^g Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67. Festus Avienus apud Borchart. Geogr. Sacr. lib. i. c. 60. p. 652. Oper. vol. iii. L. Bat. 1707.

Phenicians round Africa. A Phenician fleet, we are told, fitted out by Necho King of Egypt, took its departure about six hundred and four years before the Christian æra, from a port in the Red Sea, doubled the southern promontory of Africa, and after a voyage of three years returned by the Streights of Gades to the mouth of the Nile^h. Eudoxus of Cyzicus is said to have held the same course, and to have accomplished the same arduous undertakingⁱ.

These voyages, if performed in the manner which I have related, may justly be reckoned the greatest effort of navigation in the ancient world; and if we attend to the imperfect state of the art at that time, it is difficult to determine, whether we should most admire the courage and sagacity with which the design was formed, or the conduct and good fortune with which it was executed. But unfortunately all the original and authentic accounts of the Phenician and Carthaginian voyages, whether undertaken by public authority or in prosecution of their private trade, have perished. The information which we receive concerning them from the Greek and Roman authors is not only obscure and inaccurate, but, if we except a short narrative of Hanno's expedition, is of suspicious authority^k. Whatever acquaintance with the remote regions of the earth the Phenicians or Carthaginians may have acquired, was concealed from the rest of mankind with a mercantile jealousy. Every thing relative to the course of their navigation was not only a mystery of trade,

^h Herodot. lib. iv. c. 42.

ⁱ Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67.

^k See NOTE II.

B O O K but a secret of state. Extraordinary facts are related concerning their solicitude to prevent other nations from penetrating into what they wished should remain undivulged¹. Many of their discoveries seem, accordingly, to have been scarcely known beyond the precincts of their own states. The navigation round Africa, in particular, is recorded by the Greek and Roman writers rather as a strange amusing tale, which they did not comprehend or did not believe, than as a real transaction which enlarged their knowledge and influenced their opinions^m. As neither the progress of the Phenician or Carthaginian discoveries, nor the extent of their navigation, were communicated to the rest of mankind, all memorials of their extraordinary skill in naval affairs seem, in a great measure, to have perished, when the maritime power of the former was annihilated by Alexander's conquest of Tyre, and the empire of the latter was overturned by the Roman arms.

of the
Greeks ;

Leaving, then, the obscure and pompous accounts of the Phenician and Carthaginian voyages to the curiosity and conjectures of antiquaries, history must rest satisfied with relating the progress of navigation and discovery among the Greeks and Romans, which, though less splendid, is better ascertained. It is evident that the Phenicians, who instructed the Greeks in many other useful sciences and arts, did not communicate to them that extensive knowledge of navigation which they

¹ Strab. Geogr. lib. iii. p. 265. lib. xviii. p. 1154.

^m See NOTE III.

themselves possessed ; nor did the Romans imbibe **B O O K**
that commercial spirit and ardour for discovery **I.**
which distinguished their rivals the Carthaginians. }
Though Greece be almost encompassed by the sea,
which formed many spacious bays and commodious
harbours ; though it be surrounded by a great
number of fertile islands, yet, notwithstanding such
a favourable situation, which seemed to invite that
ingenious people to apply themselves to navigation,
it was long before this art attained any degree of
perfection among them. Their early voyages, the
object of which was piracy rather than commerce,
were so inconsiderable, that the expedition of the
Argonauts from the coast of Thessaly to the Euxine
Sea, appeared such an amazing effort of skill and
courage, as entitled the conductors of it to be ranked
among the demigods, and exalted the vessel in
which they sailed to a place among the heavenly
constellations. Even at a later period, when the
Greeks engaged in their famous enterprise against
Troy, their knowledge in naval affairs seems not to
have been much improved. According to the ac-
count of Homer, the only poet to whom history
ventures to appeal, and who, by his scrupulous ac-
curacy in describing the manners and arts of early
ages, merits this distinction, the science of navi-
gation at that time had hardly advanced beyond
its rudest state. The Greeks in the heroic age
seem to have been unacquainted with the use of
iron, the most serviceable of all the metals, with-
out which no considerable progress was ever made
in the mechanical arts. Their vessels were of in-
considerable burden, and mostly without decks.

B O O K ^{I.} They had only one mast, which was erected or taken down at pleasure. They were strangers to the use of anchors. All their operations in sailing were clumsy and unskilful. They turned their observation towards stars, which were improper for regulating their course, and their mode of observing them was inaccurate and fallacious. When they had finished a voyage they drew their paltry barks ashore, as savages do their canoes, and these remained on dry land until the season of returning to sea approached. It is not then in the early or heroic ages of Greece that we can expect to observe the science of navigation, and the spirit of discovery, making any considerable progress. During that period of disorder and ignorance, a thousand causes concurred in restraining curiosity and enterprise within very narrow bounds.

But the Greeks advanced with rapidity to a state of greater civilization and refinement. Government, in its most liberal and perfect form, began to be established in their different communities; equal laws and regular police were gradually introduced; the sciences and arts which are useful or ornamental in life were carried to a high pitch of improvement; and several of the Grecian commonwealths applied to commerce with such ardour and success, that they were considered, in the ancient world, as maritime powers of the first rank. Even then, however, the naval victories of the Greeks must be ascribed rather to the native spirit of the people, and to that courage which the enjoyment of liberty inspires, than to any extraordinary progress in the science of navigation. In the Persian

war, those exploits which the genius of the Greek historians has rendered so famous, were performed by fleets, composed chiefly of small vessels without decksⁿ; the crews of which rushed forward with impetuous valour, but little art, to board those of the enemy. In the war of Peloponnesus, their ships seem still to have been of inconsiderable burden and force. The extent of their trade, how highly soever it may have been estimated in ancient times, was in proportion to this low condition of their marine. The maritime states of Greece hardly carried on any commerce beyond the limits of the Mediterranean sea. Their chief intercourse was with the colonies of their countrymen planted in the Lesser Asia, in Italy and Sicily. They sometimes visited the ports of Egypt, of the southern provinces of Gaul, and of Thrace, or, passing through the Hellespont, they traded with the countries situated around the Euxine Sea. Amazing instances occur of their ignorance, even of those countries which lay within the narrow precincts to which their navigation was confined. When the Greeks had assembled their combined fleet against Xerxes at Egina, they thought it unadvisable to sail to Samos, because they believed the distance between that island and Egina to be as great as the distance between Egina and the Pillars of Hercules^o. They were either utterly unacquainted with all the parts of the globe beyond the Mediterranean sea, or what knowledge they had of them was founded on conjecture, or derived from the in-

ⁿ Thucyd. lib. i. c. 14.

^o Herodot. lib. viii. c. 132.

B O O K formation of a few persons whom curiosity and the
^{I.} love of science had prompted to travel by land into
the Upper Asia, or by sea into Egypt, the ancient
seats of wisdom and arts. After all that the Greeks
learned from them, they appear to have been igno-
rant of the most important facts on which an ac-
curate and scientific knowledge of the globe is
founded.

The expedition of Alexander the Great into the East, considerably enlarged the sphere of navigation and of geographical knowledge among the Greeks. That extraordinary man, notwithstanding the violent passions which incited him at some times to the wildest actions and the most extravagant enterprises, possessed talents which fitted him not only to conquer but to govern the world. He was capable of framing those bold and original schemes of policy, which gave a new form to human affairs. The revolution in commerce brought about by the force of his genius, is hardly inferior to that revolution in empire occasioned by the success of his arms. It is probable, that the opposition and efforts of the republic of Tyre, which checked him so long in the career of his victories, gave Alexander an opportunity of observing the vast resources of a maritime power, and conveyed to him some idea of the immense wealth which the Tyrians derived from their commerce, especially that with the East-Indies. As soon as he had accomplished the destruction of Tyre, and reduced Egypt to subjection, he formed the plan of rendering the empire which he proposed to establish, the centre of commerce as well as the seat of dominion.

With this view he founded a great city, which he **B O O K**
 honoured with his own name, near one of the **I.**
 mouths of the river Nile, that by the Mediterranean
 sea, and the neighbourhood of the Arabian Gulf, it
 might command the trade both of the East and
 West^p. This situation was chosen with such dis-
 cernment, that Alexandria soon became the chief
 commercial city in the world. Not only during the
 subsistence of the Grecian Empire in Egypt and
 in the East, but amidst all the successive revolu-
 tions in those countries from the time of the Pto-
 lemies to the discovery of the navigation by the
 Cape of Good Hope, commerce, particularly that
 of the East-Indies, continued to flow in the channel
 which the sagacity and foresight of Alexander had
 marked out for it.

His ambition was not satisfied with having opened
 to the Greeks a communication with India by sea;
 he aspired to the sovereignty of those regions which
 furnished the rest of mankind with so many pre-
 cious commodities, and conducted his army thither
 by land. Enterprising, however, as he was, he may
 be said rather to have viewed than to have con-
 quered that country. He did not, in his progress
 towards the East, advance beyond the banks of the
 rivers that fall into the Indus, which is now the
 western boundary of the vast continent of India.
 Amidst the wild exploits which distinguish this
 part of his history, he pursued measures that mark
 the superiority of his genius as well as the extent
 of his views. He had penetrated as far into India

^p Strab. Geogr. lib. xvii. p. 1143. 1149.

B. O. O. K as to confirm his opinion of its commercial importance, and to perceive that immense wealth might be derived from intercourse with a country where the arts of elegance, having been more early cultivated, were arrived at greater perfection than in any other part of the earth⁹. Full of this idea, he resolved to examine the course of navigation from the mouth of the Indus to the bottom of the Persian Gulf; and, if it should be found practicable, to establish a regular communication between them. In order to effect this, he proposed to remove the oataracts, with which the jealousy of the Persians, and their aversion to correspondence with foreigners, had obstructed the entrance into the Euphrates^r; to carry the commodities of the East up that river, and the Tigris, which unites with it, into the interior parts of his Asiatic dominions; while, by the way of the Arabian Gulf, and the river Nile, they might be conveyed to Alexandria, and distributed to the rest of the world. Nearchus, an officer of eminent abilities, was intrusted with the command of the fleet fitted out for this expedition. He performed this voyage, which was deemed an enterprise so arduous and important, that Alexander reckoned it one of the most extraordinary events which distinguished his reign. Inconsiderable as it may now appear, it was at that time an undertaking of no little merit and difficulty. In the prosecution of it, striking instances occur of the small progress which the Greeks had

⁹ Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1036. Q. Curtius, lib. xviii. c. 9.

^r Strab. Geogr. lib. xvi. p. 1075.

made in naval knowledge^a. Having never sailed beyond the bounds of the Mediterranean, where the ebb and flow of the sea are hardly perceptible, when they first observed this phænomenon at the mouth of the Indus, it appeared to them a prodigy, by which the gods testified the displeasure of heaven against their enterprise^t. During their whole course, they seem never to have lost sight of land, but followed the bearings of the coast so servilely, that they could not much avail themselves of those periodical winds which facilitate navigation in the Indian ocean. Accordingly, they spent no less than ten months in performing this voyage^u, which, from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Persian Gulf, does not exceed twenty degrees. It is probable, that, amidst the violent convulsions and frequent revolutions in the East, occasioned by the contests among the successors of Alexander, the navigation to India by the course which Nearchus had opened was discontinued. The Indian trade carried on at Alexandria, not only subsisted, but was so much extended, under the Grecian monarchs of Egypt, that it proved a great source of the wealth which distinguished their kingdom.

The progress which the Romans made in navigation and discovery, was still more inconsiderable than that of the Greeks. The genius of the Roman people, their military education, and the spirit of their laws, concurred in estranging them from commerce and naval affairs. It was the necessity of

^a See NOTE IV.

^u Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. vi. c. 23.

^t See NOTE V,

B O O K ^{I.} opposing a formidable rival, not the desire of extending trade, which first prompted them to aim at maritime power. Though they soon perceived that, in order to acquire the universal dominion after which they aspired, it was necessary to render themselves masters of the sea, they still considered the naval service as a subordinate station, and reserved for it such citizens as were not of a rank to be admitted into the legions^x. In the history of the Roman republic, hardly one event occurs, that marks attention to navigation any further than as it was instrumental towards conquest. When the Roman valour and discipline had subdued all the maritime states known in the ancient world; when Carthage, Greece, and Egypt, had submitted to their power, the Romans did not imbibe the commercial spirit of the conquered nations. Among that people of soldiers, to have applied to trade would have been deemed a degradation of a Roman citizen. They abandoned the mechanical arts, commerce, and navigation, to slaves, to freedmen, to provincials, and to citizens of the lowest class. Even after the subversion of liberty, when the severity and haughtiness of ancient manners began to abate, commerce did not rise into high estimation among the Romans. The trade of Greece, Egypt, and the other conquered countries, continued to be carried on in its usual channels, after they were reduced into the form of Roman provinces. As Rome was the capital of the world, and the seat of government, all the wealth and valuable productions of the provinces

^x Polyb. lib. v.

flowed naturally thither. The Romans, satisfied **B O O K**
 with this, seem to have suffered commerce to remain ^{I,}
 almost entirely in the hands of the natives of the re- }
 spective countries. The extent, however, of the
 Roman power, which reached over the greatest part
 of the known world, the vigilant inspection of the
 Roman magistrates, and the spirit of the Roman
 government, no less intelligent than active, gave
 such additional security to commerce as animated
 it with new vigour. The union among nations was
 never so entire, nor the intercourse so perfect, as
 within the bounds of this vast Empire. Commerce,
 under the Roman dominion, was not obstructed by
 the jealousy of rival states, interrupted by frequent
 hostilities, or limited by partial restrictions. One
 superintending power moved and regulated the in-
 dustry of mankind, and enjoyed the fruits of their
 joint efforts.

Navigation felt this influence, and improved under
 it. As soon as the Romans acquired a taste for
 the luxuries of the East, the trade with India through
 Egypt was pushed with new vigour, and carried on
 to greater extent. By frequenting the Indian con-
 tinent, navigators became acquainted with the pe-
 riodical course of the winds, which, in the ocean
 that separates Africa from India, blow with little
 variation during one half of the year from the east,
 and during the other half blow with equal steadiness
 from the west. Encouraged by observing this, the
 pilots who sailed from Egypt to India abandoned
 their ancient slow and dangerous course along the
 coast, and, as soon as the western monsoon set in,
 took their departure from Ocelis, at the mouth of

B O O K ^{I.} the Arabian Gulf, and stretched boldly across the ocean^y. The uniform direction of the wind, supplying the place of the compass, and rendering the guidance of the stars less necessary, conducted them to the port of Musiris, on the western shore of the Indian continent. There they took on board their cargo, and, returning with the eastern monsoon, finished their voyage to the Arabian Gulf within the year. This part of India, now known by the name of the Malabar coast, seems to have been the utmost limit of ancient navigation in that quarter of the globe. What imperfect knowledge the ancients had of the immense countries which stretch beyond this towards the East, they received from a few adventurers who had visited them by land. Such excursions were neither frequent nor extensive, and it is probable that, while the Roman intercourse with India subsisted, no traveller ever penetrated further than to the banks of the Ganges^z. The fleets from Egypt which traded at Musiris were loaded, it is true, with the spices and other rich commodities of the continent and islands of the further India; but these were brought to that port, which became the staple of the commerce between the east and west, by the Indians themselves in canoes hollowed out of one tree^a. The Egyptian and Roman merchants, satisfied with acquiring those commodities in this manner, did not think it necessary to explore unknown seas, and venture upon a dangerous navigation, in quest of the countries which produced

^y Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 23.

^z Strab. Geogr. lib. xv. p. 1006. 1010. See NOTE VI.

^a Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 26.

them. But though the discoveries of the Romans **B O O K**
 in India were so limited, their commerce there was **L**
 such as will appear considerable, even to the present
 age, in which the Indian trade has been extended
 far beyond the practice or conception of any pre-
 ceding period. We are informed by one author of
 credit^b, that the commerce with India drained the
 Roman empire every year of more than four hun-
 dred thousand pounds; and by another, that one
 hundred and twenty ships sailed annually from the
 Arabian Gulf to that country^c.

The discovery of this new method of sailing to **Disco-**
 India, is the most considerable improvement in na- **veries of**
 vigation made during the continuance of the Ro- **the an-**
 man power. But in ancient times, the knowledge **cients by**
 of remote countries was acquired more frequently **land.**
 by land than by sea^d; and the Romans, from their pe-
 culiar disinclination to naval affairs, may be said
 to have neglected totally the latter, though a more
 easy and expeditious method of discovery. The
 progress, however, of their victorious armies through
 a considerable portion of Europe, Asia, and Africa,
 contributed greatly to extend discovery by land,
 and gradually opened the navigation of new and un-
 known seas. Previous to the Roman conquests,
 the civilized nations of antiquity had little commu-
 nication with those countries in Europe which now
 form its most opulent and powerful kingdoms. The
 interior parts of Spain and Gaul were imperfectly
 known. Britain, separated from the rest of the

^b Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 26.

^c Strab. Geogr. lib. ii. p. 179.

^d See NOTE VII.

B O O K world, had never been visited, except by its neighbours the Gauls, and by a few Carthaginian merchants. The name of Germany had scarcely been heard of. Into all these countries the arms of the Romans penetrated. They entirely subdued Spain and Gaul; they conquered the greatest and most fertile part of Britain; they advanced into Germany, as far as the banks of the river Elbe. In Africa, they acquired a considerable knowledge of the provinces, which stretch along the Mediterranean Sea, from Egypt westward to the Straights of Gades. In Asia, they not only subjected to their power most of the provinces which composed the Persian and the Macedonian Empires, but after their victories over Mithridates and Tigranes, they seem to have made a more accurate survey of the countries contiguous to the Euxine and Caspian Seas, and to have carried on a more extensive trade than that of the Greeks with the opulent and commercial nations then seated round the Euxine Sea.

Imperfection of geographical knowledge among the ancients;

From this succinct survey of discovery and navigation, which I have traced from the earliest dawn of historical knowledge, to the full establishment of the Roman dominion, the progress of both appears to have been wonderfully slow. It seems neither adequate to what we might have expected from the activity and enterprise of the human mind, nor to what might have been performed by the power of the great Empires which successively governed the world. If we reject accounts that are fabulous and obscure; if we adhere steadily to the light and information of authentic history, without substituting in its place the conjectures of fancy or the

dreams of etymologists, we must conclude, that the knowledge which the ancients had acquired of the habitable globe was extremely confined. In Europe, the extensive provinces in the eastern part of Germany were little known to them. They were almost totally unacquainted with the vast countries which are now subject to the Kings of Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, Poland, and the Russian Empire. The more barren regions, that stretch within the arctic circle, were quite unexplored. In Africa, their researches did not extend far beyond the provinces which border on the Mediterranean, and those situated on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf. In Asia, they were unacquainted, as I formerly observed, with all the fertile and opulent countries beyond the Ganges, which furnish the most valuable commodities that in modern times have been the great object of the European commerce with India; nor do they seem to have ever penetrated into those immense regions occupied by the wandering tribes, which they called by the general name of Sarmatians or Scythians, and which are now possessed by Tartars of various denominations, and by the Asiatic subjects of Russia.

But there is one opinion, that universally prevailed among the ancients, which conveys a more striking idea of the small progress they had made in the knowledge of the habitable globe, than can be derived from any detail of their discoveries. They supposed the earth to be divided into five regions, which they distinguished by the name of Zones. Two of these, which were nearest the poles, they termed Frigid zones, and believed that the ex-

B O O K

I.

a remarkable proof of this,

B O O K ^{I.} treme cold which reigned perpetually there, rendered them uninhabitable. Another, seated under the line, and extending on either side towards the tropics, they called the Torrid zone, and imagined it to be so burnt up with unremitting heat, as to be equally destitute of inhabitants. On the two other zones, which occupied the remainder of the earth, they bestowed the appellation of Temperate, and taught that these, being the only regions in which life could subsist, were allotted to man for his habitation. This wild opinion was not a conceit of the uninformed vulgar, or a fanciful fiction of the poets, but a system adopted by the most enlightened philosophers, the most accurate historians and geographers in Greece and Rome. According to this theory, a vast portion of the habitable earth was pronounced to be unfit for sustaining the human species. Those fertile and populous regions within the torrid zone, which are now known not only to yield their own inhabitants the necessaries and comforts of life with most luxuriant profusion, but to communicate their superfluous stores to the rest of the world, were supposed to be the mansion of perpetual sterility and desolation. As all the parts of the globe with which the ancients were acquainted, lay within the northern temperate zone, their opinion that the other temperate zone was filled with inhabitants, was founded on reasoning and conjecture, not on discovery. They even believed that, by the intolerable heat of the torrid zone, such an insuperable barrier was placed between the two temperate regions of the earth as would prevent for ever any intercourse between their respective inha-

bitants. Thus, this extravagant theory not only **B O O K**
 proves that the ancients were unacquainted with the ^L
 true state of the globe, but it tended to render their
 ignorance perpetual, by representing all attempts
 towards opening a communication with the remote
 regions of the earth, as utterly impracticable ^f.

But, however imperfect or inaccurate the geographical knowledge which the Greeks and Romans had acquired may appear, in respect of the present improved state of that science, their progress in discovery will seem considerable, and the extent to which they carried navigation and commerce must be reckoned great, when compared with the ignorance of early times. As long as the Roman Empire retained such vigour as to preserve its authority over the conquered nations, and to keep them united, it was an object of public policy, as well as of private curiosity, to examine and describe the countries which composed this great body. Even when the other sciences began to decline, geography, enriched with new observations, and receiving some accession from the experience of every age, and the reports of every traveller, continued to improve. It attained to the highest point of perfection and accuracy to which it ever arrived in the ancient world, by the industry and genius of Ptolemy the philosopher. He flourished in the second century of the Christian æra, and published a description of the terrestrial globe, more ample and exact than that of any of his predecessors.

Improvements in
 geography
 by Ptolemy.

But, soon after, violent convulsions began to

^f See NOTE VIII.

B O O K shake the Roman state ; the fatal ambition or caprice of Constantine, by changing the seat of government, divided and weakened its force ; the barbarous nations, which Providence prepared as instruments to overturn the mighty fabric of the Roman power, began to assemble and to muster their armies on its frontier : the Empire tottered to its fall. During this decline and old age of the Roman state, it was impossible that the sciences should go on improving. The efforts of genius were, at that period, as languid and feeble as those of government. From the time of Ptolemy, no considerable addition seems to have been made to geographical knowledge, nor did any important revolution happen in trade, excepting that Constantinople, by its advantageous situation, and the encouragement of the eastern Emperors, became a commercial city of the first note.

Effects of their conquests on commercial intercourse.

At length, the clouds which had been so long gathering round the Roman Empire burst into a storm. Barbarous nations rushed in from several quarters with irresistible impetuosity, and in the general wreck, occasioned by the inundation which overwhelmed Europe, the arts, sciences, inventions, and discoveries of the Romans perished in a great measure, and disappeared^s. All the various tribes which settled in the different provinces of the Roman Empire were uncivilized, strangers to letters, destitute of arts, unacquainted with regular government, subordination, or laws. The manners and institutions of some of them were so rude as to be

^s Hist. of Charles V. vol. i.

hardly compatible with a state of social union: Europe, when occupied by such inhabitants, may be said to have returned to a second infancy, and had to begin anew its career in improvement, science, and civility. The first effect of the settlement of those barbarous invaders was to dissolve the union by which the Roman power had cemented mankind together. They parcelled out Europe into many small and independent states, differing from each other in language and customs. No intercourse subsisted between the members of those divided and hostile communities. Accustomed to a simple mode of life, and averse to industry, they had few wants to supply, and few superfluities to dispose of. The names of *stranger* and *enemy* became once more words of the same import. Customs every where prevailed, and even laws were established, which rendered it disagreeable and dangerous to visit any foreign country^b. Cities, in which alone an extensive commerce can be carried on, were few, inconsiderable, and destitute of those immunities which produce security or excite enterprise. The sciences, on which geography and navigation are founded, were little cultivated. The accounts of ancient improvements and discoveries, contained in the Greek and Roman authors, were neglected or misunderstood. The knowledge of remote regions was lost, their situation, their commodities, and almost their names, were unknown.

One circumstance prevented commercial intercourse with distant nations from ceasing altogether: Commerce still preserved in

^b Hist. of Charles V. vol. i.

B O O K Constantinople, though often threatened by the fierce invaders who spread desolation over the rest of Europe, was so fortunate as to escape their destructive rage. In that city, the knowledge of ancient arts and discoveries was preserved; a taste for splendour and elegance subsisted; the productions and luxuries of foreign countries were in request; and commerce continued to flourish there when it was almost extinct in every other part of Europe. The citizens of Constantinople did not confine their trade to the islands of the Archipelago, or to the adjacent coasts of Asia; they took a wider range, and, following the course which the ancients had marked out, imported the commodities of the East Indies from Alexandria. When Egypt was torn from the Roman Empire by the Arabians, the industry of the Greeks discovered a new channel by which the productions of India might be conveyed to Constantinople. They were carried up the Indus, as far as that great river is navigable; thence they were transported by land to the banks of the river Oxus, and proceeded down its stream to the Caspian Sea. There they entered the Volga, and, sailing up it, were carried by land to the Tanais, which conducted them into the Euxine Sea, where vessels from Constantinople waited their arrival¹. This extraordinary and tedious mode of conveyance merits attention, not only as a proof of the violent passion which the inhabitants of Constantinople had conceived for the luxuries of the East, and as a specimen of the ardour and ingenuity with which

I.
the East-
ern Em-
pire,

¹ Ramusio, vol. i. p. 372. F.

they carried on commerce; but because it demonstrates that, during the ignorance which reigned in the rest of Europe, an extensive knowledge of remote countries was still preserved in the capital of the Greek Empire.

B O O K
I.

At the same time a gleam of light and knowledge broke in upon the East. The Arabians having contracted some relish for the sciences of the people whose empire they had contributed to overturn, translated the books of several of the Greek philosophers into their own language. One of the first was that valuable work of Ptolemy which I have already mentioned. The study of geography became, of consequence, an early object of attention to the Arabians. But that acute and ingenious people cultivated chiefly the speculative and scientific parts of geography. In order to ascertain the figure and dimensions of the terrestrial globe, they applied the principles of geometry, they had recourse to astronomical observations, they employed experiments and operations, which Europe in more enlightened times has been proud to adopt and to imitate. At that period, however, the fame of the improvements made by the Arabians did not reach Europe. The knowledge of their discoveries was reserved for ages capable of comprehending and of perfecting them.

and among
the Ara-
bians.

By degrees the calamities and desolation brought upon the western provinces of the Roman Empire by its barbarous conquerors were forgotten, and in some measure repaired. The rude tribes which settled there acquiring insensibly some idea of regular government, and some relish for the functions

Revival of
commerce
and navi-
gation in
Europe.

B. O O K and comforts of civil life, Europe began to awake
 L. from its torpid and unactive state. The first symptoms of revival were discerned in Italy. The northern tribes which took possession of this country, made progress in improvement with greater rapidity than the people settled in other parts of Europe. Various causes, which it is not the object of this work to enumerate or explain, concurred in restoring liberty and independence to the cities of Italy^k. The acquisition of these roused industry, and gave motion and vigour to all the active powers of the human mind. Foreign commerce revived, navigation was attended to and improved. Constantinople became the chief mart to which the Italians resorted. There they not only met with a favourable reception, but obtained such mercantile privileges as enabled them to carry on trade with great advantage. They were supplied both with the precious commodities of the East, and with many curious manufactures, the product of ancient arts and ingenuity which still subsisted among the Greeks. As the labour and expense of conveying the productions of India to Constantinople by that long and indirect course which I have described, rendered them extremely rare, and of an exorbitant price, the industry of the Italians discovered other methods of procuring them in greater abundance and at an easier rate. They sometimes purchased them in Aleppo, Tripoli, and other ports on the coast of Syria, to which they were brought by a route not unknown to the ancients. They were conveyed

^k Hist. of Charles V. vol. i.

from India by sea up the Persian Gulf, and, ascending the Euphrates and Tigris as far as Bagdat, were carried by land across the desert of Palmyra, and from thence to the towns on the Mediterranean. But, from the length of the journey, and the dangers to which the caravans were exposed, this proved always a tedious and often a precarious mode of conveyance. At length the Soldans of Egypt, having revived the commerce with India in its ancient channel, by the Arabian Gulf, the Italian merchants, notwithstanding the violent antipathy to each other with which Christians and the followers of Mahomet were then possessed, repaired to Alexandria, and enduring, from the love of gain, the insolence and exactions of the Mahometans, established a lucrative trade in that port. From that period the commercial spirit of Italy became active and enterprising. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, rose from inconsiderable towns to be populous and wealthy cities. Their naval power increased; their vessels frequented not only all the ports in the Mediterranean, but, venturing sometimes beyond the Streights, visited the maritime towns of Spain, France, the Low-Countries, and England; and, by distributing their commodities over Europe, began to communicate to its various nations some taste for the valuable productions of the East, as well as some ideas of manufactures and arts, which were then unknown beyond the precincts of Italy.

While the cities of Italy were thus advancing in their career of improvement, an event happened, the most extraordinary, perhaps, in the history of mankind, which, instead of retarding the commer-
Their progress favoured by the Crusades;

B O O K cial progress of the Italians, rendered it more rapid.
 I. The martial spirit of the Europeans; heightened and inflamed by religious zeal, prompted them to attempt the deliverance of the Holy Land from the dominion of Infidels. Vast armies, composed of all the nations in Europe, marched towards Asia upon this wild enterprise. The Genoese, the Pisans, and Venetians, furnished the transports which carried them thither. They supplied them with provisions and military stores. Besides the immense sums which they received on this account, they obtained commercial privileges and establishments of great consequence in the settlements which the Crusaders made in Palestine, and in other provinces of Asia. From those sources prodigious wealth flowed into the cities which I have mentioned. This was accompanied with a proportional increase of power; and, by the end of the Holy War, Venice in particular became a great maritime state, possessing an extensive commerce and ample territories¹. Italy was not the only country in which the Crusades contributed to revive and diffuse such a spirit as prepared Europe for future discoveries. By their expeditions into Asia, the other European nations became well acquainted with remote regions, which formerly they knew only by name, or by the reports of ignorant and credulous pilgrims. They had an opportunity of observing the manners, the arts, and the accommodations of people more polished than themselves. This intercourse between the East and West subsisted almost two centuries.

¹ Essai de l'Histoire du Commerce de Venise, p. 52, &c.

The adventurers who returned from Asia commu- **B O O K**
 nicated to their countrymen the ideas which they **I.**
 had acquired, and the habits of life they had con- }
 tracted by visiting more refined nations. The Euro-
 peans began to be sensible of wants with which they
 were formerly unacquainted: new desires were ex-
 cited; and such a taste for the commodities and arts
 of other countries gradually spread among them,
 that they not only encouraged the resort of foreigners
 to their harbours, but began to perceive the advan-
 tage and necessity of applying to commerce them-
 selves^m.

This communication, which was opened between by the dis-
 Europe and the western provinces of Asia, en- coveries of
 couraged several persons to advance far beyond the travellers
 countries in which the Crusaders carried on their by land,
 operations, and to travel by land into the more re-
 mote and opulent regions of the East. The wild
 fanaticism, which seems at that period to have
 mingled in all the schemes of individuals, no less
 than in all the counsels of nations, first incited men
 to enter upon those long and dangerous peregrina-
 tions. They were afterwards undertaken from
 prospects of commercial advantage, or from mo-
 tives of mere curiosity. Benjamin, a Jew of Tu-
 dela, in the kingdom of Navarre, possessed with a
 superstitious veneration for the law of Moses, and
 solicitous to visit his countrymen in the East,
 whom he hoped to find in such a state of power
 and opulence as might redound to the honour of
 his sect, set out from Spain in the year 1160, and,

^m Hist. of Charles V. vol. i.

B O O K travelling by land to Constantinople, proceeded
 I. through the countries to the north of the Euxine
 and Caspian Seas, as far as Chinese Tartary. From
 thence he took his route towards the South, and
 after traversing various provinces of the further In-
 dia, he embarked on the Indian Ocean, visited
 several of its islands, and returned at the end of
 thirteen years, by the way of Egypt, to Europe, with
 much information concerning a large district of
 the globe altogether unknown at that time to the
 western worldⁿ. The zeal of the head of the Chris-
 tian church co-operated with the superstition of
 Benjamin the Jew in discovering the interior and
 remote provinces of Asia. All Christendom having
 been alarmed with accounts of the rapid progress
 of the Tartar arms under Zengis Khan, Innocent
 IV., who entertained most exalted ideas concerning
 the plenitude of his own power, and the submis-
 sion due to his injunctions, sent Father John de
 Plano Carpini, at the head of a mission of Francis-
 can monks, and Father Ascolino, at the head of
 another of Dominicans, to enjoin Kayuk Khan,
 the grandson of Zengis, who was then at the head
 of the Tartar empire, to embrace the Christian
 faith, and to desist from desolating the earth by his
 arms. The haughty descendant of the greatest
 conqueror Asia had ever beheld, astonished at this
 strange mandate from an Italian priest, whose name
 and jurisdiction were alike unknown to him, re-
 ceived it with the contempt which it merited,
 though he dismissed the mendicants who delivered

1246.

ⁿ Bergeron, Recueil des Voyages, &c. tom. i. p. 1.

it with impunity. But, as they had penetrated into the country by different routes, and followed for some time the Tartar camps, which were always in motion, they had opportunity of visiting a great part of Asia. Carpini, who proceeded by the way of Poland and Russia, travelled through its northern provinces as far as the extremities of Thibet. Ascolino, who seems to have landed somewhere in Syria, advanced through its southern provinces into the interior parts of Persia^o.

B O O K
I.

Not long after, St. Louis of France contributed further towards extending the knowledge which the Europeans had begun to acquire of those distant regions. Some designing impostor, who took advantage of the slender acquaintance of Christendom with the state and character of the Asiatic nations, having informed him that a powerful Khan of the Tartars had embraced the Christian faith, the monarch listened to the tale with pious credulity, and instantly resolved to send ambassadors to this illustrious convert, with a view of enticing him to attack their common enemy the Saracens in one quarter, while he fell upon them in another. As monks were the only persons in that age who possessed such a degree of knowledge as qualified them for a service of this kind, he employed in it Father Andrew, a Jacobine, who was followed by Father William de Rubruquis, a Franciscan. With respect to the progress of the former, there is no memorial extant. The journal of the latter has been published. He was admitted into the presence of

1253.

^o Hakluyt, i. 21. Bergeron, tom. i.

B O O K Mangu, the third Khan in succession from Zengis, and made a circuit through the interior parts of Asia, more extensive than that of any European who had hitherto explored them^p.

I.
 To those travellers whom religious zeal sent forth to visit Asia, succeeded others who ventured into remote countries from the prospect of commercial advantage, or from motives of mere curiosity. The first and most eminent of these was 1265. Marco Polo, a Venetian of a noble family. Having engaged early in trade, according to the custom of his country, his aspiring mind wished for a sphere of activity more extensive than was afforded to it by the established traffic carried on in those ports of Europe and Asia which the Venetians frequented. This prompted him to travel into unknown countries, in expectation of opening a commercial intercourse with them more suited to the sanguine ideas and hopes of a young adventurer.

As his father had already carried some European commodities to the court of the great Khan of the Tartars, and had disposed of them to advantage, he resorted thither. Under the protection of Kublay Khan, the most powerful of all the successors of Zengis, he continued his mercantile peregrinations in Asia upwards of twenty-six years; and during that time advanced towards the east, far beyond the utmost boundaries to which any European traveller had ever proceeded. Instead of following the course of Carpini and Rubruquis, along the vast unpeopled plains of Tartary, he passed

^p Hakl. i. 71. Recueil des Voyages par Bergeron, tom. i.

through the chief trading cities in the more cultivated parts of Asia, and penetrated to Cambalu, or Peking, the capital of the great kingdom of Cathay, or China, subject at that time to the successors of Zengis. He made more than one voyage on the Indian Ocean; he traded in many of the islands from which Europe had long received spiceries and other commodities which it held in high estimation, though unacquainted with the particular countries to which it was indebted for those precious productions; and he obtained information concerning several countries which he did not visit in person, particularly the island Zipangri, probably the same now known by the name of Japan^q. On his return, he astonished his contemporaries with his descriptions of vast regions whose names had never been heard of in Europe, and with such pompous accounts of their fertility, their populousness, their opulence, the variety of their manufactures, and the extent of their trade, as rose far above the conception of an uninformed age.

About half a century after Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, an Englishman, encouraged by his example, visited most of the countries in the East which he had described, and, like him, published an account of them^r. The narrations of those early travellers abound with many wild incoherent tales concerning giants, enchanters, and monsters. But they were not from that circumstance less acceptable to an ignorant age, which delighted in what

^q Viaggi di Marco Polo. Ramus. ii. 2. Bergeron, tom. ii.

^r Voyages and Travels, by Sir John Mandeville.

B O O K was marvellous. The wonders which they told, mostly on hearsay, filled the multitude with admiration. The facts which they related from their own observation attracted the attention of the more discerning. The former, which may be considered as the popular traditions and fables of the countries through which they had passed, were gradually disregarded as Europe advanced in knowledge. The latter, however incredible some of them may have appeared in their own time, have been confirmed by the observations of modern travellers. By means of both, however, the curiosity of mankind was excited with respect to the remote parts of the earth; their ideas were enlarged; and they were not only insensibly disposed to attempt new discoveries, but received such information as directed to that particular course in which these were afterwards carried on.

and by the
invention
of the
mariners'
compass.

While this spirit was gradually forming in Europe, a fortunate discovery was made, which contributed more than all the efforts and ingenuity of preceding ages to improve and to extend navigation. That wonderful property of the magnet, by which it communicates such virtue to a needle or slender rod of iron as to point towards the poles of the earth, was observed. The use which might be made of this in directing navigation was immediately perceived. That valuable but now familiar instrument, the *mariners' compass*, was constructed. When, by means of it, navigators found that, at all seasons and in every place, they could discover the north and south with so much ease and accuracy, it became no longer necessary to depend merely on the

light of the stars and the observation of the sea-^{B O O K}
 coast. They gradually abandoned their ancient ^{I.}
 timid and lingering course along the shore, ventured boldly into the ocean, and, relying on this new guide, could steer in the darkest night, and under the most cloudy sky, with a security and precision hitherto unknown. The compass may be said to have opened to man the dominion of the sea, and to have put him in full possession of the earth by enabling him to visit every part of it. Flavio Gioia, a citizen of Amalfi, a town of considerable trade in the kingdom of Naples, was the author of this great discovery, about the year one thousand three hundred and two. It hath been often the fate of those illustrious benefactors of mankind who have enriched science and improved the arts by their inventions, to derive more reputation than benefit from the happy efforts of their genius. But the lot of Gioia has been still more cruel; through the inattention or ignorance of contemporary historians, he has been defrauded even of the fame to which he had such a just title. We receive from them no information with respect to his profession, his character, the precise time when he made this important discovery, or the accidents and inquiries which led to it. The knowledge of this event, though productive of greater effects than any recorded in the annals of the human race, is transmitted to us without any of those circumstances which can gratify the curiosity that it naturally awakens^s. But though the use of the compass

^s Collinas & Trombellus de Acis Nauticæ Inventore, Instit. Acad. Bonon. tom. ii. part iii. p. 372.

B **O** **O** **K** might enable the Italians to perform the short
 I. } voyages to which they were accustomed with greater
 security and expedition, its influence was not so sudden or extensive as immediately to render navigation adventurous, and to excite a spirit of discovery. Many causes combined in preventing this beneficial invention from producing its full effect instantaneously. Men relinquish ancient habits slowly and with reluctance. They are averse to new experiments, and venture upon them with timidity. The commercial jealousy of the Italians, it is probable, laboured to conceal the happy discovery of their countrymen from other nations. The art of steering by the compass with such skill and accuracy as to inspire a full confidence in its direction, was acquired gradually. Sailors unaccustomed to quit sight of land, durst not launch out at once and commit themselves to unknown seas. Accordingly, near half a century elapsed from the time of Gioia's discovery, before navigators ventured into any seas which they had not been accustomed to frequent.

Some appearance of a bolder spirit in navigation.

The first appearance of a bolder spirit may be dated from the voyages of the Spaniards to the Canary or Fortunate Islands. By what accident they were led to the discovery of those small isles, which lie near five hundred miles from the Spanish coast, and above a hundred and fifty miles from the coast of Africa, contemporary writers have not explained. But, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the people of all the different kingdoms into which Spain was then divided, were accustomed to make piratical excursions thither, in order to plunder the

inhabitants, or to carry them off as slaves. **Cle-** **B O O K**
ment VI., in virtue of the right claimed by the Holy **I.**
 See to dispose of all countries possessed by infidels, erected those isles into a kingdom in the year one thousand three hundred and forty-four, and conferred it on Lewis de la Cerda descended from the royal family of Castile. But that unfortunate Prince, destitute of power to assert his nominal title, having never visited the Canaries, John de Bethencourt, a Norman baron, obtained a grant of them from Henry III. of Castile^s. Bethencourt, with the valour and good fortune which distinguished the adventurers of his country, attempted and effected the conquest; and the possession of the Canaries remained for some time in his family, as a fief held of the crown of Castile. Previous to this expedition of Bethencourt, his countrymen settled in Normandy are said to have visited the coast of Africa, and to have proceeded far to the south of the Canary Islands. But their voyages thither seem not to have been undertaken in consequence of any public or regular plan for extending navigation and attempting new discoveries. They were either excursions suggested by that roving piratical spirit which descended to the Normans from their ancestors, or the commercial enterprises of private merchants, which attracted so little notice that hardly any memorial of them is to be found in contemporary authors. In a general survey of the progress

1365.

^s Viera y Clavijo Notic. de la Histor. de Canaria, i. 268. &c. Glas. Hist. c. 1.

B O O K of discovery, it is sufficient to have mentioned this event; and leaving it among those of dubious existence, or of small importance, we may conclude, that though much additional information concerning the remote regions of the East had been received by travellers who visited them by land, navigation at the beginning of the fifteenth century had not advanced beyond the state to which it had attained before the downfall of the Roman Empire.

First regular plan of discovery,

formed by Portugal.

At length the period arrived, when Providence decreed that men were, to pass the limits within which they had been so long confined, and open to themselves a more ample field wherein to display their talents, their enterprise and courage. The first considerable efforts towards this were not made by any of the more powerful states of Europe, or by those who had applied to navigation with the greatest assiduity and success. The glory of leading the way in this new career was reserved for Portugal, one of the smallest and least powerful of the European kingdoms. As the attempts of the Portuguese to acquire the knowledge of those parts of the globe with which mankind were then unacquainted, not only improved and extended the art of navigation, but roused such a spirit of curiosity and enterprise as led to the discovery of the New World, of which I propose to write the history, it is necessary to take a full view of the rise, the progress, and success of their various naval operations. It was in this school that the discoverer of America was trained; and unless we trace the steps by which his instructors and guides advanced, it will be im-

possible to comprehend the circumstances which suggested the idea, or facilitated the execution, of his great design. B O O K
I.


Various circumstances prompted the Portuguese to exert their activity in this new direction, and enabled them to accomplish undertakings apparently superior to the natural force of their monarchy. The Kings of Portugal, having driven the Moors out of their dominions, had acquired power, as well as glory, by the success of their arms against the infidels. By their victories over them, they had extended the royal authority beyond the narrow limits within which it was originally circumscribed in Portugal, as well as in other feudal kingdoms. They had the command of the national force, could rouse it to act with united vigour, and, after the expulsion of the Moors, could employ it without dread of interruption from any domestic enemy. By the perpetual hostilities carried on for several centuries against the Mahometans, the martial and adventurous spirit which distinguished all the European nations during the middle ages, was improved and heightened among the Portuguese. A fierce civil war towards the close of the fourteenth century, occasioned by a disputed succession, augmented the military ardour of the nation, and formed or called forth men of such active and daring genius as are fit for bold undertakings. The situation of the kingdom, bounded on every side by the dominions of a more powerful neighbour, did not afford free scope to the activity of the Portuguese by land, as the strength of their monarchy was no match for that of Castile. But Portugal was a maritime state,

B O O K in which there were many commodious harbours ;
 I. the people had begun to make some progress in the
 knowledge and practice of navigation ; and the sea
 was open to them, presenting the only field of enter-
 prise in which they could distinguish themselves.

First at-
 tempt ;

Such was the state of Portugal, and such the dis-
 position of the people, when John I., surnamed the
 Bastard, obtained secure possession of the crown
 by the peace concluded with Castile, in the year
 one thousand four hundred and eleven. He was a
 Prince of great merit, who, by superior courage
 and abilities, had opened his way to a throne which
 of right did not belong to him. He instantly per-
 ceived that it would be impossible to preserve pub-
 lic order, or domestic tranquillity, without finding
 some employment for the restless spirit of his sub-
 jects. With this view he assembled a numerous
 fleet at Lisbon, composed of all the ships which he
 could fit out in his own kingdom, and of many
 1412. hired from foreigners. This great armament was
 destined to attack the Moors settled on the coast
 of Barbary. While it was equipping, a few vessels
 were appointed to sail along the western shore of
 Africa bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, and to dis-
 cover the unknown countries situated there. From
 this inconsiderable attempt, we may date the com-
 mencement of that spirit of discovery which
 opened the barriers that had so long shut out man-
 kind from the knowledge of one half of the terres-
 trial globe.

At the time when John sent forth these ships on
 this new voyage, the art of navigation was still very
 imperfect. Though Africa lay so near to Portugal,

and the fertility of the countries already known on B O O K
 that continent invited men to explore it more fully, ^{I.}
 the Portuguese had never ventured to sail beyond 
 Cape *Non*. That promontory, as its name im-
 ports, was hitherto considered as a boundary which
 could not be passed. But the nations of Europe
 had now acquired as much knowledge, as imbol-
 dened them to disregard the prejudices and to cor-
 rect the errors of their ancestors. The long reign
 of ignorance, the constant enemy of every curious
 inquiry and of every new undertaking, was ap-
 proaching to its period. The light of science began
 to dawn. The works of the ancient Greeks and
 Romans began to be read with admiration and pro-
 fit. The sciences cultivated by the Arabians were
 introduced into Europe by the Moors settled in
 Spain and Portugal, and by the Jews, who were
 very numerous in both these kingdoms. Geometry,
 astronomy, and geography, the sciences on which
 the art of navigation is founded, became objects of
 studious attention. The memory of the discoveries
 made by the ancients was revived, and the progress
 of their navigation and commerce began to be
 traced. Some of the causes which have obstructed
 the cultivation of science in Portugal, during this
 century and the last, did not exist, or did not ope-
 rate in the same manner, in the fifteenth century[†];
 and the Portuguese at that period seem to have
 kept pace with other nations on this side of the
 Alps in literary pursuits.

As the genius of the age favoured the execution its success.

[†] See NOTE IX.

B O O K of that new undertaking, to which the peculiar state
 }^{I.} of the country invited the Portuguese, it proved successful. The vessels sent on the discovery doubled that formidable Cape, which had terminated the progress of former navigators, and proceeded a hundred and sixty miles beyond it, to Cape Bojador. As its rocky cliffs, which stretched a considerable way into the Atlantic, appeared more dreadful than the promontory which they had passed, the Portuguese commanders durst not attempt to sail round it, but returned to Lisbon, more satisfied with having advanced so far, than ashamed of having ventured no further.

Prince
 Henry the
 director of
 the Portu-
 guese dis-
 coveries.
 1417.

Inconsiderable as this voyage was, it increased the passion for discovery which began to arise in Portugal. The fortunate issue of the King's expedition against the Moors of Barbary, added strength to that spirit in the nation, and pushed it on to new undertakings. In order to render these successful, it was necessary that they should be conducted by a person who possessed abilities capable of discerning what was attainable, who enjoyed leisure to form a regular system for prosecuting discovery, and who was animated with ardour that would persevere in spite of obstacles, and repulses. Happily for Portugal, she found all those qualities in Henry Duke of Viseo, the fourth son of King John by Philippa of Lancaster, sister of Henry IV. King of England. That Prince, in his early youth, having accompanied his father in his expedition to Barbary, distinguished himself by many deeds of valour. To the martial spirit, which was the characteristic of every man of noble birth

at that time, he added all the accomplishments of a **B O O K**
 more enlightened and polished age. He cultivated **I.**
 the arts and sciences, which were then unknown
 and despised by persons of his rank. He applied
 with peculiar fondness to the study of geography ;
 and by the instruction of able masters, as well as
 by the accounts of travellers, he early acquired such
 knowledge of the habitable globe, as discovered the
 great probability of finding new and opulent coun-
 tries, by sailing along the coast of Africa. Such
 an object was formed to awaken the enthusiasm and
 ardour of a youthful mind, and he espoused with
 the utmost zeal the patronage of a design which
 might prove as beneficial as it appeared to be
 splendid and honourable. In order that he might
 pursue this great scheme without interruption, he
 retired from court immediately after his return from
 Africa, and fixed his residence at Sagres, near Cape
 St. Vincent, where the prospect of the Atlantic
 Ocean invited his thoughts continually towards his
 favourite project, and encouraged him to execute it.
 In this retreat he was attended by some of the most
 learned men in his country, who aided him in his
 researches. He applied for information to the
 Moors of Barbary, who were accustomed to travel
 by land into the interior provinces of Africa in
 quest of ivory, gold-dust, and other rich commo-
 dities. He consulted the Jews settled in Portugal.
 By promises, rewards, and marks of respect, he al-
 lured into his service several persons, foreigners as
 well as Portuguese, who were eminent for their
 skill in navigation. In taking those preparatory
 steps, the great abilities of the Prince were seconded

B O O K by his private virtues. His integrity, his affability, his respect for religion, his zeal for the honour of his country, engaged persons of all ranks to applaud his design, and to favour the execution of it. His schemes were allowed, by the greater part of his countrymen, to proceed neither from ambition nor the desire of wealth, but to flow from the warm benevolence of a heart eager to promote the happiness of mankind, and which justly entitled him to assume a motto for his device, that described the quality by which he wished to be distinguished, *the talent of doing good.*

Discovery
of Porto
Santo;
1418.

His first effort, as is usual at the commencement of any new undertaking, was extremely inconsiderable. He fitted out a single ship, and giving the command of it to John Gonzales Zarco and Tristan Vaz, two gentlemen of his household, who voluntarily offered to conduct the enterprise, he instructed them to use their utmost efforts to double Cape Bojador, and thence to steer towards the south. They, according to the mode of navigation which still prevailed, held their course along the shore; and by following that direction, they must have encountered almost insuperable difficulties in attempting to pass Cape Bojador. But fortune came in aid to their want of skill, and prevented the voyage from being altogether fruitless. A sudden squall of wind arose, drove them out to sea, and, when they expected every moment to perish, landed them on an unknown island, which from their happy escape they named *Porto Santo*. In the infancy of navigation, the discovery of this small island appeared a matter of such moment, that they

instantly returned to Portugal with the good tidings, and were received by Henry with the applause and honour due to fortunate adventurers. This faint dawn of success filled a mind ardent in the pursuit of a favourite object, with such sanguine hopes as were sufficient incitements to proceed. Next year Henry sent out three ships under the same commanders, to whom he joined Bartholomew Perestrello, in order to take possession of the island which they had discovered. When they began to settle in Porto Santo, they observed towards the south a fixed spot in the horizon like a small black cloud. By degrees, they were led to conjecture that it might be land; and steering towards it, they arrived at a considerable island, uninhabited and covered with wood, which on that account they called *Madeira*^u. As it was Henry's chief object to render his discoveries useful to his country, he immediately equipped a fleet to carry a colony of Portuguese to these islands. By his provident care, they were furnished not only with the seeds, plants, and domestic animals common in Europe; but, as he foresaw that the warmth of the climate and fertility of the soil would prove favourable to the rearing of other productions, he procured slips of the vine from the island of Cyprus, the rich wines of which were then in great request, and plants of the sugar-cane from Sicily, into which it had been lately introduced. These thrive so prosperously in this new country, that the benefit of cultivating

B O O K
I.
1419.

of Ma-
deira.

1420.

^u Historical Relation of the first Discovery of Madeira, translated from the Portuguese of Fran. Alcafurana, p. 15, &c.

B O O K them was immediately perceived, and the sugar and wine of Madeira quickly became articles of some consequence in the commerce of Portugal^x.

As soon as the advantages derived from this first settlement to the west of the European continent began to be felt, the spirit of discovery appeared less chimerical, and became more adventurous. By their voyages to Madeira, the Portuguese were gradually accustomed to a bolder navigation, and, instead of creeping servilely along the coast, ventured into the open sea. In consequence of taking this course, Gilianez, who commanded one of Prince Henry's ships, doubled Cape Bojador, the boundary of the Portuguese navigation upwards of twenty years, and which had hitherto been deemed unpassable. This successful voyage, which the ignorance of the age placed on a level with the most famous exploits recorded in history, opened a new sphere to navigation, as it discovered the vast continent of Africa, still washed by the Atlantic Ocean, and stretching towards the south. Part of this was soon explored; the Portuguese advanced within the tropics, and in the space of a few years they discovered the river Senegal, and all the coast extending from Cape Blanco to Cape de Verd.

Hitherto the Portuguese had been guided in their discoveries, or encouraged to attempt them, by the light and information which they received from the works of the ancient mathematicians and geographers. But when they began to enter the torrid zone, the notion which prevailed among the an-

Double
Cape Bo-
jador;

1433.

advance
within the
tropics.

Astonish-
ed at what
they disco-
vered
there.

^x Lud. Guicciardini Descritt. de Paesi Bassi, p. 180, 181.

cients, that the heat, which reigned perpetually there, was so excessive as to render it uninhabitable, deterred them, for some time, from proceeding. Their own observations, when they first ventured into this unknown and formidable region, tended to confirm the opinion of antiquity concerning the violent operation of the direct rays of the sun. As far as the river Senegal, the Portuguese had found the coast of Africa inhabited by people nearly resembling the Moors of Barbary. When they advanced to the south of that river, the human form seemed to put on a new appearance. They beheld men with skins black as ebony, with short curled hair, flat noses, thick lips, and all the peculiar features which are now known to distinguish the race of Negroes. This surprising alteration they naturally attributed to the influence of heat, and if they should advance nearer to the line, they began to dread that its effects would be still more violent. Those dangers were exaggerated; and many other objections against attempting further discoveries were proposed by some of the grandees, who, from ignorance, from envy, or from that cold timid prudence which rejects whatever has the air of novelty or enterprise, had hitherto condemned all Prince Henry's schemes. They represented, that it was altogether chimerical to expect any advantage from countries situated in that region which the wisdom and experience of antiquity had pronounced to be unfit for the habitation of men; that their forefathers, satisfied with cultivating the territory which Providence had allotted them, did not waste the strength of the kingdom by fruitless projects in

B O O K
I.

B O O K quest of new settlements ; that Portugal was already
 I. exhausted by the expense of attempts to discover
 lands which either did not exist, or which nature
 destined to remain unknown ; and was drained of
 men, who might have been employed in under-
 takings attended with more certain success, and
 productive of greater benefit. But neither their ap-
 peal to the authority of the ancients, nor their
 reasonings concerning the interests of Portugal,
 made any impression upon the determined philo-
 sophic mind of Prince Henry. The discoveries
 which he had already made, convinced him that the
 ancients had little more than a conjectural know-
 ledge of the torrid zone. He was no less satisfied
 that the political arguments of his opponents, with
 respect to the interest of Portugal, were malevolent
 and ill-founded. In those sentiments he was stren-
 uously supported by his brother Pedro, who go-
 verned the kingdom as guardian of their nephew
 1438. Alphonso V., who had succeeded to the throne du-
 ring his minority ; and, instead of slackening his
 efforts, Henry continued to pursue his discoveries
 with fresh ardour.

Papal
 grant to
 Portugal
 of what
 countries
 it should
 discover.

But in order to silence all the murmurs of oppo-
 sition, he endeavoured to obtain the sanction of the
 highest authority in favour of his operations. With
 this view he applied to the Pope, and represented,
 in pompous terms, the pious and unwearied zeal
 with which he had exerted himself during twenty
 years, in discovering unknown countries, the wretch-
 ed inhabitants of which were utter strangers to true
 religion, wandering in heathen darkness, or led
 astray by the delusions of Mahomet. He besought

the holy father, to whom, as the vicar of Christ, all the kingdoms of the earth were subject, to confer on the crown of Portugal a right to all the countries possessed by infidels, which should be discovered by the industry of its subjects, and subdued by the force of its arms. He entreated him to enjoin all Christian powers, under the highest penalties, not to molest Portugal while engaged in this laudable enterprise, and to prohibit them from settling in any of the countries which the Portuguese should discover. He promised that, in all their expeditions, it should be the chief object of his countrymen to spread the knowledge of the Christian religion, to establish the authority of the Holy See, and to increase the flock of the universal pastor. As it was by improving with dexterity every favourable conjuncture for acquiring new powers, that the court of Rome had gradually extended its usurpations, Eugene IV., the Pontiff to whom this application was made, eagerly seized the opportunity which now presented itself. He instantly perceived that, by complying with Prince Henry's request, he might exercise a prerogative no less flattering in its own nature than likely to prove beneficial in its consequences. A bull was accordingly issued, in which, after applauding in the strongest terms the past efforts of the Portuguese, and exhorting them to proceed in that laudable career on which they had entered, he granted them an exclusive right to all the countries which they should discover, from Cape Non to the continent of India.

Extravagant as this donation, comprehending such a large portion of the habitable globe, would

B O O K now appear, even in Catholic countries, no person in the fifteenth century doubted that the Pope, in the plenitude of his apostolic power, had a right to confer it. Prince Henry was soon sensible of the advantages which he derived from this transaction. His schemes were authorized and sanctified by the bull approving of them. The spirit of discovery was connected with zeal for religion, which in that age was a principle of such activity and vigour as to influence the conduct of nations. All Christian Princes were deterred from intruding into those countries which the Portuguese had discovered, or from interrupting the progress of their navigation and conquests^y.

Fame and progress of the Portuguese discoveries.

The fame of the Portuguese voyages soon spread over Europe. Men long accustomed to circumscribe the activity and knowledge of the human mind within the limits to which they had been hitherto confined, were astonished to behold the sphere of navigation so suddenly enlarged, and a prospect opened of visiting regions of the globe the existence of which was unknown in former times. The learned and speculative reasoned and formed theories concerning those unexpected discoveries. The vulgar inquired and wondered; while enterprising adventurers crowded from every part of Europe, soliciting Prince Henry to employ them in this honourable service. Many Venetians and Genoese, in particular, who were at that time superior to all other nations in the science of naval affairs, entered aboard the Portuguese ships, and

^y See NOTE X.

acquired a more perfect and extensive knowledge B O O K
of their profession in that new school of navigation. I.
In emulation of these foreigners, the Portuguese exerted their own talents. The nation seconded the designs of the Prince. Private merchants formed companies, with a view to search for unknown countries. The Cape de Verd islands, which lie off the promontory of that name, were discovered, and soon after the isles called Azores. As the former of these are above three hundred miles from the African coast, and the latter nine hundred miles from any continent, it is evident, by their venturing so boldly into the open seas, that the Portuguese had by this time improved greatly in the art of navigation.

1446.

1449.

While the passion for engaging in new undertakings was thus warm and active, it received an unfortunate check by the death of Prince Henry, whose superior knowledge had hitherto directed all the operations of the discoverers, and whose patronage had encouraged and protected them. But notwithstanding all the advantages which they derived from these, the Portuguese during his life did not advance in their utmost progress towards the south, within five degrees of the equinoctial line; and after their continued exertions for half a century, hardly fifteen hundred miles of the coast of Africa were discovered. To an age acquainted with the efforts of navigation in its state of maturity and improvement, those essays of its early years must necessarily appear feeble and unskillful. But inconsiderable as they may be deemed, they were sufficient to turn the curiosity of the European

Death of
Prince
Henry.
1463.

From 1412
to 1463.

B O O K nations into a new channel, to excite an enterprising spirit, and to point the way to future discoveries.

I.
 The passion for discovery languishes for some time;

Alphonso, who possessed the throne of Portugal at the time of Prince Henry's death, was so much engaged in supporting his own pretensions to the crown of Castile, or in carrying on his expeditions against the Moors in Barbary, that, the force of his kingdom being exerted in other operations, he could not prosecute the discoveries in Africa with ardour. He committed the conduct of them to Fernando Gomez, a merchant in Lisbon, to whom he granted an exclusive right of commerce with all the countries of which Prince Henry had taken possession. Under the restraint and oppression of a monopoly, the spirit of discovery languished. It ceased to be a national object, and became the concern of a private man more attentive to his own gain than to the glory of his country. Some progress, however, was made. The Portuguese ventured at length to cross the line, and, to their astonishment, found that region of the torrid zone, which was supposed to be scorched with intolerable heat, to be not only habitable, but populous and fertile.

1471.

1481.
 revives with additional ardour.

John II., who succeeded his father Alphonso, possessed talents capable both of forming and executing great designs. As part of his revenues, while Prince, had arisen from duties on the trade with the newly-discovered countries, this naturally turned his attention towards them, and satisfied him with respect to their utility and importance. In proportion as his knowledge of these countries extended, the possession of them appeared to be of

greater consequence. While the Portuguese proceeded along the coast of Africa, from Cape Non to the river of Senegal, they found all that extensive tract to be sandy, barren, and thinly inhabited by a wretched people professing the Mahometan religion, and subject to the vast Empire of Morocco. But to the south of that river, the power and religion of the Mahometans were unknown. The country was divided into small independent principalities, the population was considerable, the soil fertile^z, and the Portuguese soon discovered that it produced ivory, rich gums, gold, and other valuable commodities. By the acquisition of these, commerce was enlarged, and became more adventurous. Men, animated and rendered active by the certain prospect of gain, pursued discovery with greater eagerness than when they were excited only by curiosity and hope.

This spirit derived no small reinforcement of vigour from the countenance of such a monarch as John. Declaring himself the patron of every attempt towards discovery, he promoted it with all the ardour of his grand-uncle Prince Henry, and with superior power. The effects of this were immediately felt. A powerful fleet was fitted out, which, after discovering the kingdoms of Benin and Congo, advanced above fifteen hundred miles beyond the line, and the Portuguese, for the first time, beheld a new heaven, and observed the stars of another hemisphere. John was not only solici-

B O O K
I

Its pro-
gress.

1484.

* *Navigatio Aloysii Cadamusti apud Novum Orbem Grynæi*, p. 2. 18. *Navigat. all Isola di San Tome per un Pilotto Portug.* Ramusio, i. 115.

B O O K tous to discover, but attentive to secure the possession of, those countries. He built forts on the coast of Guinea; he sent out colonies to settle there; he established a commercial intercourse with the more powerful kingdoms; he endeavoured to render such as were feeble or divided tributary to the crown of Portugal. Some of the petty princes voluntarily acknowledged themselves his vassals. Others were compelled to do so by force of arms. A regular and well-digested system was formed with respect to this new object of policy, and, by firmly adhering to it, the Portuguese power and commerce in Africa were established upon a solid foundation.

Hopes of discovering a new route to the East Indies.

By their constant intercourse with the people of Africa, the Portuguese gradually acquired some knowledge of those parts of that country which they had not visited. The information which they received from the natives, added to what they had observed in their own voyages, began to open prospects more extensive, and to suggest the idea of schemes more important, than those which had hitherto allured and occupied them. They had detected the error of the ancients concerning the nature of the torrid zone. They found as they proceeded southwards, that the continent of Africa, instead of extending in breadth, according to the doctrine of Ptolemy^a, at that time the oracle and guide of the learned in the science of geography, appeared sensibly to contract itself, and to bend towards the east. This induced them to give cre-

^a Vide Nov. Orbis Tabul. Geograph. secund. Ptolem. Amst. 1730.

dit to the accounts of the ancient Phenician voy- **B O O K**
 ages round Africa, which had long been deemed ^{I.}
 fabulous, and led them to conceive hopes that, by
 following the same route, they might arrive at the
 East-Indies, and engross that commerce which has
 been the source of wealth and power to every na-
 tion possessed of it. The comprehensive genius
 of Prince Henry, as we may conjecture from the
 words of the Pope's bull, had early formed some
 idea of this navigation. But though his country-
 men, at that period, were incapable of conceiving
 the extent of his views and schemes, all the Portu-
 guese mathematicians and pilots now concurred in
 representing them as well-founded and practicable.
 The King entered with warmth into their senti-
 ments, and began to concert measures for this ar-
 duous and important voyage.

Before his preparations for this expedition were ^{Schemes}
 finished, accounts were transmitted from Africa, ^{for accom-}
 that various nations along the coast had mentioned ^{pishing}
 a mighty kingdom situated on their continent, at a ^{this.}
 great distance towards the East, the King of which,
 according to their description, professed the Chris-
 tian religion. The Portuguese Monarch immedi-
 ately concluded, that this must be the Emperor of
 Abyssinia, to whom the Europeans, seduced by a
 mistake of Rubruquis, Marco Polo, and other tra-
 vellers to the East, absurdly gave the name of Pres-
 ter or Presbyter John; and, as he hoped to receive
 information and assistance from a Christian Prince,
 in prosecuting a scheme that tended to propagate
 their common faith, he resolved to open, if possi-
 ble, some intercourse with his court. With this

B O O K view, he made choice of Pedro de Covillam and
 I. Alphonso de Payva, who were perfect masters of
 the Arabic language, and sent them into the East
 to search for the residence of this unknown potentate, and to make him proffers of friendship. They had in charge likewise to procure whatever intelligence the nations which they visited could supply, with respect to the trade of India, and the course of navigation to that continent^b.

Voyage of
 Bartholomew Diaz.

1486.

While John made this new attempt by land, to obtain some knowledge of the country which he wished so ardently to discover, he did not neglect the prosecution of this great design by sea. The conduct of a voyage for this purpose, the most arduous and important which the Portuguese had ever projected, was committed to Bartholomew Diaz, an officer whose sagacity, experience, and fortitude rendered him equal to the undertaking. He stretched boldly towards the south, and, proceeding beyond the utmost limits to which his countrymen had hitherto advanced, discovered near a thousand miles of new country. Neither the danger to which he was exposed, by a succession of violent tempests in unknown seas, and by the frequent mutinies of his crew, nor the calamities of famine which he suffered from losing his store-ship, could deter him from prosecuting his enterprise. In recompense of his labours and perseverance, he at last descried that lofty promontory which bounds Africa to the south. But to descry it was all that he had in his power to accomplish.

^b Faria y Sousa *Port. Asia*, vol. i. p. 26. *Lafitau Decouv. de Port.* i. 46.

The violence of the winds, the shattered condition of his ships, and the turbulent spirit of the sailors, compelled him to return after a voyage of sixteen months, in which he discovered a far greater extent of country than any former navigator. Diaz had called the promontory which terminated his voyage, *Cabo Tormentoso*, or the Stormy Cape; but the King, his master, as he now entertained no doubt of having found the long-desired route to India, gave it a name more inviting, and of better omen, *The Cape of Good Hope*^c.

Those sanguine expectations of success were confirmed by the intelligence which John received over land, in consequence of his embassy to Abyssinia. Covillam and Payva, in obedience to their master's instructions, had repaired to Grand Cairo. From that city they travelled along with a caravan of Egyptian merchants, and, embarking on the Red Sea, arrived at Aden in Arabia. There they separated; Payva sailed directly towards Abyssinia; Covillam embarked for the East-Indies, and, having visited Calcut, Goa, and other cities on the Malabar coast, returned to Sofala, on the east side of Africa, and thence to Grand Cairo, which Payva and he had fixed upon as their place of rendezvous. Unfortunately the former was cruelly murdered in Abyssinia; but Covillam found at Cairo two Portuguese Jews, whom John, whose provident sagacity attended to every circumstance that could facilitate the execution of his schemes, had dispatched after them, in order to receive a detail of their pro-

B O O K
I.

More certain prospects of success.

^c Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 26.

B O O K ^{I.}ceedings, and to communicate to them new instructions. By one of these Jews, Covillam transmitted to Portugal a journal of his travels by sea and land, his remarks upon the trade of India, together with exact maps of the coasts on which he had touched; and from what he himself had observed, as well as from the information of skilful seamen in different countries, he concluded, that, by sailing round Africa, a passage might be found to the East Indies^d.

Preparations for another voyage.

The happy coincidence of Covillam's opinion and report with the discoveries which Diaz had lately made, left hardly any shadow of doubt with respect to the possibility of sailing from Europe to India. But the vast length of the voyage, and the furious storms which Diaz had encountered near the Cape of Good Hope, alarmed and intimidated the Portuguese to such a degree, although by long experience they were now become adventurous and skilful mariners, that some time was requisite to prepare their minds for this dangerous and extraordinary voyage. The courage, however, and authority of the monarch, gradually dispelled the vain fears of his subjects, or made it necessary to conceal them. As John thought himself now upon the eve of accomplishing that great design which had been the principal object of his reign, his earnestness in prosecuting it became so vehement, that it occupied his thoughts by day, and bereaved him of sleep through the night. While he was taking

^d Faria y Sousa Port. Asia, vol. i. p. 27. Lafitau Decouv. i. 48.

every precaution that his wisdom and experience could suggest, in order to ensure the success of the expedition, which was to decide concerning the fate of his favourite project, the fame of the vast discoveries which the Portuguese had already made, the reports concerning the extraordinary intelligence which they had received from the East, and the prospect of the voyage which they now meditated, drew the attention of all the European nations, and held them in suspense and expectation. By some, the maritime skill and navigations of the Portuguese were compared with those of the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and exalted above them. Others formed conjectures concerning the revolutions which the success of the Portuguese schemes might occasion in the course of trade, and the political state of Europe. The Venetians began to be disquieted with the apprehension of losing their Indian commerce, the monopoly of which was the chief source of their power as well as opulence, and the Portuguese already enjoyed in fancy the wealth of the East. But during this interval, which gave such scope to the various workings of curiosity, of hope, and of fear, an account was brought to Europe of an event no less extraordinary than unexpected, the discovery of a New World situated in the West; and the eyes and admiration of mankind turned immediately towards that great object.

B O O K
I.

The attention of mankind fixed upon it;

of suddenly turned to a new object.