

AN
HISTORICAL DISQUISITION
CONCERNING
ANCIENT INDIA.

SECTION IV.

General Observations.

THUS I have endeavoured to describe the progress of trade with India, both by sea and by land, from the earliest times in which history affords any authentic information concerning it, until an entire revolution was made in its nature, and the mode of carrying it on, by that great discovery which I originally fixed as the utmost boundary of my inquiries. Here, then, this Disquisition might have been terminated. But as I have conducted my readers to that period when a new order of ideas, and new arrangements of policy, began to be introduced into Europe, in consequence of the value and importance of commerce being so thoroughly understood, that in almost every country the encouragement of it became a chief object of public attention; as we have now reached that point whence a line may

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be drawn which marks the chief distinction between the manners and political institutions of ancient and modern times, it will render the work more instructive and useful to conclude it with some general observations, which naturally arise from a survey of both, and a comparison of the one with the other. These observations, I trust, will be found not only to have an intimate connexion with the subject of my researches, and to throw additional light upon it; but will serve to illustrate many particulars in the general history of commerce, and to point out effects or consequences of various events, which have not been generally observed, or considered with that attention which they merited.

I. AFTER viewing the great and extensive effects of finding a new course of navigation to India by the Cape of Good Hope, it may appear surprising to a modern observer, that a discovery of such importance was not made, or even attempted, by any of the commercial states of the ancient world. But in judging with respect to the conduct of nations in remote times, we never err more widely, than when we decide with regard to it, not according to the ideas and views of their age, but of our own. This is not, perhaps, more conspicuous in any instance, than in that under consideration. It was by the Tyrians, and by the Greeks, who were masters of Egypt, that the different people of Europe were first supplied with the productions of the East. From the account that has been given of the manner in

which they procured these, it is manifest that they had neither the same inducements with modern nations to wish for any new communication with India, nor the same means of accomplishing it. All the commercial transactions of the ancients with the East were confined to the ports on the Malabar Coast, or extended, at farthest, to the island of Ceylon. To these staples the natives of all the different regions in the eastern parts of Asia brought the commodities which were the growth of their several countries, or the product of their ingenuity, in their own vessels; and with them the ships from Tyre and from Egypt completed their investments. While the operations of their Indian trade were carried on within a sphere so circumscribed, the conveyance of a cargo by the Arabian Gulf, notwithstanding the expense of land carriage, either from Elath to Rhinocolura, or across the desert to the Nile, was so safe and commodious, that the merchants of Tyre and Alexandria had little reason to be solicitous for the discovery of any other. The situation of both these cities, as well as that of the other considerable commercial states of antiquity, was very different from that of the countries to which, in later times, mankind have been indebted for keeping up intercourse with the remote parts of the globe. Portugal, Spain, England, Holland, which have been most active and successful in this line of enterprise, all lie on the Atlantic Ocean, (in which every European voyage of discovery must commence), or have immediate access to it. But Tyre was situated

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at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean, Alexandria not far from it; Rhodes, Athens, Corinth, which came afterwards to be ranked among the most active trading cities of antiquity, lay considerably advanced towards the same quarter in that sea. The commerce of all these states was long confined within the precincts of the Mediterranean; and in some of them, never extended beyond it. The Pillars of Hercules, or the Straits of Gibraltar, were long considered as the utmost boundary of navigation. To reach this was deemed a signal proof of naval skill; and before any of these states could give a beginning to an attempt towards exploring the vast unknown ocean which lay beyond it, they had to accomplish a voyage (according to their ideas) of great extent and much danger. This was sufficient to deter them from engaging in an arduous undertaking, from which, even if attended with success, their situation prevented their entertaining hopes of deriving great advantage.*

BUT could we suppose the discovery of a new passage to India to have become an object of desire or pursuit to any of these states, their science as well as practice of navigation was so defective, that it would have been hardly possible for them to attain it. The vessels which the ancients employed in trade were so small, as not to afford stowage for provisions sufficient to subsist a crew

* See NOTE LV.

during a long voyage. Their construction was such, that they could seldom venture to depart far from land, and their mode of steering along the coast (which I have been obliged to mention often) so circuitous and slow, that from these, as well as from other circumstances which I might have specified,* we may pronounce a voyage from the Mediterranean to India by the Cape of Good Hope, to have been an undertaking beyond their power to accomplish, in such a manner as to render it, in any degree, subservient to commerce. To this decision, the account preserved by Herodotus, of a voyage performed by some Phœnician ships employed by a king of Egypt, which, taking their departure from the Arabian Gulf, doubled the southern promontory of Africa, and arrived, at the end of three years, by the Straits of Gades, or Gibraltar, at the mouth of the Nile,† can hardly be considered as repugnant; for several writers of the greatest eminence among the ancients, and most distinguished for their proficiency in the knowledge of geography, regarded this account rather as an amusing tale than the history of a real transaction; and either entertained doubts concerning the possibility of sailing round Africa, or absolutely denied it.‡ But if what Herodotus relates concerning the course held by these Phœnician ships had ever

* Goguet Orig. des Loix, des Arts, &c. ii. 303. 329.

† Lib. iv. c. 42.

‡ Polyb. lib. iii. p. 193. edit. Casaub. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 6. Ptol. Geogr. lib. iv. c. 9. See NOTE LVI.

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been received by the ancients with general assent, we can hardly suppose that any state could have been so wildly adventurous, as to imagine, that a voyage, which it required three years to complete, could be undertaken with a prospect of commercial benefit.

II. THE rapid progress of the moderns in exploring India, as well as the extensive power and valuable settlements which they early acquired there, mark such a distinction between their mode of conducting naval operations and that of the ancients, as merits to be considered and explained with attention. From the reign of the first Ptolemy to the conquest of Egypt by the Mahomedans, Europe had been supplied with the productions of the East by the Greeks of Alexandria, by the Romans while they were masters of Egypt, and by the subjects of the Emperors of Constantinople, when that kingdom became a province of their dominions. During this long period, extending almost to a thousand years, none of those people, the most enlightened, undoubtedly, in the ancient world, ever advanced by sea farther towards the east than the Gulf of Siam, and had no regular established trade but with the ports on the coast of Malabar, or those in the island of Ceylon. They attempted no conquests in any part of India, they made no settlements, they erected no forts. Satisfied with an intercourse merely commercial, they did not aim at acquiring any degree of power or dominion in the countries where they traded,

though it seems to be probable that they might have established it without much opposition from the natives, a gentle effeminate people, with whom, at that time, no foreign and more warlike race was mingled. But the enterprising activity of the Portuguese was not long confined within the same limits: a few years after their arrival at Calcut, they advanced towards the east, into regions unknown to the ancients. The kingdoms of Cambodia, Cochin-China, Tonquin, the vast empire of China, and all the fertile islands in the great Indian Archipelago, from Sumatra to the Philippines, were discovered, and the Portuguese, though opposed in every quarter by the Mahomedans of Tartar or Arabian origin settled in many parts of India, enemies much more formidable than the natives, established there that extensive influence and dominion which I have formerly described.

OF this remarkable difference between the progress and operations of the ancients and moderns in India, the imperfect knowledge of the former, with respect both to the theory and practice of navigation, seems to have been the principal cause. From the coast of Malabar to the Philippines, was a voyage of an extent far beyond any that the ancients were accustomed to undertake, and, according to their manner of sailing, must have required a great length of time to perform it. The nature of their trade with India was such, that they had not (as has been formerly observed) the same inducements with the mo-

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deners to prosecute discovery with ardour; and, according to the description given of the vessels in which the merchants of Alexandria carried on their trade from the Arabian Gulf, they appear to have been very unfit for that purpose. On all these accounts the ancients remained satisfied with a slender knowledge of India; and influenced by reasons proceeding from the same cause, they attempted neither conquest nor settlement there. In order to accomplish either of these, they must have transported a considerable number of men into India. But, from the defective structure of their ships, as well as from the imperfection of their art in navigating them, the ancients seldom ventured to convey a body of troops to any distance by sea. From Berenice to Musiris was to them, even after Hippalus had discovered the method of steering a direct course, and when their naval skill had attained to its highest state of improvement, a voyage of no less than seventy days. By the ancient route along the coast of Persia, a voyage from the Arabian Gulf to any part of India must have been of greater length, and accomplished more slowly. As no hostile attack was ever made upon India by sea, either by the Greek monarchs of Egypt, though the two first of them were able and ambitious princes, or by the most enterprising of the Roman Emperors, it is evident that they must have deemed it an attempt beyond their power to execute. Alexander the Great, and, in imitation of him, his successors, the monarchs of Syria, were the only persons in the ancient world

who formed an idea of establishing their dominion in any part of India ; but it was with armies led thither by land that they hoped to achieve this.

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III. THE sudden effect of opening a direct communication with the East, in lowering the price of Indian commodities, is a circumstance that merits observation. How compendious soever the ancient intercourse with India may appear to have been, it was attended with considerable expense. The productions of the remote parts of Asia, brought to Ceylon, or to the ports on the Malabar Coast, by the natives, were put on board the ships which arrived from the Arabian Gulf. At Berenice they were landed, and carried by camels two hundred and fifty-eight miles to the banks of the Nile. There they were again embarked, and conveyed down the river to Alexandria, whence they were dispatched to different markets. The addition to the price of goods by such a multiplicity of operations must have been considerable, especially when the rate chargeable on each operation was fixed by monopolists, subject to no controul. But, after the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, its various commodities were purchased at first hand in the countries of which they were the growth or manufacture. In all these, particularly in Indostan and in China, the subsistence of man is more abundant than in any other part of the earth. The people live chiefly upon rice, the most prolific of all grains : Popu-

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lation, of consequence, is so great, and labour so extremely cheap, that every production of nature or of art is sold at a very low price. When these were shipped in different parts of India, they were conveyed directly to Lisbon, by a navigation, long indeed, but uninterrupted and safe, and thence circulated through Europe. The carriage of mercantile goods by water is so much less expensive than by any other mode of conveyance, that as soon as the Portuguese could import the productions of India in sufficient quantities to supply the demands of Europe, they were able to afford them at such a reduced price, that the competition of the Venetians ceased almost entirely, and the full stream of commerce flowed in its natural direction towards the cheapest market. In what proportion the Portuguese lowered the price of Indian commodities, I cannot ascertain with precision, as I have not found in contemporary writers sufficient information with respect to that point. Some idea, however, of this, approaching perhaps near to accuracy, may be formed from the computations of Mr Munn, an intelligent English merchant. He has published a table of the prices paid for various articles of goods in India, compared with the prices for which they were sold in Aleppo, from which the difference appears to be nearly as three to one; and he calculates, that, after a reasonable allowance for the expense of the voyage from India, the same goods may be sold in England at half the price which they bear in Aleppo. The expense of conveying the

productions of India up the Persian Gulf to Basora, and thence either through the Great or Little Desert to Aleppo, could not, I should imagine, differ considerably from that by the Red Sea to Alexandria. We may therefore suppose, that the Venetians might purchase them from the merchants of that city, at nearly the same rate for which they were sold in Aleppo; and when we add to this what they must have charged as their own profit in all the markets which they frequented, it is evident that the Portuguese might afford to reduce the commodities of the East to a price below that which has been mentioned, and might supply every part of Europe with them more than one-half cheaper than formerly. The enterprising schemes of the Portuguese monarchs were accomplished sooner, as well as more completely, than in the hour of most sanguine hope they could have presumed to expect; and, early in the sixteenth century, their subjects became possessed of a monopoly of the trade with India, founded upon the only equitable title, that of furnishing its productions in greater abundance, and at a more moderate price.

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IV. WE may observe, that, in consequence of a more plentiful supply of Indian goods, and at a cheaper rate, the demand for them increased rapidly in every part of Europe. To trace the progress of this in detail, would lead me far beyond the period which I have fixed as the limit of this Disquisition, but some general remarks

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concerning it will be found intimately connected with the subject of my inquiries. The chief articles of importation from India, while the Romans had the direction of the trade with that country, have been formerly specified. But upon the subversion of their empire, and the settlement of the fierce warriors of Scythia and Germany in the various countries of Europe, the state of society, as well as the condition of individuals, became so extremely different, that the wants and desires of men were no longer the same. Barbarians, many of them not far advanced in their progress beyond the rudest state of social life, had little relish for those accommodations, and that elegance, which are so alluring to polished nations. The curious manufactures of silk, the precious stones and pearls of the East, which had been the ornament and pride of the wealthy and luxurious citizens of Rome, were not objects of desire to men, who, for a considerable time after they took possession of their new conquests, retained the original simplicity of their pastoral manners. They advanced, however, from rudeness to refinement in the usual course of progression which nations are destined to hold, and an increase of wants and desires requiring new objects to gratify them, they began to acquire a relish for some of the luxuries of India. Among these they had a singular predilection for the spices and aromatics which that country yields in such variety and abundance. Whence their peculiar fondness for these arose, it is not of importance to inquire. Whoever consults the writers

of the middle ages, will find many particulars which confirm this observation. In every enumeration of Indian commodities which they give, spices are always mentioned as the most considerable and precious article.* In their cookery, all dishes were highly seasoned with them. In every entertainment of parade, a profusion of them was deemed essential to magnificence. In every medical prescription they were principal ingredients.† But considerable as the demand for spices had become, the mode in which the nations of Europe had hitherto been supplied with them was extremely disadvantageous. The ships employed by the merchants of Alexandria never ventured to visit those remote regions which produce the most valuable spices; and before they could be circulated through Europe, they were loaded with the accumulated profits received by four or five different hands through which they had passed. But the Portuguese, with a bolder spirit of navigation, having penetrated into every part of Asia, took in their cargo of spices in the places where they grew, and could afford to dispose of them at such a price, that, from being an expensive luxury, they became an article of such general use as greatly augmented the demand for them. An effect similar to this may be observed with respect to the demand for other commodities imported

* Jac. de Vitriac. Hist. Hieros. ap. Bongars. i. p. 1099. Wilh. Tyr. lib. xii. c. 23.

† Du Cange, Glossar. Verb. *Aromata*, *Species*. Henry's Hist. of Great Brit. vol. iv. p. 597, 598.

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from India, upon the reduction of their price by the Portuguese. From that period a growing taste for Asiatic luxuries may be traced in every country of Europe, and the number of ships fitted out for that trade at Lisbon continued to increase every year.*

V. LUCRATIVE as the trade with India was, and had long been deemed, it is remarkable that the Portuguese were suffered to remain in the undisturbed and exclusive possession of it, during the course of almost a century. In the ancient world, though Alexandria, from the peculiar felicity of its situation, could carry on an intercourse with the East by sea, and circulate its productions through Europe with such advantage as gave it a decided superiority over every rival; yet various attempts (which have been described in their proper places) were made, from time to time, to obtain some share in a commerce so apparently beneficial. From the growing activity of the commercial spirit in the sixteenth century, as well as from the example of the eager solicitude with which the Venetians and Genoese exerted themselves alternately to shut out each other from any share in the Indian trade, it might have been expected that some competitor would have arisen to call in question the claim of the Portuguese to an exclusive right of traffic with the East, and to wrest from them some portion of it. There were, however, at that time, some

* See NOTE LVII.

peculiar circumstances in the political state of all those nations in Europe, whose intrusion, as rivals, the Portuguese had any reason to dread, which secured to them the quiet enjoyment of their monopoly of Indian commerce, during such a long period. From the accession of Charles V. to the throne, Spain was either so much occupied in a multiplicity of operations in which it was engaged by the ambition of that monarch, and of his son Philip II. or so intent on prosecuting its own discoveries and conquests in the New World, that although, by the successful enterprise of Magellan, its fleets were unexpectedly conducted by a new course to that remote region of Asia which was the seat of the most gainful and alluring branch of trade carried on by the Portuguese, it could make no considerable effort to avail itself of the commercial advantages which it might have derived from that event. By the acquisition of the crown of Portugal, in the year one thousand five hundred and eighty, the Kings of Spain, instead of the rivals, became the protectors of the Portuguese trade, and the guardians of all its exclusive rights. Throughout the sixteenth century, the strength and resources of France were so much wasted by the fruitless expeditions of their monarchs into Italy, by their unequal contest with the power and policy of Charles V., and by the calamities of the civil wars which desolated the kingdom upwards of forty years, that it could neither bestow much attention upon objects of commerce, nor engage in any scheme of

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distant enterprise. The Venetians, how sensibly soever they might feel the mortifying reverse of being excluded, almost entirely, from the Indian trade, of which their capital had been formerly the chief seat, were so debilitated and humbled by the League of Cambray, that they were no longer capable of engaging in any undertaking of magnitude. England, weakened (as was formerly observed) by the long contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, and just beginning to recover its proper vigour, was restrained from active exertion, during one part of the sixteenth century, by the cautious maxims of Henry VII. ; and wasted its strength, during another part of it, by engaging inconsiderately in the wars between the princes on the continent. The nation, though destined to acquire territories in India more extensive and valuable than were ever possessed by any European power, had no such presentiment of its future eminence there as to take an early part in the commerce or transactions of that country, and a great part of the century elapsed before it began to turn its attention towards the East.

WHILE the most considerable nations in Europe found it necessary, from the circumstances which I have mentioned, to remain inactive spectators of what passed in the East, the Seven United Provinces of the Low-Countries, recently formed into a small state, still struggling for political existence, and yet in the infancy of its power, ventured to appear in the Indian Ocean as the rivals of the Portuguese ; and, despising their preten-

sions to an exclusive right of commerce with the extensive countries to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, invaded that monopoly which they had hitherto guarded with such jealous attention. The English soon followed the example of the Dutch, and both nations, at first by the enterprising industry of private adventurers, and afterwards by the more powerful efforts of trading companies, under the protection of public authority, advanced with astonishing ardour and success in this new career opened to them. The vast fabric of power which the Portuguese had erected in the East (a superstructure much too large for the basis on which it had to rest) was almost entirely overturned, in as short time, and with as much facility, as it had been raised. England and Holland, by driving them from their most valuable settlements, and seizing the most lucrative branches of their trade, have attained to that pre-eminence in naval power and commercial opulence, by which they are distinguished among the nations of Europe.

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VI. THE coincidence, in point of time, of the discoveries made by Columbus in the west, and those of Gama in the east, is a singular circumstance, which merits observation, on account of the remarkable influence of those events in forming or strengthening the commercial connexion of the different quarters of the globe with each other. In all ages, gold and silver, particularly the latter, have been the commodities exported with the greatest profit to India. In no part of

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the earth do the natives depend so little upon foreign countries, either for the necessaries or luxuries of life. The blessings of a favourable climate and fertile soil, augmented by their own ingenuity, afford them whatever they desire. In consequence of this, trade with them has always been carried on in one uniform manner, and the precious metals have been given in exchange for their peculiar productions, whether of nature or art. But when the communication with India was rendered so much more easy, that the demand for its commodities began to increase far beyond what had been formerly known, if Europe had not been supplied with the gold and silver which it was necessary to carry to the markets of the East from sources richer and more abundant than her own barren and impoverished mines, she must either have abandoned the trade with India altogether, or have continued it with manifest disadvantage. By such a continual drain of gold and silver, as well as by the unavoidable waste of both in circulation and in manufactures, the quantity of those metals must have gone on diminishing, and their value would have been so much enhanced, that they could not have continued long to be of the same utility in the commercial transactions between the two countries. But before the effects of this diminution could be very sensibly felt, America opened her mines, and poured in treasures upon Europe in the most copious stream to which mankind ever had access. This treasure, in spite of innumerable anxious precautions to prevent it, flowed to the markets where the commodities

necessary for supplying the wants, or gratifying the luxury of the Spaniards, were to be found; and from that time to the present, the English and Dutch have purchased the productions of China and Indostan, with silver brought from the mines of Mexico and Peru. The immense exportation of silver to the East, during the course of two centuries, has not only been replaced by the continual influx from America, but the quantity of it has been considerably augmented, and at the same time the proportional rate of its value in Europe and in India has varied so little, that it is chiefly with silver that many of the capital articles imported from the East are still purchased.

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WHILE America contributed in this manner to facilitate and extend the intercourse of Europe with Asia, it gave rise to a traffic with Africa, which, from slender beginnings, has become so considerable, as to form the chief bond of commercial connexion with that continent. Soon after the Portuguese had extended their discoveries on the coast of Africa beyond the river Senegal, they endeavoured to derive some benefit from their new settlements there, by the sale of slaves. Various circumstances combined in favouring the revival of this odious traffic. In every part of America, of which the Spaniards took possession, they found that the natives, from the feebleness of their frame, from their indolence, or from the injudicious manner of treating them, were incapable of the exertions requisite either for working mines, or for cultivating the earth.

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Eager to find hands more industrious and efficient, the Spaniards had recourse to their neighbours the Portuguese, and purchased from them negro slaves. Experience soon discovered that they were men of a more hardy race, and so much better fitted for enduring fatigue, that the labour of one negro was computed to be equal to that of four Americans;* and from that time the number employed in the New World has gone on increasing with rapid progress. In this practice, no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity than to the principles of religion, the Spaniards have unhappily been imitated by all the nations of Europe who have acquired territories in the warmer climates of the New World. At present the number of negro slaves in the settlements of Great Britain and France in the West Indies, exceeds a million; and as the establishment of servitude has been found, both in ancient and in modern times, extremely unfavourable to population, it requires an annual importation from Africa of at least fifty-eight thousand to keep up the stock.† If it were possible to ascertain, with equal exactness, the number of slaves in the Spanish dominions, and in North America, the total number of negro slaves might be well reckoned at as many more.

Thus the commercial genius of Europe, which has given it a visible ascendant over the three

* Hist. of America, vol. i. p. 311.

† Report of Lords of the Privy-Council, A. D. 1788.

other divisions of the earth, by discerning their respective wants and resources, and by rendering them reciprocally subservient to one another, has established an union among them, from which it has derived an immense increase of opulence, of power, and of enjoyments.

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VII. **THOUGH** the discovery of a New World in the west, and the opening of a more easy and direct communication with the remote regions of the east, co-operated towards extending the commerce, and adding to the enjoyments of Europe, a remarkable difference may be observed, with respect both to the time and the manner in which they produced these effects. When the Portuguese first visited the different countries of Asia, stretching from the coast of Malabar to China, they found them possessed by nations highly civilized, which had made considerable progress in elegant as well as useful arts, which were accustomed to intercourse with strangers, and well acquainted with all the advantages of commerce. But when the Spaniards began to explore the New World which they discovered, the aspect which it presented to them was very different. The islands were inhabited by naked savages, so unacquainted with the simplest and most necessary arts of life, that they subsisted chiefly on the spontaneous productions of a fertile soil and genial climate. The continent appeared to be a forest of immense extent, along the coast of which were scattered some feeble tribes, not greatly superior to the islanders

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in industry or improvement. Even its two large monarchies, which have been dignified with the appellation of civilized states, had not advanced so far beyond their countrymen as to be entitled to that name. The inhabitants both of Mexico and Peru, unacquainted with the useful metals, and destitute of the address requisite for acquiring such command of the inferior animals as to derive any considerable aid from their labour, had made so little progress in agriculture, the first of all arts, that one of the greatest difficulties with which the small number of Spaniards who overturned those highly extolled empires had to struggle, was how to procure in them what was sufficient for their subsistence.

It was, of consequence, with a very different spirit that the intercourse with two countries, resembling each other so little in their degree of improvement, was begun and carried on. The Portuguese, certain of finding in the East, not only the productions with which the bountiful hand of nature has enriched that part of the globe, but various manufactures which had long been known and admired in Europe, engaged in this alluring trade with the greatest eagerness. The encouragement of it their monarchs considered as a chief object of government, towards which they directed all the power of the kingdom, and roused their subjects to such vigorous exertions in the prosecution of it, as occasioned that astonishing rapidity of progress which I have

described. The sanguine hopes with which the Spaniards entered upon their career of discovery, met not with the same speedy gratification. From the industry of the rude inhabitants of the New World, they did not receive a single article of commerce. Even the natural productions of the soil and climate, when not cherished and multiplied by the fostering and active hand of man, were of little account. Hope, rather than success, incited them to persist in extending their researches and conquests; and as government derived little immediate benefit from these, it left the prosecution of them chiefly to private adventurers, by whose enterprising activity, more than by any effort of the state, the most valuable possessions of Spain in America were acquired. Instead of the instantaneous and great advantages which the Portuguese derived from their discoveries, above half a century elapsed before the Spaniards reaped any benefit of consequence from their conquests, except the small quantities of gold which the islanders were compelled to collect, and the plunder of the gold and silver employed by the Mexicans and Peruvians as ornaments of their persons and temples, or as utensils of sacred or domestic use. It was not until the discovery of the mines of Potosi in Peru, in the year one thousand five hundred and forty-five, and of those of Sacotecas in Mexico soon after, that the Spanish territories in the New World brought a permanent and valuable addition of wealth and revenue to the mother country.

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NOR did the trade with India differ more from that with America, in respect of the particular circumstances which I have explained, than in respect to the manner of carrying it on, after it grew to be a considerable object of political attention. Trade with the East was a simple mercantile transaction, confined to the purchase either of the natural productions of the country, such as spices, precious stones, pearls, &c. or of the manufactures which abounded among an industrious race of men, such as silk and cotton stuffs, porcelain, &c. Nothing more was requisite in conducting this trade, than to settle a few skilful agents in proper places, to prepare a proper assortment of goods for completing the cargoes of ships as soon as they arrived from Europe, or at the utmost to acquire the command of a few fortified stations, which might secure them admission into ports where they might careen in safety, and find protection from the insults of any hostile power. There was no necessity of making any attempt to establish colonies, either for the cultivation of the soil, or the conduct of manufactures. Both these remained, as formerly, in the hands of the natives.

BUT as soon as that wild spirit of enterprise, which animated the Spaniards who first explored and subdued the New World, began to subside, and when, instead of roving as adventurers from province to province in quest of gold and silver, they seriously turned their thoughts towards rendering their conquests beneficial by cultivation

and industry, they found it necessary to establish colonies in every country which they wished to improve. Other nations imitated their example in the settlements which they afterwards made in some of the islands, and on the continent of North America. Europe, after having desolated the New World, began to repeople it, and under a system of colonization (the spirit and regulations of which it is not the object of this Disquisition to explain) the European race has multiplied there amazingly. Every article of commerce imported from the New World, if we except the furs and skins purchased from the independent tribes of hunters in North America, and from a few tribes in a similar state on the southern continent, is the produce of the industry of Europeans settled there. To their exertions, or to those of hands which they have taught or compelled to labour, we are indebted for sugar, rum, cotton, tobacco, indigo, rice, and even the gold and silver extracted from the bowels of the earth. Intent on those lucrative branches of industry, the inhabitants of the New World pay little attention to those kinds of labour which occupy a considerable part of the members of other societies, and depend, in some measure, for their subsistence, and entirely for every article of elegance and luxury, upon the ancient continent. Thus the Europeans have become manufacturers for America, and their industry has been greatly augmented by the vast demands for supplying the wants of extensive countries, the population of which is continually increasing.

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Nor is the influence of this demand confined solely to the nations which have a more immediate connexion with the American colonies; it is felt in every part of Europe that furnishes any article exported to them, and gives activity and vigour to the hand of the artisan in the inland provinces of Germany, as well as to those in Great Britain and other countries, which carry on a direct trade with the New World.

BUT while the discovery and conquest of America is allowed to be one principal cause of that rapid increase of industry and wealth, which is conspicuous in Europe during the two last centuries, some timid theorists have maintained, that throughout the same period Europe has been gradually impoverished, by being drained of its treasure in order to carry on its trade with India. But this apprehension has arisen from inattention to the nature and use of the precious metals. They are to be considered in two different lights; either as the signs which all civilized nations have agreed to employ, in order to estimate or represent the value both of labour and of all commodities, and thus to facilitate the purchase of the former and the conveyance of the latter from one proprietor to another; or gold and silver may be viewed as being themselves commodities, or articles of commerce, for which some equivalent must be given by such as wish to acquire them. In this light the exportation of the precious metals to the East should be regarded; for, as the nation by which they are

exported must purchase them with the produce of its own labour and ingenuity, this trade must contribute, though not in the same obvious and direct manner as that with America, towards augmenting the general industry and opulence of Europe. If England, as the price of Mexican and Peruvian dollars which are necessary for carrying on its trade with India, must give a certain quantity of its woollen or cotton cloth, or hard-ware, then the hands of an additional number of manufacturers are rendered active, and work to a certain amount must be executed, for which, without this trade, there would not have been any demand. The nation reaps all the benefit arising from a new creation of industry. With the gold and silver which her manufacturers have purchased in the West, she is enabled to trade in the markets of the East; and the exportation of treasure to India, which has been so much dreaded, instead of impoverishing, enriches the kingdom.

VIII. IT is to the discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, and to the vigour and success with which the Portuguese prosecuted their conquests and established their dominion there, that Europe has been indebted for its preservation from the most illiberal and humiliating servitude that ever oppressed polished nations. For this observation I am indebted to an author, whose ingenuity has illustrated, and whose eloquence has adorned the History of the Settlements and Commerce of Modern Nations

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in the East and West Indies;* and it appears to me so well founded as to merit more ample investigation. A few years after the first appearance of the Portuguese in India, the dominion of the Mamelukes was overturned by the irresistible power of the Turkish arms, and Egypt and Syria were annexed as provinces to the Ottoman empire. If after this event the commercial intercourse with India had continued to be carried on in its ancient channels, the Turkish Sultans, by being masters of Egypt and Syria, must have possessed the absolute command of it, whether the productions of the East were conveyed by the Red Sea to Alexandria, or were transported by land carriage from the Persian Gulf to Constantinople and the ports of the Mediterranean. The monarchs who were then at the head of this great empire, were neither destitute of abilities to perceive the pre-eminence to which this would have elevated them, nor of ambition to aspire to it. Selim, the conqueror of the Mamelukes, by confirming the ancient privileges of the Venetians in Egypt and Syria, and by his regulations concerning the duties on Indian goods, which I have already mentioned, early discovered his solicitude to secure all the advantages of commerce with the East to his own dominions. The attention of Solyman the Magnificent, his successor, seems to have been equally directed towards the same object. More enlightened than any monarch of the Ottoman race, he attended to all the transactions of

the European states, and had observed the power as well as opulence to which the republic of Venice had attained by engrossing the commerce with the East. He now beheld Portugal rising towards the same elevation by the same means. Eager to imitate and to supplant them, he formed a scheme suitable to his character for political wisdom, and the appellation of *Institutor of Rules* by which the Turkish historians have distinguished him, and established, early in his reign, a system of commercial laws in his dominions, by which he hoped to render Constantinople the great staple of Indian trade, as it had been in the prosperous ages of the Greek empire.* For accomplishing this scheme, however, he did not rely on the operation of laws alone; he fitted out about the same time a formidable fleet in the Red Sea, A. D. 1538. under the conduct of a confidential officer, with such a body of janizaries on board of it, as he deemed sufficient not only to drive the Portuguese out of all their new settlements in India, but to take possession of some commodious station in that country, and to erect his standard there. The Portuguese, by efforts of valour and constancy entitled to the splendid success with which they were crowned, repulsed this powerful armament in every enterprise it undertook, and compelled the shattered remains of the Turkish fleet and army to return with ignominy to the harbours from which they had taken their departure,

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* Paruta Hist. Venet. lib. vii. p. 589. Sandi Stor. Civil. Venez. part ii. p. 901.

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with the most sanguine hopes of terminating the expedition in a very different manner.* Solyman, though he never relinquished the design of expelling the Portuguese from India, and of acquiring some establishment there, was so occupied, during the remainder of his reign, by the multiplicity of arduous operations in which an insatiable ambition involved him, that he never had leisure to resume the prosecution of it with vigour.

If either the measures of Selim had produced the effect which he expected, or if the more adventurous and extensive plan of Solyman had been carried into execution, the command of the wealth of India, together with such a marine as the monopoly of trade with that country has, in every age, enabled the power which possessed it to create and maintain, must have brought an accession of force to an empire already formidable to mankind, that would have rendered it altogether irresistible. Europe, at that period, was not in a condition to have defended itself against the combined exertions of such naval and military power, supported by commercial wealth, and under the direction of a monarch whose comprehensive genius was able to derive from each its peculiar advantages, and to employ all with the greatest effect. Happily for the human race, the despotic system of Turkish government, founded on such illiberal fanaticism as has ex-

tinguished science in Egypt, in Assyria, and in Greece, its three favourite mansions in ancient times, was prevented from extending its dominion over Europe, and from suppressing liberty, learning, and taste, when beginning to make successful efforts to revive there, and again to bless, to enlighten, and to polish mankind.

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