

ivory, mirrors of polished metal, formed the toilette of the Caledonian nymphs who bounded over the mountains, or pierced through the forests, like the Dryades of antiquity.

For any commercial intercourse between Britain and those regions now called the Netherlands, and the western parts of Germany, there is no evidence till a far later period. Even in the time of Caligula, the Germans seem to have known nothing of the sea, or of commerce; advantages gradually imparted by the Roman conquests. Even in later times, the Caledonians derived their few arts from their southern neighbours, the German ocean presenting a formidable barrier, conquerable by fearless and invading warriors, but not by timid and cautious merchants.

The discoveries of the Carthaginians in the north, were succeeded by those of the Romans, chiefly conducted by conquest. But before proceeding to the latter, it may be proper briefly to consider the state of commerce among some other nations of antiquity. The Greeks of Marfeilles and her colonies maintained an extensive trade, their vessels having visited the western coast of Africa; and Pytheas, one of their navigators, having performed a celebrated voyage towards the northern extremities of Europe. But the accounts are imperfect; the Greeks having conceived that incredulity concerning those distant regions, was a mark of judgment and talent. Yet it might, perhaps, be found as veracious as that of Hanno along the western coast of Africa; and the wonders might easily have been explained by natural phenomena, rather magnified and misrepresented, than falsified or invented. His Thule, at the distance of six days sail from Britain, might, perhaps, be Iceland or Scandinavia.

The commerce of the ancient Persians was conducted in Phenician ships, that great nation having a religious aversion to the sea. The discoveries of the Persians were by land; and they carried their arms to the north and east, and conquered a portion of Hindostan. India and China, rather the objects of trade than seats of external traffick, were themselves chief points of discovery by more enterprising nations. China, in fact, remained unknown till the time of Marco Polo, in the thirteenth century, and is reserved for the account of modern discoveries. But the precious articles brought from Hindostan, either by sea to Egypt, or by land to Persia, excited attention and curiosity long before the age of Alexander, whose arms exposed to enlightened Greece the real state of that prodigious country. The voyage of Nearchus extended from the Indus to the Euphrates; and has recently been illustrated with care and ability. Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, having restored the ancient intercourse, and founded the town of Berenice, on the Red Sea, to facilitate the trade with India, the shores of that extensive region, with the Isle of Taprobane or Ceylon, and a part beyond the Ganges, as far as Pegu, the Golden Chersonese of the ancients,