

the countries, which conquest was afterwards completely to investigate. The chart was designed by the ship, but the map was drawn by the sword. The reports of merchants led Alexander to India, and Cesar to Gaul and Britain. The peculiar products of Hindostan, the diamonds, spikenard, and spices, the tin of Cornwall, the amber of Prussia, were all known to the Greeks for ages before Alexander encountered Porus. An ancient author informs us that Cesar was tempted to the conquest of Britain by the sight of the pearls, which he probably received from the merchants of Gaul. At this day a little commerce arises from the pearls found in the *mya*, or what is called the horse mussel, not uncommon in the rivers of the north of Scotland, particularly the Erne, the South Esk, and the Ythan; and we are not to wonder that the Gallic merchants traded so far, when we find that even after the fall of the Roman empire, vessels from Gaul visited the western islands of Scotland, and brought tidings of an earthquake in Italy.* Thus avarice led the way to ambition; and the extension of commerce attracted the extension of war.

It is well known that two nations of antiquity contend for the palm of early commerce, the Egyptians and Phenicians, who shine in the first fragments of recorded knowledge. But Egypt was so fertile a country that its external relations seem always to have yielded to those of the narrow and barren province of Phenicia, where the merchants of Tyre and Sidon rivalled the princes of the East. In modern times we have seen a marsh, intersected with ditches, and defended by strong embankments, from a boisterous and superior sea, rise to a high rank among European states; and with no native produce, except butter and cheese from its rich pastures, (for even its linen is from Silesia), diffuse its commerce and colonies through every quarter of the globe, and dispute even with England the empire of the ocean. Such seem to have been the Phenicians of antiquity; of whose commerce we find extensive and lasting traces in Europe and Africa, while concerning that of the Egyptians few evidences appear. It seems to have been chiefly confined to Hindostan, and perhaps Eastern Africa. The learned Huet, bishop of Avranches, has, with great care and erudition, compiled a history of ancient commerce at the desire of the celebrated Colbert, minister of the finances of France, a most able and enlightened statesman, who exerted every nerve to extend the commerce of his country. This great work, which is little known except to the learned, will be our chief guide in a view of ancient commerce, which forms the best and surest foundation for that of ancient discovery, and as he is of remarkable accuracy, the learned reader is referred to him for the original sources, as the nature of this essay attending a popular work, neither admits nor requires the constant quotations, necessary in a learned dissertation, for the use of a few critical enquirers.

* In the sixth century. *Vita Columbe apud Vit. Sanæ Scot.* p. 78. In the twelfth, English, Flemish and French ships came to fish near the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth. *Ib. Vita Kentegerni.*