

South Sea, either at the Marquesas, or at one of those islands which Tasman had called Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Middleburgh, and which are now better known under the appellation of the Friendly Islands. This being a matter of eminent consequence in astronomy; and which excited the attention of foreign nations as well as of our own, the affair was taken up by the Royal Society, with the zeal which has always been displayed by that learned body for the advancement of every branch of philosophical science. Accordingly, a long memorial was addressed to his Majesty, dated February 15th, 1768, representing the great importance of the object, together with the regard that had been paid to it by the principal courts of Europe; and intreating, among other things, that a vessel might be ordered, at the expence of government, for the conveyance of suitable persons, to make the observation of the transit of Venus at one of the places before mentioned. This memorial having been laid before the King by the Earl of Shelburne, (now the Marquis of Lansdown) one of the principal Secretaries of State, his Majesty graciously signified his pleasure to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that they should provide a ship for carrying over

such observers as the Royal Society should judge proper to send to the South seas; and on the 3d of April, Mr. Stephens informed the society that a bark had been taken up for the purpose.

The gentleman who had originally been fixed upon to take the direction of the expedition, was Alexander Dalrymple, Esq; an eminent member of the Royal Society, and who, besides possessing an accurate knowledge of astronomy, had distinguished himself by his enquiries into the geography of the Southern oceans; and by the collection he had published of several voyages to those parts of the world. Mr. Dalrymple being sensible of the difficulty, or rather of the impossibility, of carrying a ship through unknown seas, the crew of which were not subject to the military discipline of his Majesty's Navy, he made it the condition of his going, that he should have a brevet commission as captain of the vessel, in the same manner as such a commission had been granted to Dr. Halley in his voyage of discovery. To this demand Sir Edward Hawke, who was then at the head of the admiralty, and who possessed more of the spirit of his profession than either of education or science, absolutely refused to accede.

(To be continued.)

CHARACTER OF THE SPANISH NATION.

[From M. Peyron's *Essai sur l'Espagne*.]

SPAIN was by turns inhabited and conquered by different nations; and with the remains of the conquerors received a part of their character. The reigning taste of the Spaniards for certain spectacles, as tournaments, and the tilings of the *maffranca*; the love of pompous titles; an endless list of names; their gallantry, and their great respect for the fair sex; these and the language of metaphor and hyperbole they received from the Moors. They inherited gravity of countenance in conversation, and the jealousy which renders them suspicious and vindictive, from the African Berbers. From the Goths, and their ancestors, they derived frankness, probity, and courage, virtues which were their own. The Romans, and the Goths also, gave them the enthusiasm of patriotism, the love of great things, and superstition. To what a degree the Romans were superstitious may be learned from Plutarch. The superstition of Italy is changed in nothing but its object; and there,

as well as in Spain, its nature is still the same.

The Spaniards have been frequently described to us, but each province has its particular character, and there seems to exist between them a moral as well as a physical division. The provinces, which were formerly almost as many kingdoms, appear to have preserved the spirit of hatred to a greater or lesser degree, in proportion to the distance they are from each other.

The Catalans are the most industrious, active, and laborious amongst the Spaniards; they consider themselves as a distinct people, are always ready to revolt, and have more than once formed the project of erecting their country into a republic. For some centuries past, Catalonia has been the nursery of the arts and trades of Spain; which have acquired there a degree of perfection, not found in any other part of the kingdom. The Catalan is rude, vulgar, jealous, and self-interested, but open and friendly. The