

of the first creation, and the people their primitive innocence." These happy natives were described as living after the manner of the golden age; as free from toil, spending their time in fishing, fowling, and hunting, and gathering the fruits of the earth, which ripened without their care. They had no boundaries to their lands, nor individual property in cattle, but shared and shared alike. All this, which was rather too good to be absolutely true, seems to have been implicitly believed. The letters of patent, however, granted to poor Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and subsequently to Sir Walter Raleigh, mark a most important epoch in the world's history, for from those small starting-points date the English efforts at colonising America—the great New World of the past, the present, and the future. Where then a few naked savages lurked and lazed, fished and hunted, forty millions of English-speaking people now dwell, whose interests on and about the sea, rising in importance every day, are scarcely excelled by those of any nation on the globe, except our own. Some points in connection with this colonisation, bearing as they do on the history of the sea and maritime affairs, will be treated in the succeeding volume.

The reader, who while living "at home in ease," has voyaged in spirit with the writer over so much of the globe's watery surface, visiting its most distant shores, will not be one of those who under-rate

"The dangers of the seas."

Nor will the events of every day allow us to forget them. "The many voices" of ocean—as Michelet puts it—its murmur and its menace, its thunder and its roar, its wail, its sigh, rise from the watery graves of hundreds of brave men, who, during only the brief progress of this work, have lost their lives upon the briny deep. Proud as is the position of "Mistress of the Seas," great as is the glory and the gain, there is a reverse to the bright picture, telling of many a brave career suddenly and irrecoverably quenched in the dark waters. Sometimes the pitiless ocean claims for its own—as it did in the cases of the *Encydic* and *Grosser Kurfürst*—hundreds at one moment, leaving whole nations to mourn the loss. To such painful subjects, alas! we must necessarily recur once and again during the progress of these pages.