

The PREFACE.

What can be more interesting to Man than the History of himself? if unacquainted with the World, he is then "fixed to one spot, and rots just where he grew." Mankind, by the different accounts of Navigators and Travellers, is entertained by various pictures of his own species, and from these pictures many instructive lessons may be derived; particularly when we read of inhabitants, who without any other assistance than their own natural good sense, have not only emerged from the gloomy shade of Infidelity and Barbarism, but have also attained that perfection of Religion and Propriety, which have constituted at last the Essence of *real* Civilization. Nations which are now the most polished, have acquired their enlightened refinement by very slow degrees, and through long periods of intervening ages.

A taste for discoveries in every way is certainly the characteristic of an enlightened age, but it is inconceivably confessed that of all kind of Knowledge, that of the Globe we inhabit is the most useful acquirement; besides it is the only one we can ever hope of carrying to Perfection, seeing it consists only of positive things, the number of which is limited, notwithstanding they are many. Various parts of Europe have been long concealed, and places but a small distance from us long unknown, till explored and discovered by our bold Travellers, whose Zeal was neither damped nor Efforts repressed, though much difficulty appeared in penetrating into some of the inland parts.

The Utility of a good Collection of Voyages and Travels must be obvious to persons of every class and denomination; it would therefore be needless and unprofitable to expatiate on the advantages of a Work of this Kind. Valuable books are hereby prevented from being lost, also scarce ones rendered common; mistakes of many rectified, doubts of several cleared up, and the best Authors relating to all parts of the World are, with Illustrations and Improvements, united into one body. It must also be observed, that whatever Authors have been referred to, whether ancient or modern, are and have been men of respectability and esteem, otherwise their assistance would have been unavailing; *facts* and not *stories* should be the object of every Historian, nor is there occasion to call in the artificial aid of Romance when Nature herself has supplied us with *Works* worthy the commemoration of *Words*. Many Compilations have indeed been offered to the Public very undeserving either notice or encouragement: it is not a number of Volumes, swelled with uninteresting accounts and trivial relations, composed from the memoranda of unsteady men, which deserve the approbation of a discerning Public. That writer who is prolix is as much to be censured as the one who is too brief. Much should be contained in a moderate space, by which means the Curiosity of the Reader is not only kept alive, but immediately gratified; whereas superfluities exhaust the patience, and Enquiries consequently cease before they attain sufficient Satisfaction. Notwithstanding there are many ancient Collections extant, yet as materials are very much increased, on account of the several late Discoveries; such Additions and Improvements must undoubtedly render a NEW ONE highly acceptable, being absolutely necessary, on account of the Modern Voyages and Travels, which are of such an important Nature.

It is not, in these our glorious annals, with a prospect of enlarging private dominion, or satisfying vain ambitious views, that the recesses of the Globe are investigated; but to gratify a laudable Curiosity and promote general Knowledge. Our bold Voyagers have traversed the World to visit new tribes of their Fellow-creatures, not as enemies but friends, to relieve their wants, bring them from darkness into light, and communicate to them our superior attainments. Those recent Voyages, which have been made under the patronage of our present King; have not, it is presumed, been entirely useless. How many ignorant Islands have been enlightened by the introduction of our English manners: from the uncommon objects exhibited to them, and the frequent opportunities of intercourse, new materials have been furnished them for the exercise of their Reason, and their stock of Ideas naturally enlarged. Is it not probable that the Savage Natives, upon comparing themselves with their English Visitors, became soon conscious of their extreme inferiority, endeavoured to emerge from their brutal state, throw off all ferocious appearance, and rise nearer to a level with those who left behind them so many marks of their Generosity, Humanity, and Spirit? The Britons when first visited by the Phœnicians, are described to have been as savage as any of the uncivilized natives of Tongataboo or Otaheite; it is therefore very likely that the Britons may, in due progress of time, spread those blessings of civilization which they themselves have thus acquired, and be the happy means of abolishing the many abominable repasts, and almost equally abominable sacrifices, which are too common among the Inhabitants of distant Islands.

Near Twenty Years have elapsed since any COLLECTION of VOYAGES and TRAVELS has been published, and during that space of time so many detached Voyages as well as Travels have been presented to the Public, that a Work upon the present plan (including all the MODERN VOYAGES and TRAVELS) is now absolutely necessary and much wanted by readers of every class and denomination.

The pleasure attending the perusal of Works of this kind, have made them more universally read than any other branch of Polite Literature. In a good COLLECTION of VOYAGES and TRAVELS, we have all the entertaining incidents of the most romantic Novel, with all the evidence of the most authentic History. It is a happy circumstance in this kind of reading, that it gratifies that thirst of knowledge which it excites, and that as we read on, we find new reason to wonder and to admire.

The most ample fortune of the richest man, and the longest life of the most laborious traveller, attended with all that Success which his most sanguine Expectations could hope for, would be insufficient to make him acquainted with the twentieth part of what will be found in this New Work; which is recommended to the Public as a faithful narrative of indubitable Facts; and on such easy terms as to be within the power of every person to purchase.

It is by the aid of VOYAGES and TRAVELS that the studious, the delicate, the infirm, those whose age, sex, disposition of mind, or habit of body, renders incapable of encountering the dangers and inconveniences of long VOYAGES and wearisome JOURNIES, may pass with ease over lonely DESARTS, vast MOUNTAINS, and interposing SEAS; view the most distant Lands, and become acquainted with all the Nations of the peopled earth: thus reaping in their closets the fruits of those accumulated labours, which have employed the most adventurous Spirits for a long succession of ages. Nay, it is to the enterprising Spirit of VOYAGERS and TRAVELLERS, that every enlightened Nation in the World is indebted for that state of Geographical, Historical, and Philosophical Knowledge, of which they can now boast.

In a word, if there be any Merit in blending the Useful with the Agreeable; if conveying the most valuable Knowledge, in the most pleasing manner, can merit Attention, this NEW UNIVERSAL COLLECTION of VOYAGES and TRAVELS bids fair to ensure the complete Approbation of the Public.

W. H. PORTLOCK.

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