

B O O K
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destined to facilitate the communication between distant countries, seem, at first, to be formed to check the progress of man, and to mark the bounds of that portion of the globe to which nature had confined him. It was long, we may believe, before men attempted to pass this formidable barrier, and became so skilful and adventurous as to commit themselves to the mercy of the winds and waves, or to quit their native shore in quest of remote and unknown regions.

First attempts
towards navigation.

NAVIGATION and ship-building are arts so nice and complicated, that they require the ingenuity, as well as experience of many successive ages to bring them to any degree of perfection. From the raft or canoe, which first served to carry a savage over the river that obstructed him in the chase, to the construction of a vessel capable of conveying a numerous crew with safety to a distant coast, the progress in improvement is immense. Many efforts would be made, many experiments would be tried, and much labour and invention would be employed, before men could accomplish this arduous and important undertaking. The rude and imperfect state in which navigation is still found among all nations which are not considerably civilized, corresponds with this account of its progress, and demonstrates that, in early times, the art was not so far improved as to enable men to undertake distant voyages, or to attempt remote discoveries.

Introduction
of commerce.

As soon, however, as the art of navigation became known, a new species of correspondence among men took place. It is from this æra, that we must date the commencement of such an intercourse between nations as deserves the appellation of commerce. Men are, indeed, far advanced in improvement before
commerce