

RETROSPECT

OF THE

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY,

BY SEA AND LAND,

IN ANCIENT, MODERN, AND THE MOST RECENT TIMES.

IN the early period of human history, when voyages and travels were not undertaken from the view of amusement or instruction, or from political or commercial motives, the discovery of adjacent countries was chiefly effected by war, and of distant regions by commerce.

The wars of the Egyptians with the Scythians, mentioned in the pristine pages of history, must have opened faint sources of information concerning the circumjacent tribes. The Assyrian and Persian empires could not have been consolidated, without an increase of this knowledge; but which, like that acquired by the Persian conquests, which seem to have embraced the northern part of Hindostan, is buried in profound darkness from the want of literary monuments. Under the Grecian empire of Alexander and his successors, the progress of discovery by war is first marked on the page of history; and science began to attend the banners of victory.

The opulence of nature was now to be disclosed; and Greece was astonished at the miracles of India. The Romans not only inherited the Grecian knowledge, but, extending their arms to the North and West, accumulated discoveries upon regions dimly descried by the Greeks, through the obscurity in which the Phenicians enveloped their commercial advantages. Spain was unveiled by the Punic wars; and the eagles of the first Cesar were seen in the extremities of Gaul, and in the southern parts of Britain. The western regions of Germany afforded farther scenes of enterprize, and the fleets of Rome visited the Baltic.

On the south the Egyptians had disclosed a portion of Africa, and maintained their ancient commercial relations with Hindostan; which, with its fine linens, diamonds, spices, and perfumes, has always been the very centre and focus of extensive commerce. The rudeness of the natives of western Africa led to the establishment of