

INTRODUCTION.

To the honour of the *British Nation* be it said, their conduct has uniformly been the reverse : whatever unknown tracts of land they have explored ; wherever they found inhabitants, their attention and humanity towards them have uniformly been such, as to gain their *affection*, and conciliate their *esteem*, instead of exciting their resentment, or incurring their hatred.

Indeed, if we regard adventurers from our own Country in a commercial point of view, even so lately as the latter part of the last, or beginning of the present century, we shall find the generality of them little better than *free-booters* ; but on the other hand, were we to take a retrospective view of the several voyages made immediately under the patronage of Government, during the space of the last fifty years, we shall not only find them set on foot for the benefit of mankind in general, but that their endeavours to improve Navigation, and the different Sciences connected therewith, have been attended with the most brilliant success ; and it is not easy to say, whether that zeal for the general good which first projected these voyages, or the constant wish to have the result of them made universally public, reflects the greatest lustre on their royal and munificent patrons.

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