

ORIGINAL.

SOME REMARKS ON EARLY DISCOVERY.

THE spirit of adventure has, at all times, rendered the barbarian to the seats of learning and great assistance, if, indeed, it did not give a primary impulse, to the march of civilization. The like cultivation of the higher sentiments, to passion, it is true, in the breast of the savage, may be considered in one point of view, as of little advantage to mankind—for in the expeditions and the examinations to which it prompts him, he is content with the gratification of his own curiosity. Besides, where there is no science there is little certainty. The want of the art of navigation prevented the early navigators from extending their researches far beyond the coast lines of their own countries; an ignorance of those means by which the geographical position of a country is determined, its general appearance, and the manners and customs of its inhabitants, most easily described, was a hindrance to the acquisition of any information among the roving tribes and the first travellers,—while the credulity and the wonder which are the consequences of ignorance, supplied the place of facts with inventions of the imagination, and left to posterity accounts as fictitious in their narrative as they were vague and meagre in their descriptions. But yet, among the rudest and primitive nations of the earth does the spirit of adventure present the most striking instance of its importance. It gave rise to the first inventions by which man was enabled to cross the trackless ocean,—it was the parent of international commerce. Among those nations, too, which remained in a rude condition after others had made great progress in a polished civilization, it is curiosity and impulse to action was extremely serviceable, inasmuch as it often led the barbarian to the seats of learning and refinement, from which he returned to institute a like cultivation of the higher sentiments, to promote the like arts, to found similar laws and customs, amid the deserts inhabited by his yet uninstructed brethren. In a community already enlightened, the spirit of adventure gives a continued impulse to invention and improvement, not only in those arts to which it is more peculiarly allied—such as navigation, geography, and the arts of commerce—but even to such as are more remotely connected with it—as poetry, painting, music. But if it aids the cause of science, by greatly conducing to the furtherance of observation, experiment and research,—if it joins itself with the love of knowledge in the breast of the philosopher, impelling him to leave the peaceful abodes of learning, and wander over regions which the hardy savage scarcely ventures to explore, in order to accumulate facts, to investigate phenomena, how slow would be the encroachments of a general civilization upon barbarism,—how retarded the advancement of the Christian religion in the pagan world, were it not for this wisely instituted passion. If it incited Humboldt to gratify his thirst for information on the heights of the most precipitous mountains,—if it nerved the heart of the chivalric Park, amid the sandy deserts of Africa, and upon the unknown waters of the Niger,—if it tempted Cook to the task of three times circumnavigating the globe,—if it sent forth Columbus to win the name—greater than that of him who wept that there were no more worlds to conquer—of Discoverer of a New World: does