

their performance ; yet this delay in their publication may, on some considerations, enhance their value. It may be interesting to the young merchant to trace some of the great revolutions in the commerce of the world, which have occurred within the above-named periods ; and those of advanced age may be induced to recur to by-gone days, with pleasing, even if accompanied with melancholy associations.

For several years preceding the date of the first of my voyages, the merchants of the United States, and particularly those of Salem, carried on an active and lucrative commerce with the Isles of France and Bourbon, which was continued up to the period of the conquest of those islands by the British, since which it has nearly ceased. That important product of our country, cotton, which is now its greatest and most valuable article of export, employing a greater amount of tonnage than any other, was then unknown as an article of export from the United States ; and the little required for the consumption of our domestic fabrics, was imported from Demerara, Surinam, and the West India Islands. The trade to the Northwest Coast of America, which for about twenty-five years was actively and almost exclusively pursued from Boston, on an extensive scale, and to great advantage, has for some years been abandoned, from the scarcity and high price of furs, caused by the competition of the Russians, who have gradually advanced their posts far to the south of those places where my cargo was collected ; and where they were not then seen. The sealing voy-