

...waged against the Hollanders, led to the Dutch, who had heretofore been content with the carrying trade between Lisbon and the N. of Europe, proceeding to India, and at the commencement of the 17th century they became formidable rivals of the Portuguese, stripping them first of Malacca and Ceylon, then driving them from various settlements on the Malabar coast, and finally usurping their place on the shores of Coromandel. The enterprising spirit of the English was not long behind in establishing a trade in the Eastern Hemisphere, and they were followed by the French, who became the most powerful rivals of the former after the dominion and trade of the Portuguese and Dutch had declined.

Although it is not within the province of this work to enter into details of the conquests of the Colonial possessions of Britain, it is impossible to avoid bestowing a few pages in explanation of the mode by which our acquisitions on the continent of Asia were obtained, and for the better understanding of the subject, it will be necessary to consider the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay separately, (Agra Presidency is only a Lieutenantcy of Bengal) as regards their subjugation to the prowess of England, making brevity, as far as it is consistent with perspicuity, the leading feature of a work in which utility may well be deemed of more consequence than ornateness of style or elaborateness of diction. The first Charter for the incorporation of the East India Company, was granted by Queen Elizabeth on the last day of the sixteenth century, and was one of exclusive trade in the Indian seas for fifteen years with promise of renewal. In 1630, Charles I. being in want of money, granted a license to Sir William Courten and others, to trade where the existing East India Company had no settlements, but such collision ensued, that a compromise was effected the year preceding the Commonwealth. In 1653 the East India trade was thrown open by Cromwell for four years, and history informs us it was found expedient to reinstate the Company in their entire privileges in 1657, Cromwell and his Council being