

BOOK  
I.

institutions differed in almost every point from those of other nations, to renounce all intercourse with foreigners. In consequence of this, they never went out of their own country; they held all sea-faring persons in detestation, as impious and profane; and fortifying their own harbours, they denied strangers admittance into them<sup>b</sup>; and it was in the decline of their power, that they again opened their ports, and resumed any communication with foreigners.

Of the Phenicians.

THE character and situation of the Phenicians were as favourable to the spirit of commerce and discovery as those of the Egyptians were adverse to it. They had no distinguishing peculiarity in their manners and institutions; they were not addicted to any singular and unsocial form of superstition; they could mingle with other nations without scruple or reluctance. The territory which they possessed was neither large nor fertile. Commerce was the only source from which they could derive opulence or power. Accordingly, the trade carried on by the Phenicians of Sidon and Tyre, was more extensive and enterprising than that of any state in the ancient world. The genius of the Phenicians, as well as the object of their policy and the spirit of their laws, were entirely commercial. They were a people of merchants who aimed at the empire of the sea, and actually possessed it. Their ships not only frequented all the ports in the Mediterranean, but they were the first who ventured beyond the ancient boundaries of navigation, and passing the Straights of Gades, visited the western coasts of Spain and Africa. In many of the places to which they resorted, they planted colonies, and communicated to the rude inhabitants

<sup>b</sup> Died. Sicul. lib. i. p. 78. Ed. Wesselingi. Amst. 1756. Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 1142. Ed. Amst. 1707.