

P R E F A C E.

NO event ever proved so interesting, to mankind in general and to the inhabitants of Europe in particular, as the discovery of the new world, and the passage to India by the cape of Good Hope: it at once gave rise to a revolution in the commerce and in the power of nations, as well as in the manners, industry and government of almost the whole world. At this period new connections were formed by the inhabitants of the most distant regions, for the supply of wants they had never before experienced. The productions of climates situated under the equator were consumed in countries bordering on the pole; the industry of the north was transplanted to the south; and the inhabitants of the west were clothed with the manufactures of the east; in short, a general intercourse of opinions, laws and customs, diseases and remedies, virtues and vices, were established amongst men.

In Europe, in particular, every thing has been changed in consequence of its commerce and connection with the American continent; but the changes which took place prior to the late revolution, (which established the liberties of the United States, and transformed the dependent colonies of Britain into an independent commonwealth, or rather a society of commonwealths) only served to increase the misery of mankind; adding to the power of despotism, and rivetting faster the shackles of oppression; the commerce of Spain, in particular, with the new world, has been supported by a system of rapine,