

backs of camels across the desert, and thence finding their way to the trading cities of Phœnicia, while they yet flourished—and subsequently, after their destruction or decay, to Alexandria—they were distributed over the continent of Europe; enriching whole nations by the profits of the mere transfer: for thus Venice became not only the mistress of the Adriatic and Mediterranean, but in a measure the arbitress of the whole world—

“ And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers
 “ From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
 “ Pour’d in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
 “ In purple was she robed, and of her feast
 “ Monarchs partook, and deem’d their dignity increased^p.”

And when, in consequence of the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, Alexandria ceased to be the main emporium of India and Europe, Venice declined in its riches and power; and the Portuguese, the Dutch, and lastly the English, acquired the political influence which Venice had lost: so true is the observation of sir William Temple, that whatever nation is in possession of the commerce of India must necessarily have a preponderating influence in the affairs of the whole world^q.

But, although the route by the Cape has in a

^p Childe Harold, Canto IV. Stanza 2.

^q For an account of the traffick between India and Europe, see Niebuhr, *Descript. de l’Arabie*, p. 246, &c.