

probably be allowed that such intercourse has a great influence upon the comforts, the prosperity, the arts, the literature, the power, of the nations which thus communicate. Now the variety of the productions of different lands supplies both the stimulus to this intercourse, and the instruments by which it produces its effects. The desire to possess the objects or the knowledge which foreign countries alone can supply, urges the trader, the traveller, the discoverer to compass land and sea; and the progress of the arts and advantages of civilization consists almost entirely in the cultivation, the use, the improvement of that which has been received from other countries.

This is the case to a much greater extent than might at first sight be supposed. Where man is active as a cultivator, he scarcely ever bestows much of his care on those vegetables which the land would produce in a state of nature. He does not select some of the plants of the soil and improve them by careful culture, but, for the most part, he expels the native possessors of the land, and introduces colonies of strangers.

Thus, to take the condition of our own part of the globe as an example; scarcely one of the plants which occupy our fields and gardens is indigenous to the country. The walnut and the peach come to us from Persia; the apricot from Armenia: from Asia Minor, and Syria, we have the cherry tree, the fig, the pear, the pomegranate, the olive, the plum, and the mulberry. The vine which is now cultivated is not a native of Europe; it is found wild on the shores of the Caspian, in Armenia and Carmania. The most useful species of plants, the *cereal* vegetables, are certainly strangers, though their birth place seems to be an impenetrable secret. Some have fancied that barley is found wild on the banks of the Semara, in Tartary, rye in Crete, wheat at Baschkiros, in Asia; but this is held by the best botanists to be very doubtful. The potatoe, which