

accompanied the exercise and extension of the sciences in this ancient country; but if we may believe the wreck of her history, and the unvarnished but sublime detail of the Divine Law-giver, we shall hear that few countries could boast of the powers of the Magii of Egypt, or compete with them in mathematical precision or astronomical researches. Yet, like the Nile which inundates the country and sweeps away every obstacle which falls in its course, the scientific glories of Egypt were overwhelmed by the unrelenting and gigantic arm of ignorance, and transferred to a soil better adapted for their cultivation and improvement. Though GREECE became heir to the knowledge of Egypt, it was long before she arrived at that exalted station in the improvement of the mind for which, at one period of her existence, she was so distinguished and admired, and whose receding rays illumined the horizon of a dawning world. But having once arrived at a pitch of literary and artificial greatness which may justly call forth the astonishment of every age and people enlightened by the knowledge of Christianity, Greece—eloquent and philosophic Greece—was swept away by the vortex of luxurious prosperity, which had ripened the principle of decay; leaving nothing behind save the ruins of an Empire which gave law and philosophy to the world, and genius and eloquence to succeeding ages. The Greeks, after their country had been reduced into a province, imputed the triumph of ROME, not to the merit, but to the FORTUNE of the Republic. A wiser Greek, who has composed, with a philosophic spirit, the memorable history of his own times, deprived his countrymen of this vain and delusive comfort, by opening to their view the deep foundations of the greatness of Rome—the fidelity of her citizens to each other, and to the state—their education and prejudices of religion—their honour as well as virtue—their ambition—and the military ardour of the youth. From these wise institutions of peace and war, Polybius has deduced the spirit and success of a people, incapable of fear and impatient of repose, thereby raising themselves to the very summit of human greatness. Yet Rome—invincible Rome—also fell! The causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance, and the Barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of ROME! Many are of opinion that monastic studies have tended, for the most part, to darken rather than to dispel, the cloud of ignorance and superstition which perpetually hangs over the world. But, without advancing any opinion of our own upon this subject, we are authorised by history to state, that the curiosity or zeal of some learned solitaries has cultivated the profane as well as the ecclesiastical sciences:—and posterity must gratefully acknowledge, that the monuments of Greek and Roman literature have been preserved and multiplied by their indefatigable pens. It is to these means that we owe all the knowledge of past ages which we possess. It is to them that we are indebted for the pleasure which we derive from the perusal of the unparalleled works of Homer, of Virgil, and of Cicero. And it is to them that the nations of Europe owe their attainment of almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. Ages may now be said to have rolled away since the darkness which overspread the world after the fall of the Roman Empire was succeeded by that beam of light and knowledge which has shone so refulgently in latter