

INTRODUCTION.

FOR ages the tribes and families of men lived isolated from, and unknown to each other. There seemed to have been an insurmountable barrier to separate one half of the world from the other. So far as mutual intercourse with and knowledge of each other extended, the population of the eastern and western portions of our globe, especially, might as well, almost, have been the inhabitants of different planets.

The spirit of enterprize, however, began at length to awaken; and the boundaries of science to enlarge; and discoveries in various departments were gradually and continually being made. At length Columbus, who possessed a vigorous and inquisitive mind, and a stock of knowledge uncommon to his day, by the exercise of his powers of reason on a variety of principles and facts, expanded his ideas many steps beyond those ordinarily entertained, and began to conceive that there must be another side to the globe—some *terra incognita*—to complete the habitable earth. With acuteness of understanding Columbus possessed energy and perseverance in action; and after many impediments being removed, and astounding difficulties surmounted, he discovered the object of his search. Great has been his fame, and many the honours conferred upon him, at least, by posterity.

But the enquiry will naturally arise, what benefits have accrued to the inhabitants of those regions by the discovery; and their consequent intercourse with the old world? This, I am aware, has been made a serious question by