

modes of thinking, which have given a tinge to all they have said on the subject.

The various speculations, for example, on the question, whence America was peopled, led to many misrepresentations of the religious rites of its inhabitants; and affinities were discovered which existed no where but in the fancy of the inventor. Gomara, Lerius, and Lescarbot, inferred from some resemblances of this kind, that America was peopled by the Canaanites when they were expelled by Joshua; and the celebrated Grotius, adopting the sentiment of Martyr, imagined that Yucatan was first peopled by Ethiopians, and that those Ethiopians were Christians!*

The human mind derives pleasure from paradox, for the same reason that it delights in wit. Both produce new and surprising combinations of thought; and the judgment, being overpowered by the fervours of imagination, becomes for a time insensible to their extravagance.

It is well known, that, among the philosophers of Europe, the opinion has very generally prevailed, that the natives of America were, both as to physical and mental powers, a feeble race; and, impressed with this belief, they hardly considered the religion of the Indians as worthy of minute attention. The celebrated historian of America, has unconsciously fallen into this error, at the very moment in

* See Note B.