

this leads us back to the subject more particularly before us, by entering into a short consideration and review of the arts connected with Literature and History.

Some useful arts must be nearly coeval with the human race ; for food, clothing, and habitation, even in their original simplicity require some art. Many other arts are of such antiquity as to place the inventors beyond the reach of tradition. Several have gradually crept into the world without an inventor. The busy mind, however, accustomed to a beginning in things, cannot rest till it finds or imagines a beginning to every thing. But in all Countries, especially where the people are barbarous, rude, or illiterate, the progress of arts is extremely slow. The lowest date assigned to the arrival of Cadmus in Greece is one thousand and forty five years before the birth of our Saviour. Homer flourished not less than two hundred years after him. It has been doubted, however, whether the Prince of poets could either write or read ; and the arguments adduced for the negative, in Mr. Wood's Essay on the original genius of Homer, seems scarcely controvertible. The earliest Grecian prose writers known to the ancients themselves, were Pherecydes of Syrus, and Cadmus of Miletus ; mentioned by Pliny to have lived during the reign of Cyrus King of Persia, and at least two hundred and fifty years after Homer. No Grecian State had its laws put in writing till about the same period, when Draco was archon of Athens, and Zaleucus lawgiver of the Epizephyrian Locrians. The earliest Grecian prose-writers, whose works had any considerable reputation with posterity, were Hecateus of Miletus, and Pherecydes of Athens, who were about half a century later. The interval, therefore, between the first introduction of letters into Greece, and any familiar use of them was, by the most moderate computation, between four and five hundred years. They made a progress not more rapid in Rome than they had done at Athens ; and they passed to the extremities of the Roman Empire, only in company with new Colonies, and joined to Italian policy. In Britain, where they flourish with most splendour in the present age, they were equally tardy in approaching to maturity. To encourage the art of reading in England, the capital punishment for murder was remitted, if the criminal could but read, which in law language is termed *benefit of Clergy*. One would imagine that the arts would have made a very rapid progress when so greatly favoured ; but there is a signal proof to the contrary ; for so small an edition of the bible as six hundred copies, translated into English in the reign of Henry VIII. was not wholly sold off in three years. Indeed, as a learned antiquarian justly observes, the people of England must have been profoundly ignorant in Queen Elizabeth's time, when a forged clause added to the twentieth article of the English Creed passed unnoticed till about eighty years ago.

Before we proceed to investigate whence and in what manner the arts and the sciences first dawned upon the world, let us for a moment consider the causes which give facility to their advancement. The progress of art seldom fails to be rapid, when a people happens