

want of rain, but by the ceasing of many rivers to flow into it, whose sources were dried up. I rode across the mouths of several perfectly dry, which I had often before passed in boats. The fish no longer experiencing this refreshment, necessary as it would seem to their existence, sickened and perished as in a corrupted element.

If any thing similar to what I have above described has been noticed in other parts of the world, I should be happy by a comparison of the attendant circumstances, to investigate, and ascertain the true causes of so extraordinary an effect.

AN ESSAY ON FLATTERY.

————— Honey'd assent,
How pleasant art thou to the taste of man,
And woman also! Flattery direct
Rarely disgusts. They little know mankind
Who doubt its operation: 'tis the key
That opes the wicket of the human heart.

DOUGLAS, ACT III. Scene ult.

FLATTERY is a vice equally hateful in its nature, and dangerous in its consequences. Its lurking poison is extremely difficult to be avoided, as it wears the specious mask of friendship, and its hurtful approaches are seconded and facilitated by our insatiate desire of praise, which is so great, that we seldom consider whether we are praise-worthy or no. Pride, that universal passion which first

'Brought death into the world, and all our woe,'

And which, in its different degrees, possesses the prince and the peasant; makes us flatter ourselves, inflames our imaginations with a strong inclination to appear what we are not; and exposes us in a peculiar manner to the pleasing attempts of flattery, which like music,

————— 'So softens and disarms the mind,
That not one arrow can resistance find.'

The man who takes Persius's advice, will readily discover the deception, and consequently have it in his power to escape it. He says,

Ne quicquam populo bibulas donaverit aures;
Respice quod non es. Sat. 4. ver. 50.

His caution is very just and pertinent to those who listen to the siren flattery, who (if they do not take it) will perhaps entice them on to ruin; and equally opposite is the admonition he gives them, *respice quod non es*, 'reject what thou art not; that is, survey thyself, and reject that praise which is built upon qualities

thou dost not possess. The fatal effects of flattery have been too often felt by princes, whose natural ambition, fomented by the panegyrics profusely lavished upon their pretended virtues by sawning sycophants, has frequently led them blindly on to enterprises replete with destruction, and then, by dreadful experience, they have seen their error, which by a prudent examination of their own hearts might have been avoided. Examples of modesty are rare in exalted stations, where they are found they give a peculiar lustre to real merit, and from such a character, flattery will ever meet with deserved detestation. An instance of the truth of this observation is recorded by Huntington, of King Canute (justly styled) the Great, a prince equally conspicuous for his justice, piety, moderation and courage. 'One day while he walked on the sea shore, accompanied by his courtiers, who offered the grossest incense of adulation, and even compared his power to that of the Deity, he ordered a chair to be placed upon the beach, while the tide was making, and sitting down commanded the sea to retire; but being in a little time surrounded with water, he rose up and chid his flatterers for having bestowed upon him those encomiums which were due to God alone.'

Herod and Nebuchadnezzar, in the sacred writings, furnish us with awful instances of the dreadful effects of indulging the love of flattery, and exalting themselves; and ought to warn princes (whatever achievements they may perform, and however high they may rise in the opinions of their subjects) to remember, that it is through the will and power of the Almighty they are victorious; and that he