

Although we may fairly boast of the pre-eminence of the human species, over all other animals in arts of ingenious contrivance, and in mental capacities, which elevate our hopes beyond terrestrial enjoyments, yet we find the earth inhabited by different races of men, who do not only vary in complexion, manners and customs, but their rules of conduct, sentiments and opinions, are apparently so contrary and inconsistent, that the minds of the curious are at once struck with a degree of surprise, which naturally excites a desire of consulting those extensive sources of information, which have been laid open to the antiquary, by the travels and researches of modern travellers. The intellectual faculties of man, as well as his bodily frame and complexion, exhibit so various an aspect among different races of mankind, as would seem to authorise an arrangement of the human species into different classes, marked by a specific diversity of powers, both mental and corporeal.

The revival of critical learning, however, has induced the learned and the intelligent to examine with some interest, the early state of mankind, as well as the striking diversity in the human species throughout the regions of the earth. The whole human race, when compared with the present generation, were in a state of infancy, for many centuries after the deluge; as well as in the antediluvian world. To observe mankind leaving the first rude stages of society, and advancing gradually in the provinces of civilization and refinement, till they came to cultivate the arts and sciences, and to form wise regulations for the better government of communities, is a contemplation in which every man should indulge, in order to know what man really is, and what he has been. The wonderful revolutions which every age and every year have produced in the mental regions of man, go to prove that the human race have not yet attained their manhood.

But how much soever men may seem to be diversified by manners and customs, opinions and sentiments, shape and size of body, colour complexion, the organization of