

PREFACE.

THE curiosity of that man must be very feeble and sluggish, and his appetite for information very weak or depraved, who, when he compares the map of the world, as it was known to the ancients, with the map of the world as it is at present known, does not feel himself powerfully excited to inquire into the causes which have progressively brought almost every speck of its surface completely within our knowledge and access. To develop and explain these causes is one of the objects of the present work ; but this object cannot be attained, without pointing out in what manner Geography was at first fixed on the basis of science, and has subsequently, at various periods, been extended and improved, in proportion as those branches of physical knowledge which could lend it any assistance, have advanced towards perfection. We shall thus, we trust, be enabled to place before our readers a clear, but rapid view of the surface of the globe, gradually exhibiting a larger portion of known regions, and explored seas, till at last we introduce them to the full knowledge of the nineteenth century. In the course of this part of our work, deci-