

MONTREAL.

NO. I.

WHATEVER may have been the labour and the pains which have attended the researches of historians into the dark recesses of human events, and whatever accuracy and precision they may have discovered in tracing to their source the various windings of the transactions of mankind, and in laying them in open review before our senses, there is one subject, in particular, which has resisted their scrutiny with greater obduracy than any other, if not altogether eluded their grasp. We allude to the *origin* of nations and cities. On the authority of the most enlightened and renowned travellers, we may state, that there is no part of the surface of the globe, capable of yielding in rotation, from season to season, the necessaries of life, which is not inhabited by some species of the human race, possessing all the desires and faculties incident to man. The people of every country of whose discovery history has preserved a record, have almost uniformly been found in a state of barbarity and uncivilization—roaming, without a home or domestic affections, in pursuit of the animals of the chase, for both food and raiment. It is, however, true, that, even in savage life, where the human race have appeared in the rudest form, several tribes have been known intuitively to have formed some vague and remote ideas of civilized life, and to settle themselves in detached and comparatively industrious societies. This was found to be the case when the Spaniards first visited Mexico and Peru: and the inhabitants of those extensive countries were no sooner collected into great bodies under their emperors than *stone-buildings* began to be erected. Though the art of Architecture was not carried to the same extent of refinement, the natives of our own more northern continent, in their first intercourse with Europeans, were also found, in many instances, the quiet and undisturbed possessors of large, though rude and irregular, villages. But it is one of the many misfortunes which attend a state of barbarous existence, that, if the people who are subject to its dark and ignominious sway, have in one instance the good fortune to approach the habits or improvements of their more civilized and enlightened brethren, they are obliged to remain in total ignorance of all those higher and more important consolations to man, by which he is not only enabled to attain a distinct knowledge of his rank in civilization, but to improve this knowledge still farther, and convey to posterity a just and accurate detail of its rise and progress. This is an observation which may be applied, with an equal degree of propriety, to the original inhabitants of the ancient nations of the world as well as to the aborigines of modern discoveries. The perfect state of destitution to which nature has subjected man, in his savage condition, must, indeed, have taught him both the utility and necessity of some protection from the elements, beyond the tender and fragile superstructure of his own body; but the powers of the mind, by which alone this defence could be improved, strengthened, and enlarged, could never be so sufficiently developed by personal necessities as at once to enable him to arrive at that philosophical and just sense of his condition, which was calculated to convey to future ages the outlines of his intellectual and mechanical attainments.