

PREFACE.

THE different varieties of the human species afford interesting objects of contemplation, not only to the naturalist, but to the metaphysician, and to the Christian philanthropist. Notices of the various families of uncivilized men, especially of those merging from that state, may be of special interest. By exhibitions of this kind, the human character is unfolded; man is seen, not only under the effects of human culture, and polished refinement, but as the child of nature.

In the following pages, perhaps, the young may find entertainment, and receive some useful and instructive hints; the natural curiosity of the enquirer may be satisfied; and the necessity of missionary exertions may appear to be evident. But one of my principal objects is to show to the Christian philanthropist that his benevolence is not employed in vain, and to prompt him to renewed exertion. This, I trust, he may see fairly illustrated, by the contrast of the former and present conditions of the North American Indians—which is attempted in these pages.

There are various persons, who have taken barely a bird's eye view—a passing glance of these people, who have presumed dogmatically to state various things concerning them, which cannot be supported by the evidence of facts. Notwithstanding the acknowledged ability of those writers, it cannot be expected that they should arrive at *accuracy*, principally from the want of opportunity to give correct information. I regret that in these investigations I have to contradict some of their statements; but I beg the reader to consider that I write from personal and continuous observation; and my observations have been made not barely on one isolated spot, or on one solitary tribe, but from an acquaintance with several. First, I