

PREFACE.

To trace the descent of nations and travel through the regions of antiquity, is universally admitted to be a difficult task, and consequently not unworthy the attention of the lovers of science. Our present subject, it is true, has frequently attracted the curiosity of the learned, both of the old and new world; and although their researches have been both plausible and ingenious, yet the result of their inquiries is evidently so adverse and inconsistent, that a wide field is still open to the antiquary and historian. Nay, the obscurity in which the origin of the Aborigines of America has, hitherto, been involved, demands and calls forth all the ingenuity which the most enlightened philosophy can bring to its aid, in order to satisfy the public mind on so intricate a subject.

In this arduous undertaking, therefore, it becomes us to solicit the indulgence of our readers, especially of those who may not, perhaps, feel disposed to reason on matters, which, as they might likely imagine, exceed so far the reach and testimony of authentic history, that the origin of the North American Indians must, as a