

PREFACE.

THE volume now laid before the public, is submitted under the pleasing hope that it will not be unacceptable, although the subject of the Antiquities of America is every where surrounded with its mysteries ; on which account, we have been compelled to wander widely in the field of conjecture, from which it is not impossible but we may have gathered and presented some original and novel opinions.

We have felt that we are bound by the nature of the subject, to treat wholly on those matters which relate to ages preceding the discovery of America by Columbus ; as we apprehend no subject connected with the history of the continent since, can be entitled to the appellation of *ANTIQUITIES* of America.

If we may be permitted to judge from the liberal subscription this work has met with, notwithstanding the universal prejudice against subscribing for books, we should draw the conclusion, that this curious subject, has not its *only* admirers within the pdes of Antiquarian Societies.

If it is pleasing as well as useful to know the history of one's country, if to feel a rising interest as its beginnings are unfolded ; its sufferings, its wars, its struggles, and its victories, delineated ; why not also, when the story of its antiquities, though of a graver and more majestic nature, are attempted to be rehearsed.

The traits of the antiquities of the *old* world are every where shown by the fragments of dilapidated cities, pyramids of stone, and walls of wondrous length ; but here are the wrecks of empire, whose beginnings it would seem, are older than *any* of these, which are the mounds and works of the west, towering aloft as if their builders were preparing against another flood.

We have undertaken to elicit arguments, from what we suppose evidence, that the *first* inhabitants who peopled America, came on by land, at certain places, where it is supposed once to have been united with Asia, Europe, and Africa, but has been torn asunder by the force of earthquakes, and the irruptions of the waters, so that what animals had not passed over before this great physical rupture, were for ever excluded ; but not so with men, as they could resort to the use of boats.