

The first fruits of these inquiries in the United States have been the able and philosophical investigations of Mr. Du Ponceau,

guages ; several specimens of which were accordingly furnished. But what will most surprise the reader will be, to learn that the Empress herself actually began the labour of this comparison of languages. In a letter to the celebrated Zimmerman, dated May 9, 1785, she says—" Your letter drew me from the retirement in which I had kept myself for almost nine months, and which it was difficult for me to relinquish. You will hardly suspect what I was employed about in my solitude. I made a list of between two and three hundred radical words of the Russian language, and had them translated into every tongue and jargon that I could hear of; the number of which already exceeds two hundred. Every day I took one of these words and wrote it down in all the languages I had been able to collect. . . . I grew tired of this hobby, as soon as the book upon Solitude was read through. But as I felt some regret at committing to the flames my great mass of papers, and the long hull, which I occupied in my hermitage, was quite warm enough, I requested Professor PALLAS to attend me, and after a full confession of this sin of mine, it was agreed between us that these translations should be printed, and thus made of some use to those persons, who might be willing to occupy themselves with the idle labours of others. We are now only waiting, with that view, for some specimens of the dialects of Eastern Siberia. Whether the reader shall or shall not find in the work, striking facts of various kinds, will depend upon the feelings with which he enters upon the subject, and is a matter of little concern to me."—p. 40. Professor Pallas accordingly informed the public of Her Majesty's intentions; stating (among other things) that " she had herself made a selection of such words as were the most essential, and generally in use even among the best civilized nations. . . . In that selection the preference was given to substantives and adjectives of the first necessity, and which are common to the most barbarous of languages, or which serve to trace the progress of agriculture or of any arts or elementary knowledge from one people to another. The pronouns, adverbs, and some verbs and numerals, whose great utility in the comparison of languages is acknowledged, were also admitted into the collection, in order to render this Glossary more complete and more instructive."