

and has since continued to do so. The Fur Trade of Canada. The propriety and utility, of giving a description, of those animals from which the trade, whose history we are now considering takes its rise, having been suggested to us both publicly and privately, we deem the present a proper place in our researches, for availing ourselves of so good an advice. Natural History, indeed, has, in all ages, been the subject of philosophical enquiry, as well as a source of much amusement to almost every class of readers. In it, sages have found a mine of curious and interesting speculation, while scientific men have found it an ample scope for the indulgence of their genius. We cannot, therefore, doubt that the task which we are about to undertake will be acceptable to our readers, though we are far from pretending that we shall be able to combine any very new or interesting information with what has already been written upon this most important subject. The only merit due to us, if any, will consist of selecting from the best authors such information regarding those animals in Canada as contribute to the Fur trade, as may be deemed both authentic and entertaining. Until the commencement of our enquiries upon this subject, we had no conception of the number and variety of these animals; and, therefore, our account of them should extend beyond the bounds anticipated by our readers, we can only assure them that our sole excuse will be founded on our general desire to explore the history of this country, both in its natural and moral capacity, and to render it of as interesting a character as our humble talents, and the means which we possess, can possibly enable us to perform.

We shall begin with the BEAR. Of the Bear, there are three different kinds; the Brown Bear of the Alps, the Black Bear of North America, which is smaller, and the great Greenland, or White Bear. These, though different in their forms, are no doubt of the same original, and have all the same habits, being equally carnivorous, treacherous, and cruel. It has been said, indeed, that the black bear of Canada rejects animal food; but of the contrary we are all certain, and that they prefer flesh to every kind of vegetable aliment. The brown bear is properly an inhabitant of the temperate climates; but the black finds subsistence in the northern regions of Europe and America, while the great white bear takes refuge in the most icy climates, and lives where scarce any other animal can find subsistence. The brown and black bears are found in all desert, rude, and woody countries; but they never appear in populous nations, nor in open and cultivated regions.

The bear is not only a savage, but a solitary animal. He flies from all society, avoiding every place to which man can have access, and is only easy where nature appears in her rudest and most antient form. An old cavern, among inaccessible rocks, or a grotto formed by time

* The Bear has six cutting teeth and two canine in each jaw; five toes before and five behind. In walking he rests on the hind feet as far as the heel.