

afford a desirable entertainment to those of more enlarged understanding, and cultivated taste.

It is not however, on account of the dissemination of *knowledge* alone that the editor calls the attention of the public to this work; but because it is equally adapted to the extirpation of *error*. Facts, especially when they respect distant objects, are often imperfectly known, or much misrepresented by those who communicate them to the public. When this happens, in the ordinary modes of publication, such misrepresentations cannot be easily discovered. It may be long before such publications fall in the way of those who know the facts with precision: and when this at last does happen, it requires so great an exertion, in these circumstances, to put matters to rights, that few persons find themselves disposed to undertake the task. Even when this difficulty is overcome, the task is but imperfectly accomplished. Thousands may have been misled by the supposed fact, who may never have an opportunity of meeting with its refutation. These, in their turn, may reason upon the fact, and publish it in other works. Error may thus be propagated among millions who never shall have an opportunity of getting these false notions corrected. This could not happen, should the intended miscellany meet with as general a circulation as it is naturally susceptible of. In that case, the publication would soon fall into the hands of some one who would know with precision the facts that occurred in it, even with respect to very distant objects: And as errors of this sort might be rectified, in many cases, by a few lines, which would cost little trouble to write, and be attended with no expense, nor be accompanied with obloquy nor any other disagreeable effect to the writer, there seems to be no room to doubt, that the native love of truth, which is congenial to the human mind, would prompt such persons cheerfully to point out errors wherever they occurred; and as these corrections would come in succession to be read by the very persons who had been at first misled, the evil would be quickly rectified, and this great inlet to error be stopped up nearly at its source. Doubtful facts also, that occurred in other writings, might thus be ascertained; and error be at last so thoroughly ferretted out from all its intricate retreats, as to make TRUTH to reign triumphant over all the regions of science. Such, then, being the great objects aimed at in this apparently humble work, it will not be wondered at that the editor not only does not wish to conceal his name from the public, but is even proud to have given birth to such an undertaking. If his former writings possess any merit at all, they owe it entirely to an unremitting desire in him to promote the general good of mankind; and he trusts, that his efforts to render as perfect as he can, this much greater and more useful performance, may entitle him to hope for a continuance, and an extension even, of that favour, which he has, on all former occasions, so liberally experienced from an ever indulgent public. Should he fail in this attempt, he shall regret it as a misfortune, and ascribe it to the weakness of his powers, that have not been sufficient to rouse the public attention to a subject of such universal moment; and to the accidental waywardness of the times. If, however,