

LECTURE.

THE surface of the earth presents a great variety of aspects. Its position on its axis, and in its orbit, occasions an almost endless series of changes in seasons and climates—nor are these mere capricious or accidental varieties; unerring law controls every arrangement, exquisite order and precision are evident in every change. From the poles to the tropics there is an immense variety of climates, and in every one the animals and vegetables whose respective natures are just adapted to these varying conditions are invariably found—they cannot pass the bounds of their habitations with impunity, for the penalty is death. But all these differing regions have a higher end than that of forming suitable abodes for the lower works of creation; these also are, with all portions of the globe, subservient to the welfare of man. In the language of Scripture “The earth hath He given to the children of men.”

It is also evident that man himself is influenced by climate and the surrounding circumstances of his habitation; the inhabitants of a sea coast will differ in many respects from those who dwell in the centre of a continent and who know the great sea only from the tales of poets or travellers.

Commerce too, as influenced by the more or less maritime position of a country, will tend greatly to modify the condition of its people, and above all the political and religious conditions of a nation exercise the strongest influence upon its character: and thus springing from various causes, we find as manifold varieties both as to habits of life and modes of thought in the human family as in other respects among the lower or-