



THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.



E are about to start on a long and distant journey over land and sea. We are to make a grand tour, during which we shall visit in company many foreign countries. It may be well, therefore, before we start, to do what all wise travellers do, try to gain a few ideas regarding the general appearance of the great world over which we are to travel together for so long. But first of all let us endeavour to learn something of the names of those who have gone before us, and very briefly to recapitulate, if nothing more, the terms that we shall be so frequently using in our descriptions.

THE WORLD OF A THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

A thousand years ago, and for long after, the world was not all the geologised, botanised, zoologised, and mapped out earthy ball it is now. There it lay, according to the imagination of the men and women of those days—or rather, according to the ideas of the monks; for the men, and far less the women, of those distant times troubled themselves very little about matters of this kind, but left it to the churchmen to meddle with such dangerous book-learning—a flat plain, full of things mysterious and unknown; and out of the four corners, through the gaps of four mountain ranges, which were placed there to keep it steady, blew the four winds of heaven! Of course, the centre of it all was the little town, and county, parish, manor, barony, or kingdom where they dwelt; but outside of that was no man's land. It was looked upon by our remote forefathers in much the same light as it is by the Chinese, who, while making maps of the Flowery Land on a scale so large as to show the ground plan