

**B O O K** A country of such extent passes through all the climates capable of becoming the habitation of man, and fit for yielding the various productions peculiar either to the temperate or to the torrid regions of the earth.

IV.

grand objects it presents to view ;

its mountains,

rivers,

Next to the extent of the New World, the grandeur of the objects which it presents to view is most apt to strike the eye of an observer. Nature seems here to have carried on her operations upon a larger scale, and with a bolder hand, and to have distinguished the features of this country by a peculiar magnificence. The mountains in America are much superior in height to those in the other divisions of the globe. Even the plain of Quito, which may be considered as the base of the Andes, is elevated further above the sea than the top of the Pyrenees. This stupendous ridge of the Andes, no less remarkable for extent than elevation, rises in different places more than one-third above the Pike of Teneriffe, the highest land in the ancient hemisphere. The Andes may literally be said to hide their heads in the clouds ; the storms often roll, and the thunder bursts below their summits, which, though exposed to the rays of the sun in the centre of the torrid zone, are covered with everlasting snows<sup>b</sup>.

From these lofty mountains descend rivers, proportionably large, with which the streams in the ancient continent are not to be compared, either for length of course, or the vast body of water which they roll towards the ocean. The Maragnon, the Orinoco, the Plata in South America, the

<sup>b</sup> See NOTE XXVIII.

Mississippi and St. Laurence in North America, flow in such spacious channels, that, long before they feel the influence of the tide, they resemble arms of the sea rather than rivers of fresh water<sup>o</sup>.

The lakes of the New World are no less conspicuous for grandeur than its mountains and rivers. There is nothing in other parts of the globe which resembles the prodigious chain of lakes in North America. They may properly be termed inland seas of fresh water; and even those of the second or third class in magnitude are of larger circuit (the Caspian Sea excepted) than the greatest lake of the ancient continent.

The New World is of a form extremely favourable to commercial intercourse. When a continent is formed, like Africa, of one vast solid mass, unbroken by arms of the sea penetrating into its interior parts, with few large rivers, and those at a considerable distance from each other, the greater part of it seems destined to remain for ever uncivilised, and to be debarred from any active or enlarged communication with the rest of mankind. When, like Europe, a continent is opened by inlets of the ocean of great extent, such as the Mediterranean and Baltic; or when, like Asia, its coast is broken by deep bays advancing far into the country, such as the Black Sea, the Gulfs of Arabia, of Persia, of Bengal, of Siam, and of Leotang; when the surrounding seas are filled with large and fertile islands, and the continent itself watered with a variety of navigable rivers, those regions may be

<sup>o</sup> See NOTE XXIX.

B O O K said to possess whatever can facilitate the progress  
 IV. of their inhabitants in commerce and improvement.

In all these respects America may bear a comparison with the other quarters of the globe. The Gulf of Mexico, which flows in between North and South America, may be considered as a Mediterranean sea, which opens a maritime commerce with all the fertile countries by which it is encircled. The islands scattered in it are inferior only to those in the Indian Archipelago, in number, in magnitude, and in value. As we stretch along the northern division of the American hemisphere, the Bay of Chesapeak presents a spacious inlet, which conducts the navigator far into the interior parts of provinces no less fertile than extensive; and if ever the progress of culture and population shall mitigate the extreme rigour of the climate in the more northern districts of America, Hudson's Bay may become as subservient to commercial intercourse in that quarter of the globe, as the Baltic is in Europe. The other great portion of the New World is encompassed on every side by the sea, except one narrow neck which separates the Atlantic from the Pacific Ocean; and though it be not opened by spacious bays or arms of the sea, its interior parts are rendered accessible by a number of large rivers, fed by so many auxiliary streams, flowing in such various directions, that almost without any aid from the hand of industry and art, an inland navigation may be carried on through all the provinces from the river De la Plata to the Gulf of Paria. Nor is this bounty of nature confined to the southern division of America; its northern continent abounds no

less in rivers which are navigable almost to their sources, and by its immense chain of lakes provision is made for an inland communication, more extensive and commodious than in any quarter of the globe. The countries stretching from the Gulf of Darien on one side, to that of California on the other, which form the chain that binds the two parts of the American continent together, are not destitute of peculiar advantages. Their coast on one side is washed by the Atlantic Ocean, on the other by the Pacific. Some of their rivers flow into the former, some into the latter, and secure to them all the commercial benefits that may result from a communication with both.

But what most distinguishes America from other parts of the earth, is the peculiar temperature of its climate, and the different laws to which it is subject with respect to the distribution of heat and cold. We cannot determine with precision the portion of heat felt in any part of the globe, merely by measuring its distance from the equator. The climate of a country is affected, in some degree, by its elevation above the sea, by the extent of continent, by the nature of the soil, the height of adjacent mountains, and many other circumstances. The influence of these, however, is from various causes less considerable in the greater part of the ancient continent; and from knowing the position of any country there, we can pronounce with greater certainty what will be the warmth of its climate, and the nature of its productions.

The maxims which are founded upon observation of our hemisphere will not apply to the other.

B O O K  
IV.

tempera-  
ture of its  
climate;

predomi-  
nance of  
cold;

**B O O K** In the New World, cold predominates. The rigour of the frigid zone extends over half of those regions which should be temperate by their position. Countries where the grape and the fig should ripen, are buried under snow one half of the year ; and lands situated in the same parallel with the most fertile and best cultivated provinces in Europe, are chilled with perpetual frosts, which almost destroy the power of vegetation<sup>d</sup>. As we advance to those parts of America which lie in the same parallel with provinces of Asia and Africa, blessed with an uniform enjoyment of such genial warmth as is most friendly to life and to vegetation, the dominion of cold continues to be felt, and winter reigns, though during a short period, with extreme severity. If we proceed along the American continent into the torrid zone, we shall find the cold prevalent in the New World extending itself also to this region of the globe, and mitigating the excess of its fervour. While the negro on the coast of Africa is scorched with unremitting heat, the inhabitant of Peru breathes an air equally mild and temperate, and is perpetually shaded under a canopy of grey clouds, which intercepts the fierce beams of the sun, without obstructing his friendly influence<sup>e</sup>. Along the eastern coast of America, the climate, though more similar to that of the torrid zone in other parts of the earth, is nevertheless considerably milder than in those countries of Asia and Africa which lie in the same latitude. If from the southern tropic we continue our progress to the extremity of

<sup>d</sup> See NOTE XXX.

<sup>e</sup> Voyage de Ulloa, tom. i. p. 453. Anson's Voyage, p. 184.

the American continent, we meet with frozen seas, and countries horrid, barren, and scarcely habitable for cold, much sooner than in the north<sup>f</sup>.

Various causes combine in rendering the climate of America so extremely different from that of the ancient continent. Though the utmost extent of America towards the north be not yet discovered, we know that it advances much nearer to the pole than either Europe or Asia. Both these have large seas to the north, which are open during part of the year; and even when covered with ice, the wind that blows over them is less intensely cold than that which blows over land in the same high latitudes. But in America the land stretches from the river St. Laurence towards the pole, and spreads out immensely to the west. A chain of enormous mountains covered with snow and ice, runs through all this dreary region. The wind, in passing over such an extent of high and frozen land, becomes so impregnated with cold, that it acquires a piercing keenness, which it retains in its progress through warmer climates, and it is not entirely mitigated until it reach the Gulf of Mexico. Over all the continent of North America, a north-westerly wind and excessive cold are synonymous terms. Even in the most sultry weather, the moment that the wind veers to that quarter, its penetrating influence is felt in a transition from heat to cold no less violent than sudden. To this powerful cause we may

<sup>f</sup> Anson's Voyage, p. 74.; and Voyage de Quiros, chez Hist. Gen. des Voyages, tom. xiv. p. 83. Richard Hist. Natur. de l'Air, ii. 305, &c.

**B O O K** ascribe the extraordinary dominion of cold, and its  
 IV. violent inroads into the southern provinces, in that  
 part of the globe <sup>s</sup>.

Other causes, no less remarkable, diminish the active power of heat in those parts of the American continent which lie between the tropics. In all that portion of the globe, the wind blows in an invariable direction from east to west. As this wind holds its course across the ancient continent, it arrives at the countries which stretch along the western shores of Africa, inflamed with all the fiery particles which it hath collected from the sultry plains of Asia, and the burning sands in the African deserts. The coast of Africa is, accordingly, the region of the earth which feels the most fervent heat, and is exposed to the unmitigated ardour of the torrid zone. But this same wind, which brings such an accession of warmth to the countries lying between the river of Senegal and Cafraria, traverses the Atlantic Ocean before it reaches the American shore. It is cooled in its passage over this vast body of water, and is felt as a refreshing gale along the coast of Brazil <sup>h</sup>, and Guiana, rendering these countries, though among the warmest in America, temperate, when compared with those which lie opposite to them in Africa <sup>i</sup>. As this wind advances in its course across America, it meets with immense plains covered with impenetrable forests, or occupied by large rivers, marshes, and stagnating waters, where it can recover no considerable degree of

<sup>s</sup> Charlevoix Hist. de Nouv. Fr. iii. 165. Hist. Generale des Voyages, tom. xv. 215, &c.

<sup>h</sup> See NOTE XXXI.

<sup>i</sup> See NOTE XXXII.

heat. At length it arrives at the Andes, which run from north to south through the whole continent. In passing over their elevated and frozen summits, it is so thoroughly cooled, that the greater part of the countries beyond them hardly feel the ardour to which they seem exposed by their situation<sup>k</sup>. In the other provinces of America, from Tierra Ferme westward to the Mexican Empire, the heat of the climate is tempered, in some places, by the elevation of the land above the sea, in others, by their extraordinary humidity, and in all, by the enormous mountains scattered over this tract. The islands of America in the torrid zone are either small or mountainous, and are fanned alternately by refreshing sea and land breezes.

The causes of the extraordinary cold towards the southern limits of America, and in the seas beyond it, cannot be ascertained in a manner equally satisfying. It was long supposed that a vast continent, distinguished by the name of *Terra Australis Incognita*, lay between the southern extremity of America and the Antarctic pole. The same principles which account for the extraordinary degree of cold in the northern regions of America, were employed in order to explain that which is felt at Cape Horn and the adjacent countries. The immense extent of the southern continent, and the large rivers which it poured into the ocean, were mentioned and admitted by philosophers as causes sufficient to occasion the unusual

<sup>k</sup> Acosta Hist. Novi Orbis, lib. ii. c. 11. Buffon Hist. Naturelle, &c. tom. ii. 512, &c. ix. 107, &c. Osborn's Collect. of Voyages, ii. p. 868.



**B O O K** sensation of cold, and the still more uncommon ap-  
 IV. pearances of frozen seas in that region of the globe.

But the imaginary continent to which such influence was ascribed, having been searched for in vain, and the space which it was supposed to occupy having been found to be an open sea, new conjectures must be formed with respect to the causes of a temperature of climate, so extremely different from that which we experience in countries removed at the same distance from the opposite pole<sup>1</sup>.

condition  
 when first  
 disco-  
 vered,

After contemplating those permanent and characteristic qualities of the American continent, which arise from the peculiarity of its situation, and the disposition of its parts, the next object that merits attention is its condition when first discovered, as far as that depended upon the industry and operations of man. The effects of human ingenuity and labour are more extensive and considerable, than even our own vanity is apt at first to imagine. When we survey the face of the habitable globe, no small part of that fertility and beauty which we ascribe to the hand of nature, is the work of man. His efforts, when continued through a succession of ages, change the appearance and improve the qualities of the earth. As a great part of the ancient continent has long been occupied by nations far advanced in arts and industry, our eye is accustomed to view the earth in that form which it assumes when rendered fit to be the residence of a numerous race of men, and to supply them with nourishment.

<sup>1</sup> See NOTE XXXIII.

But in the New World, the state of mankind was ruder, and the aspect of nature extremely different. Throughout all its vast regions, there were only two monarchies remarkable for extent of territory, or distinguished by any progress in improvement. The rest of this continent was possessed by small independent tribes, destitute of arts and industry, and neither capable to correct the defects nor desirous to meliorate the condition of that part of the earth allotted to them for their habitation. Countries occupied by such people were almost in the same state as if they had been without inhabitants. Immense forests covered a great part of the uncultivated earth; and as the hand of industry had not taught the rivers to run in a proper channel, or drained off the stagnating water, many of the most fertile plains were overflowed with inundations, or converted into marshes. In the southern provinces, where the warmth of the sun, the moisture of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, combine in calling forth the most vigorous powers of vegetation, the woods are so choked with its rank luxuriance as to be almost impervious, and the surface of the ground is hid from the eye under a thick covering of shrubs and herbs and weeds. In this state of wild unassisted nature, a great part of the large provinces in South America, which extend from the bottom of the Andes to the sea, still remain. The European colonies have cleared and cultivated a few spots along the coast; but the original race of inhabitants, as rude and indolent as ever, have done nothing to open or improve a country possessing almost

B O O K  
IV.  
rude and  
uncultivated;

BOOK every advantage of situation and climate. As we  
 IV. advance towards the northern provinces of America, nature continues to wear the same uncultivated aspect, and, in proportion as the rigour of the climate increases, appears more desolate and horrid. There the forests, though not encumbered with the same exuberance of vegetation, are of immense extent; prodigious marshes overspread the plains, and few marks appear of human activity in any attempt to cultivate or embellish the earth. No wonder that the colonies sent from Europe were astonished at their first entrance into the New World. It appeared to them waste, solitary, and uninviting. When the English began to settle in America, they termed the countries of which they took possession, *The Wilderness*. Nothing but their eager expectation of finding mines of gold, could have induced the Spaniards to penetrate through the woods and marshes of America, where at every step they observed the extreme difference between the uncultivated face of Nature, and that which it acquires under the forming hand of industry and art<sup>m</sup>.

unwhole-  
some.

The labour and operations of man not only improve and embellish the earth, but render it more wholesome and friendly to life. When any region lies neglected and destitute of cultivation, the air stagnates in the woods; putrid exhalations arise from the waters; the surface of the earth, loaded with rank vegetation, feels not the purifying influence of the sun or of the wind; the malignity of

<sup>m</sup> See NOTE XXXIV.

the distempers natural to the climate increases, and new maladies no less noxious are engendered. Accordingly, all the provinces of America, when first discovered, were found to be remarkably unhealthy. This the Spaniards experienced in every expedition into the New World, whether destined for conquest or settlement. Though by the natural constitution of their bodies, their habitual temperance, and the persevering vigour of their minds, they were as much formed as any people in Europe for active service in a sultry climate, they felt severely the fatal and pernicious qualities of those uncultivated regions through which they marched, or where they endeavoured to plant colonies. Great numbers were cut off by the unknown and violent diseases with which they were infected. Such as survived the destructive rage of those maladies, were not exempted from the noxious influence of the climate. They returned to Europe, according to the description of the early Spanish historians, feeble, emaciated, with languid looks, and complexions of such a sickly yellow colour as indicated the unwholesome temperature of the countries where they had resided<sup>n</sup>.

The uncultivated state of the New World affected not only the temperature of the air, but the qualities of its productions. The principle of life seems to have been less active and vigorous there, than in the ancient continent. Notwithstanding the vast extent of America, and the variety of its

<sup>n</sup> Gomara Hist. c. 20, 22. Oviedo Hist. lib. ii. c. 13. lib. v. c. 10. P. Martyr, Epist. 545. Decad. p. 176.

BOOK climates, the different species of animals peculiar  
 IV. to it are much fewer in proportion than those of  
 Its ani- the other hemisphere. In the islands, there were  
 mals; only four kinds of quadrupeds known, the largest  
 of which did not exceed the size of a rabbit. On  
 the continent, the variety was greater; and though  
 the individuals of each kind could not fail of multi-  
 plying exceedingly when almost unmolested by  
 men, who were neither so numerous, nor so united  
 in society, as to be formidable enemies to the ani-  
 mal creation, the number of distinct species must  
 still be considered as extremely small. Of two  
 hundred different kinds of animals spread over the  
 face of the earth, only about one-third existed in  
 America at the time of its discovery°. Nature was  
 not only less prolific in the New World, but she  
 appears likewise to have been less vigorous in her  
 productions. The animals originally belonging to  
 this quarter of the globe appear to be of an inferior  
 race, neither so robust, nor so fierce, as those of  
 the other continent. America gives birth to no  
 creature of such bulk as to be compared with the  
 elephant or rhinoceros, or that equals the lion and  
 tiger in strength and ferocity<sup>p</sup>. The *Tapyr* of  
 Brazil, the largest quadruped of the ravenous tribe  
 in the New World, is not larger than a calf of six  
 months old. The *Puma* and *Jaguár*, its fiercest  
 beasts of prey, which Europeans have inaccurately  
 denominated lions and tigers, possess neither the

° Buffon Hist. Naturelle, tom. ix. p. 96.

<sup>p</sup> See NOTE XXXV.

undaunted courage of the former, nor the ra- BOOK  
 venous cruelty of the latter<sup>q</sup>. They are inactive IV.  
 and timid, hardly formidable to man, and often  
 turn their backs upon the least appearance of re-  
 sistance<sup>r</sup>. The same qualities in the climate of  
 America which stinted the growth, and enfeebled  
 the spirit, of its native animals, have proved per-  
 nicious to such as have migrated into it voluntarily  
 from the other continent, or have been transported  
 thither by the Europeans<sup>s</sup>. The bears, the wolves,  
 the deer of America, are not equal in size to those  
 of the Old World<sup>t</sup>. Most of the domestic animals,  
 with which the Europeans have stored the provinces  
 wherein they settled, have degenerated with respect  
 either to bulk or quality, in a country whose tem-  
 perature and soil seem to be less favourable to the  
 strength and perfection of the animal creation<sup>u</sup>.

The same causes which checked the growth and insects and  
 the vigour of the more noble animals, were friendly reptiles ;  
 to the propagation and increase of reptiles and in-  
 sects. Though this is not peculiar to the New  
 World, and those odious tribes, nourished by heat,  
 moisture, and corruption, infest every part of the  
 torrid zone; they multiply faster, perhaps, in Ame-

<sup>q</sup> Buffon Hist. Natur. tom. ix. p. 87. Marcgravii Hist. Nat. Brazil, p. 229.

<sup>r</sup> Buffon Hist. Natur. ix. 13. 203. Acosta Hist. lib. iv. c. 34. Pisonis Hist. p. 6. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. iv. c. 1. lib. x. c. 13.

<sup>s</sup> Churchill, v. p. 691. Ovalle Relat. of Chili, Church. iii. p. 10. Somario de Oviedo, c. 14—22. Voyage du Des Marchais, iii. 299.

<sup>t</sup> Buffon Hist. Natur. ix. 103. Kalm's Travels, i. 102. Biet. Voy. de France Equinox. p. 339.

<sup>u</sup> See NOTE XXXVI.

**B O O K** *rica, and grow to a more monstrous bulk. As this*  
 IV. *country is on the whole less cultivated, and less*  
 peopled, than the other quarters of the earth, the  
 active principle of life wastes its force in productions  
 of this inferior form. The air is often darkened  
 with clouds of insects, and the ground covered with  
 shocking and noxious reptiles. The country around  
 Porto-Bello swarms with toads in such multitudes  
 as hide the surface of the earth. At Guayaquil,  
 snakes and vipers are hardly less numerous. Car-  
 thagena is infested with numerous flocks of bats,  
 which annoy not only the cattle but the inhabitants<sup>x</sup>.  
 In the islands, legions of ants have at different  
 times consumed every vegetable production<sup>y</sup>, and  
 left the earth entirely bare as if it had been burnt  
 with fire. The damp forests and rank soil of the  
 countries on the banks of the Orinoco and Marag-  
 non, teem with almost every offensive and poisonous  
 creature which the power of a sultry sun can quicken  
 into life<sup>z</sup>.

birds ;

The birds of the New World are not distinguish-  
 ed by qualities so conspicuous and characteristical  
 as those which we have observed in its quadrupeds.  
 Birds are more independent of man, and less af-  
 fected by the changes which his industry and labour  
 make upon the state of the earth. They have a  
 greater propensity to migrate from one country to

<sup>x</sup> Voyage de Ulloa, tom. i. p. 89. Id. p. 147. Herrera, dec. 11:  
 lib. iii. c. 3. 19.

<sup>y</sup> See NOTE XXXVII:

<sup>z</sup> Voyage de Condamine, p. 167. Gumilla, iii. 120, &c. Hist.  
 Gener. des Voyages, xiv. 317. Dumont Mémoires sur la Loui-  
 siane, i. 108. Somario de Oviedo, c. 52—62.

another, and can gratify this instinct of their nature without difficulty or danger. Hence the number of birds common to both continents is much greater than that of quadrupeds; and even such as are peculiar to America, nearly resemble those with which mankind were acquainted in similar regions of the ancient hemisphere. The American birds of the torrid zone, like those of the same climate in Asia and Africa, are decked in plumage which dazzles the eye with the beauty of its colours; but nature, satisfied with clothing them in this gay dress, has denied most of them that melody of sound, and variety of notes, which catch and delight the ear. The birds of the temperate climates there, in the same manner as in our continent, are less splendid in their appearance; but, in compensation for that defect, they have voices of greater compass, and more melodious. In some districts of America, the unwholesome temperature of the air seems to be unfavourable even to this part of the creation. The number of birds is less than in other countries, and the traveller is struck with the amazing solitude and silence of its forests<sup>a</sup>. It is remarkable, however, that America, where the quadrupeds are so dwarfish and dastardly, should produce the *Condor*, which is entitled to pre-eminence over all the flying tribe, in bulk, in strength, and in courage<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Bouguer Voy. au Perou, 17: Chanvalon Voyage à la Martinique, p. 96. Warren's Descript. Surinam. Osborn's Collect. ii. 924. Lettres Edif. xxiv. p. 339. Charlev. Hist. de la Nouv. France, iii. 155.

<sup>b</sup> Voyage de Ulloa, i. 363. Voyage de Condamine, 175. Buffon Hist. Nat. xvi. 184. Voyage du Des Marchais, iii. 320.



B O O K

IV.

soil ;

The soil in a continent so extensive as America must, of course, be extremely various. In each of its provinces we find some distinguishing peculiarities, the description of which belongs to those who write their particular history. In general we may observe, that the moisture and cold, which predominate so remarkably in all parts of America, must have great influence upon the nature of its soil; countries lying in the same parallel with those regions which never feel the extreme rigour of winter in the ancient continent, are frozen over in America during a great part of the year. Chilled by this intense cold, the ground never acquires warmth sufficient to ripen the fruits which are found in the corresponding parts of the other continent. If we wish to rear in America the productions which abound in any particular district of the ancient world, we must advance several degrees nearer to the line than in the other hemisphere, as it requires such an increase of heat to counterbalance the natural frigidity of the soil and climate<sup>c</sup>. At the Cape of Good Hope, several of the plants and fruits peculiar to the countries within the tropics are cultivated with success; whereas, at St. Augustine in Florida, and Charles-Town in South Carolina, though considerably nearer the line, they cannot be brought to thrive with equal certainty<sup>d</sup>. But, if allowance be made for this diversity in the degree of heat, the soil of America is naturally as rich and fertile as in any part of the earth. As the country was thinly inhabited, and by a people of

<sup>c</sup> See NOTE XXXVIII.<sup>d</sup> See NOTE XXXIX.

little industry, who had none of the domestic animals which civilized nations rear in such vast numbers; the earth was not exhausted by their consumption. The vegetable productions, to which the fertility of the soil gave birth, often remained untouched, and, being suffered to corrupt on its surface, returned with increase into its bosom<sup>e</sup>. As trees and plants derive a great part of their nourishment from air and water; if they were not destroyed by man and other animals, they would render to the earth more, perhaps, than they take from it, and feed rather than impoverish it. Thus the unoccupied soil of America may have gone on enriching for many ages. The vast number as well as enormous size of the trees in America, indicate the extraordinary vigour of the soil in its native state. When the Europeans first began to cultivate the New World, they were astonished at the luxuriant power of vegetation in its virgin mould; and in several places the ingenuity of the planter is still employed in diminishing and wasting its superfluous fertility, in order to bring it down to a state fit for profitable culture<sup>f</sup>.

Having thus surveyed the state of the New World at the time of its discovery, and considered the peculiar features and qualities which distinguish and characterize it, the next inquiry that merits attention is, How was America peopled? By what course did mankind migrate from the one continent to the

BOOK  
IV.  
How was  
America  
peopled?

<sup>e</sup> Buffon, *Hist. Natur.* i. 242. Kalm, i. 151.

<sup>f</sup> Charlevoix, *Histoire de Nouv. Fran.* iii. 405. *Voyage du Des Marchais*, iii. 229. Lery ap. de Bry, part. iii. p. 174. See NOTE XL.

**B O O K** other? and in what quarter is it most probable that  
 IV. a communication was opened between them?

No tradi-  
 tion con-  
 cerning it  
 among  
 them-  
 selves.

We know, with infallible certainty, that all the human race spring from the same source, and that the descendants of one man, under the protection as well as in obedience to the command of Heaven, multiplied and replenished the earth. But neither the annals nor the traditions of nations reach back to those remote ages, in which they took possession of the different countries where they are now settled. We cannot trace the branches of this first family, or point out with certainty the time and manner in which they divided and spread over the face of the globe. Even among the most enlightened people, the period of authentic history is extremely short; and every thing prior to that, is fabulous or obscure. It is not surprising, then, that the unlettered inhabitants of America, who have no solicitude about futurity, and little curiosity concerning what is passed, should be altogether unacquainted with their own original. The people on the two opposite coasts of America, who occupy those countries in America which approach nearest to the ancient continent, are so remarkably rude, that it is altogether vain to search among them for such information as might discover the place from whence they came, or the ancestors of whom they are descended<sup>f</sup>. Whatever light has been thrown on this subject, is derived, not from the natives of America, but from the inquisitive genius of their conquerors.

Various  
 theories.

When the people of Europe unexpectedly disco-

<sup>f</sup> Vinegas's Hist. of California, i. 60.

vered a New World, removed at a vast distance from every part of the ancient continent which was then known, and filled with inhabitants whose appearance and manners differed remarkably from the rest of the human species, the question concerning their original became naturally an object of curiosity and attention. The theories and speculations of ingenious men with respect to this subject, would fill many volumes ; but are often so wild and chimerical, that I should offer an insult to the understanding of my readers, if I attempted either minutely to enumerate or to refute them. Some have presumptuously imagined, that the people of America were not the offspring of the same common parent with the rest of mankind, but that they formed a separate race of men, distinguishable by peculiar features in the constitution of their bodies, as well as in the characteristic qualities of their minds. Others contend, that they are descended from some remnant of the antediluvian inhabitants of the earth, who survived the deluge which swept away the greatest part of the human species in the days of Noah ; and preposterously suppose rude, uncivilized tribes, scattered over an uncultivated continent, to be the most ancient race of people on the earth. There is hardly any nation from the north to the south pole, to which some antiquary, in the extravagance of conjecture, has not ascribed the honour of peopling America. The Jews, the Canaanites, the Phœnicians, the Carthaginians, the Greeks, the Scythians in ancient times, are supposed to have settled in this western world. The Chinese, the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Welsh,

B O O K  
 IV.

BOOK the Spaniards, are said to have sent colonies thither  
 IV. in later ages, at different periods, and on various occasions. Zealous advocates stand forth to support the respective claims of those people; and though they rest upon no better foundation than the casual resemblance of some customs, or the supposed affinity between a few words in their different languages, much erudition and more zeal have been employed, to little purpose, in defence of the opposite systems. Those regions of conjecture and controversy belong not to the historian. His is a more limited province, confined by what is established by certain or highly probable evidence. Beyond this I shall not venture, in offering a few observations which may contribute to throw some light upon this curious and much agitated question.

Ought not to be founded on mere conjecture,

1. There are authors who have endeavoured by mere conjecture to account for the peopling of America. Some have supposed that it was originally united to the ancient continent, and disjoined from it by the shock of an earthquake, or the irruption of a deluge. Others have imagined, that some vessel being forced from its course by the violence of a westerly wind, might be driven by accident towards the American coast, and have given a beginning to population in that desolate continent<sup>s</sup>. But with respect to all those systems, it is vain either to reason or inquire, because it is impossible to come to any decision. Such évents as

<sup>s</sup> Parsons's Remains of Japhet, p. 240. Ancient Univers. Hist. vol. xx. p. 164. P. Feyjoo Teatro Critico, tom. v. p. 304, &c. Acosta Hist. Moral. Novi Orbis, lib. i. 16. c. 19.

they suppose are barely possible, and may have happened. That they ever did happen, we have no evidence, either from the clear testimony of history, or from the obscure intimations of tradition. B O O K  
IV.

2. Nothing can be more frivolous, or uncertain, than the attempts to discover the original of the Americans merely by tracing the resemblance between their manners and those of any particular people in the ancient continent. If we suppose two tribes, though placed in the most remote regions of the globe, to live in a climate nearly of the same temperature, to be in the same state of society, and to resemble each other in the degree of their improvement, they must feel the same wants and exert the same endeavours to supply them. The same objects will allure, the same passions will animate them, and the same ideas and sentiments will arise in their minds. The character and occupations of the hunter in America, must be little different from those of an Asiatic who depends for subsistence on the chase. A tribe of savages on the banks of the Danube, must nearly resemble one upon the plains washed by the Mississippi. Instead then of presuming from this similarity, that there is any affinity between them, we should only conclude that the disposition and manners of men are formed by their situation, and arise from the state of society in which they live. The moment that begins to vary, the character of a people must change. In proportion as it advances in improvement, their manners refine, their powers and talents are called forth. In every part of the earth, the progress of man hath been nearly the same ; and

**B O O K** we can trace him in his career from the rude simplicity of savage life, until he attains the industry, the arts, and the elegance of polished society. **IV.** There is nothing wonderful, then, in the similitude between the Americans and the barbarous nations of our continent. Had Lafitau, Garcia, and many other authors attended to this, they would not have perplexed a subject, which they pretend to illustrate, by their fruitless endeavours to establish an affinity between various races of people, in the old and new continents, upon no other evidence than such a resemblance in their manners as necessarily arises from the similarity of their condition. There are, it is true, among every people, some customs which, as they do not flow from any natural want or desire peculiar to their situation, may be denominated usages of arbitrary institution. If between two nations settled in remote parts of the earth, a perfect agreement with respect to any of these should be discovered, one might be led to suspect that they were connected by some affinity. If, for example, a nation were found in America that consecrated the seventh day to religious worship and rest, we might justly suppose that it had derived its knowledge of this usage, which is of arbitrary institution, from the Jews. But, if it were discovered that another nation celebrated the first appearance of every new moon with extraordinary demonstrations of joy, we should not be entitled to conclude that the observation of this monthly festival was borrowed from the Jews, but ought to consider it merely as the expression of that joy which is natural to man on the return of the planet which guides

and cheers him in the night. The instances of customs, merely arbitrary, common to the inhabitants of both hemispheres, are, indeed, so few and so equivocal, that no theory concerning the population of the New World ought to be founded upon them.

3. The theories which have been formed with respect to the original of the Americans, from observation of their religious rites and practices, are no less fanciful, and destitute of solid foundation. When the religious opinions of any people are neither the result of rational inquiry, nor derived from the instructions of revelation, they must needs be wild and extravagant. Barbarous nations are incapable of the former, and have not been blessed with the advantages arising from the latter. Still, however, the human mind, even where its operations appear most wild and capricious, holds a course so regular, that in every age and country the dominion of particular passions will be attended with similar effects. The savage of Europe or America, when filled with superstitious dread of invisible beings, or with inquisitive solicitude to penetrate into the events of futurity, trembles alike with fear, or glows with impatience. He has recourse to rites and practices of the same kind, in order to avert the vengeance which he supposes to be impending over him, or to divine the secret which is the object of his curiosity. Accordingly, the ritual of superstition in one continent seems, in many particulars, to be a transcript of that established in the other, and both authorize similar institutions, sometimes so frivolous as to excite pity, sometimes so bloody

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**B O O K** and barbarous as to create horror. But without  
 }  
 } **IV.** supposing any consanguinity between such distant  
 } nations, or imagining that their religious ceremonies  
 } were conveyed by tradition from the one to the  
 } other, we may ascribe this uniformity, which in  
 } many instances seems very amazing, to the natural  
 } operation of superstition and enthusiasm upon the  
 } weakness of the human mind.

Not peo-  
 pled by  
 any nation  
 highly ci-  
 vilized ;

4. We may lay it down as a certain principle in this inquiry, that America was not peopled by any nation of the ancient continent which had made considerable progress in civilization. The inhabitants of the New World were in a state of society so extremely rude, as to be unacquainted with those arts which are the first essays of human ingenuity in its advance towards improvement. Even the most cultivated nations of America were strangers to many of those simple inventions which were almost coëval with society in other parts of the world, and were known in the earliest periods of civil life with which we have any acquaintance. From this it is manifest, that the tribes which originally migrated to America, came off from nations which must have been no less barbarous than their posterity, at the time when they were first discovered by the Europeans. For, although the elegant or refined arts may decline or perish, amidst the violent shocks of those revolutions and disasters to which nations are exposed, the necessary arts of life, when once they have been introduced among any people, are never lost. None of the vicissitudes in human affairs affect these, and they continue to be practised as long as the race of men exists. If ever the use

of iron had been known to the savages of America, B O O K  
 or to their progenitors; if ever they had employed IV.  
 a plough, a loom, or a forge, the utility of those inventions would have preserved them, and it is impossible that they should have been abandoned or forgotten. We may conclude, then, that the Americans sprung from some people, who were themselves in such an early and unimproved stage of society, as to be unacquainted with all those necessary arts, which continued to be unknown among their posterity when first visited by the Spaniards.

5. It appears no less evident that America was not peopled by any colony from the more southern nations of the ancient continent. None of the rude tribes settled in that part of our hemisphere can be supposed to have visited a country so remote. They possessed neither enterprise, nor ingenuity, nor power that could prompt them to undertake, or enable them to perform, such a distant voyage. That the more civilized nations in Asia or Africa are not the progenitors of the Americans, is manifest, not only from the observations which I have already made concerning their ignorance of the most simple and necessary arts, but from an additional circumstance. Whenever any people have experienced the advantages which men enjoy by their dominion over the inferior animals, they can neither subsist without the nourishment which these afford, nor carry on any considerable operation independent of their ministry and labour. Accordingly, the first care of the Spaniards, when they settled in America, was to stock it with all the domestic animals of Europe; and if, prior to them, the Tyrians, the

nor from the southern regions of our continent.

B O O K  
IV.

Carthaginians, the Chinese, or any other polished people, had taken possession of that continent, we should have found there the animals peculiar to those regions of the globe where they were originally seated. In all America, however, there is not one animal, tame or wild, which properly belongs to the warm or even the more temperate countries of the ancient continent. The camel, the dromedary, the horse, the cow, were as much unknown in America as the elephant or the lion. From which it is obvious, that the people who first settled in the western world did not issue from the countries where those animals abound, and where men, from having been long accustomed to their aid, would naturally consider it not only as beneficial, but as indispensably necessary to the improvement, and even the preservation, of civil society.

The two continents seem to approach nearest to each other towards the north.

6. From considering the animals with which America is stored, we may conclude that the nearest point of contact between the old and new continents is towards the northern extremity of both, and that there the communication was opened, and the intercourse carried on between them. All the extensive countries in America which lie within the tropics, or approach near to them, are filled with indigenous animals of various kinds, entirely different from those in the corresponding regions of the ancient continent. But the northern provinces of the New World abound with many of the wild animals which are common in such parts of our hemisphere as lie in a similar situation. The bear, the wolf, the fox, the hare, the deer, the roebuck, the elk, and several other species, frequent the

forests of North America, no less than those in the north of Europe and Asia<sup>h</sup>. It seems to be evident, then, that the two continents approach each other in this quarter, and are either united, or so nearly adjacent that these animals might pass from the one to the other.

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7. The actual vicinity of the two continents is so clearly established by modern discoveries, that the chief difficulty with respect to the peopling of America is removed. While those immense regions which stretch eastward from the River Oby to the sea of Kamchatka were unknown or imperfectly explored, the north-east extremities of our hemisphere were supposed to be so far distant from any part of the New World, that it was not easy to conceive how any communication should have been carried on between them. But the Russians having subjected the western part of Siberia to their empire, gradually extended their knowledge of that vast country, by advancing towards the east into unknown provinces. These were discovered by hunters in their excursions after game, or by soldiers employed in levying the taxes; and the court of Moscow estimated the importance of those countries, only by the small addition which they made to its revenue. At length Peter the Great ascended the Russian throne. His enlightened, comprehensive mind, intent upon every circumstance that could aggrandise his empire, or render his reign illustrious, discerned consequences of those discoveries which had escaped the observation of his ignorant prede-

This ascer-  
tained by  
discovery.

<sup>h</sup> Buffon, Hist. Nat. ix. p. 97, &c.

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IV.

cessors. He perceived that in proportion as the regions of Asia extended towards the east, they must approach nearer to America; that the communication between the two continents, which had long been searched for in vain, would probably be found in this quarter; and that by opening it, some part of the wealth and commerce of the western world might be made to flow into his dominions by a new channel. Such an object suited a genius that delighted in grand schemes. Peter drew up instructions with his own hand for prosecuting this design, and gave orders for carrying it into execution<sup>i</sup>.

His successors adopted his ideas and pursued his plan. The officers whom the Russian court employed in this service, had to struggle with so many difficulties, that their progress was extremely slow. Encouraged by some faint traditions among the people of Siberia, concerning a successful voyage in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-eight, round the north-east promontory of Asia, they attempted to follow the same course. Vessels were fitted out, with this view, at different times, from the rivers Lena and Kolyma; but in a frozen ocean, which nature seems not to have destined for navigation, they were exposed to many disasters, without being able to accomplish their purpose. No vessel fitted out by the Russian court ever doubled this formidable Cape<sup>k</sup>; we are indebted for what is known of those extreme regions of Asia, to the discoveries made in excursions by land. In all those provinces an opinion prevails, that there are coun-

<sup>i</sup> Muller, Voyages et Découvertes par les Russes, tom. i. p. 4, 5. 141.

<sup>k</sup> See NOTE XLI.

tries of great extent and fertility which lie at no considerable distance from their own coasts. These the Russians imagined to be part of America; and several circumstances concurred not only in confirming them in this belief, but in persuading them that some portion of that continent could not be very remote. Trees of various kinds unknown in those naked regions of Asia, are driven upon the coast by an easterly wind. By the same wind, floating ice is brought thither in a few days; flights of birds arrive annually from the same quarter; and a tradition obtains among the inhabitants, of an intercourse formerly carried on with some countries situated to the east.

After weighing all these particulars, and comparing the position of the countries in Asia which had been discovered, with such parts in the northwest of America as were already known, the Russian court formed a plan, which would have hardly occurred to a nation less accustomed to engage in arduous undertakings, and to contend with great difficulties. Orders were issued to build two vessels at the small village of Ochotz, situated on the sea of Kamchatka, to sail on a voyage of discovery. Though that dreary uncultivated region furnished nothing that could be of use in constructing them, but some larch trees: though not only the iron, the cordage, the sails, and all the numerous articles requisite for their equipment, but the provisions for victualling them were to be carried through the immense deserts of Siberia, down rivers of difficult navigation, and along roads almost impassable, the mandate of the sovereign, and the perseverance of

**B O O K** the people, at last surmounted every obstacle. Two  
**IV.** vessels were finished, and, under the command of  
**1741.** the Captains Behring and Tschirikow, sailed from  
**June 4.** Kamchatka, in quest of the New World in a quarter where it had never been approached. They shaped their course towards the east; and though a storm soon separated the vessels, which never re-joined, and many disasters befel them, the expectations from the voyage were not altogether frustrated: Each of the commanders discovered land, which to them appeared to be part of the American continent; and, according to their observations, it seems to be situated within a few degrees of the north-west coast of California. Each set some of his people ashore: but in one place the inhabitants fled as the Russians approached; in another, they carried off those who landed, and destroyed their boats. The violence of the weather, and the distress of their crews, obliged both captains to quit this inhospitable coast. In their return they touched at several islands which stretch in a chain from east to west between the country which they had discovered and the coast of Asia. They had some intercourse with the natives, who seemed to them to resemble the North Americans. They presented to the Russians the *calumet*, or pipe of peace, which is a symbol of friendship universal among the people of North America, and an usage of arbitrary institution peculiar to them.

Though the islands of this New Archipelago have been frequented since that time by the Russian hunters, the court of St. Petersburg, during a period of more than forty years, seems to have relinquished

every thought of prosecuting discoveries in that quarter. But in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight it was unexpectedly resumed. The sovereign who had been lately seated on the throne of Peter the Great, possessed the genius and talents of her illustrious predecessor. During the operations of the most arduous and extensive war in which the Russian empire was ever engaged, she formed schemes and executed undertakings, to which more limited abilities would have been incapable of attending but amidst the leisure of pacific times. A new voyage of discovery from the eastern extremity of Asia was planned, and Captain Krenitzin and Lieutenant Levasheff were appointed to command the two vessels fitted out for that purpose. In their voyage outward they held nearly the same course with the former navigators, they touched at the same islands, observed their situation and productions more carefully, and discovered several new islands with which Behring and Tschirikow had not fallen in. Though they did not proceed so far to the east as to revisit the country which Behring and Tschirikow supposed to be part of the American continent, yet, by returning in a course considerably to the north of theirs, they corrected some capital mistakes into which their predecessors had fallen, and have contributed to facilitate the progress of future navigators in those seas<sup>1</sup>.

Thus the possibility of a communication between the continents in this quarter rests no longer upon mere conjecture, but is established by undoubted

<sup>1</sup> See NOTE XLII.



BOOK evidence<sup>m</sup>. Some tribe, or some families of wandering Tartars, from the restless spirit peculiar to their race, might migrate to the nearest islands, and, rude as their knowledge of navigation was, might, by passing from one to the other, reach at length the coast of America, and give a beginning to population in that continent. The distance between the Marian or Ladrone islands and the nearest land in Asia, is greater than that between the part of America which the Russians discovered, and the coast of Kamchatka; and yet the inhabitants of those islands are manifestly of Asiatic extract. If, notwithstanding their remote situation, we admit that the Marian islands were peopled from our continent, distance alone is no reason why we should hesitate about admitting that the Americans may derive their original from the same source. It is probable that future navigators in those seas, by steering further to the north, may find that the continent of America approaches still nearer to Asia. According to the information of the barbarous people who inhabit the country about the north-east promontory of Asia, there lies, off the coast, a small island, to which they sail in less than a day. From that they can descry a large continent which, according to their description, is covered with forests, and possessed by people whose language they do not understand<sup>n</sup>. By them they are supplied with the skins of martens, an animal unknown in the northern parts of Siberia, and which is never found but in countries abounding with trees. If

<sup>m</sup> Muller's Voyages, tom. i. 248, &c. 267. 276.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid. i. 166.

we could rely on this account, we might conclude BOOK  
IV. that the American continent is separated from ours only by a narrow strait, and all the difficulties with respect to the communication between them would vanish. What could be offered only as a conjecture when this History was first published, is now known to be certain. The near approach of the two continents to each other has been discovered and traced in a voyage undertaken upon principles so pure and so liberal, and conducted with so much professional skill, as reflect lustre upon the reign of the sovereign by whom it was planned, and do honour to the officers intrusted with the execution of it<sup>o</sup>.

It is likewise evident from recent discoveries, Another  
communi-  
cation by  
the north-  
west.  
A.D. 830, that an intercourse between our continent and America might be carried on with no less facility from the north-west extremities of Europe. As early as the ninth century, the Norwegians discovered Greenland, and planted colonies there. The communication with that country, after a long interruption, was renewed in the last century. Some Lutheran and Moravian missionaries, prompted by zeal for propagating the Christian faith, have ventured to settle in this frozen and uncultivated region<sup>p</sup>. To them we are indebted for much curious information with respect to its nature and inhabitants. We learn, that the north-west coast of Greenland is separated from America by a very narrow strait; that, at the bottom of the bay into which this strait conducts, it is highly probable that

<sup>o</sup> See NOTE XLIII.

<sup>p</sup> Crantz' Hist. of Greenl. i. 242. 244. Prevot, Hist. Gen. des Voyages, tom. xv. 152. not. (96).

**B O O K** they are united<sup>9</sup>; that the inhabitants of the two countries have some intercourse with one another; that the Esquimaux of America perfectly resemble the Greenlanders in their aspect, dress, and mode of living; that some sailors who had acquired the knowledge of a few words in the Greenlandish language, reported that these were understood by the Esquimaux; that, at length, a Moravian missionary, well acquainted with the language of Greenland, having visited the country of the Esquimaux, found, to his astonishment, that they spoke the same language with the Greenlanders; that they were in every respect the same people, and he was accordingly received and entertained by them as a friend and a brother<sup>r</sup>.

By these decisive facts, not only the consanguinity of the Esquimaux and Greenlanders is established, but the possibility of peopling America from the north of Europe is demonstrated. If the Norwegians, in a barbarous age, when science had not begun to dawn in the north of Europe, possessed such naval skill as to open a communication with Greenland, their ancestors, as much addicted to roving by sea, as the Tartars are to wandering by land, might, at some more remote period, accomplish the same voyage, and settle a colony there, whose descendants might, in progress of time, migrate into America. But if, instead of venturing to sail directly from their own coast to Greenland, we suppose that the Norwegians held a more cautious course, and advanced from Shetland to the Feroe islands, and from them to Iceland, in all

<sup>9</sup> Eggede, p. 2, 3.

<sup>r</sup> Crantz' Hist. of Greenl. p. 261, 262.

which they had planted colonies ; their progress may have been so gradual, that this navigation cannot be considered as either longer or more hazardous, than those voyages which that hardy and enterprising race of men is known to have performed in every age.

8. Though it be possible that America may have received its first inhabitants from our continent, either by the north-west of Europe or the north-east of Asia, there seems to be good reason for supposing that the progenitors of all the American nations from Cape Horn to the southern confines of Labrador, migrated from the latter rather than the former. The Esquimaux are the only people in America, who in their aspect or character bear any resemblance to the northern Europeans. They are manifestly a race of men distinct from all the nations of the American continent, in language, in disposition, and in habits of life. Their original, then, may warrantably be traced up to that source which I have pointed out. But among all the other inhabitants of America, there is such a striking similitude in the form of their bodies and the qualities of their minds, that, notwithstanding the diversities occasioned by the influence of climate, or unequal progress in improvement, we must pronounce them to be descended from one source. There may be a variety in the shades, but we can every where trace the same original colour. Each tribe has something peculiar which distinguishes it, but in all of them we discern certain features common to the whole race. It is remarkable, that in every peculiarity, whether in their persons or dispo-

B O O K  
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Probably  
peopled  
from the  
north-east.

**B O O K** sitions, which characterize the Americans, they  
 IV. have some resemblance to the rude tribes scattered  
 over the north-east of Asia, but almost none to the  
 nations settled in the northern extremities of Eu-  
 rope. We may, therefore, refer them to the  
 former origin, and conclude that their Asiatic pro-  
 genitors, having settled in those parts of America  
 where the Russians have discovered the proximity  
 of the two continents, spread gradually over its va-  
 rious regions. This account of the progress of po-  
 pulation in America coincides with the traditions of  
 the Mexicans concerning their own origin, which,  
 imperfect as they are, were preserved with more ac-  
 curacy, and merit greater credit, than those of any  
 people in the New World. According to them,  
 their ancestors came from a remote country situ-  
 ated to the north-west of Mexico. The Mexicans  
 point out their various stations as they advanced  
 from this, into the interior provinces, and it is  
 precisely the same route which they must have held  
 if they had been emigrants from Asia. The Mexi-  
 cans, in describing the appearance of their proge-  
 nitors, their manners and habits of life at that pe-  
 riod, exactly delineate those of the rude Tartars,  
 from whom I suppose them to have sprung<sup>r</sup>.

Thus have I finished a Disquisition which has  
 been deemed of so much importance, that it would  
 have been improper to omit it in writing the his-  
 tory of America. I have ventured to inquire, but

<sup>r</sup> Acosta, Hist. Nat. & Mor. lib. vii. c. 2, &c. Garcia, Origen  
 de los Indios, lib. v. c. 3. Torquemada Monar. Ind. lib. i. c. 2,  
 &c. Boturini Benaduci Idea de una Hist. de la Amer. Septentr.  
 § xvii. p. 127.

without presuming to decide. Satisfied with offering conjectures, I pretend not to establish any system. When an investigation is, from its nature, so intricate and obscure, that it is impossible to arrive at conclusions which are certain, there may be some merit in pointing out such as are probable<sup>s</sup>.

The condition and character of the American nations, at the time when they became known to the Europeans, deserve more attentive consideration than the inquiry concerning their original. The latter is merely an object of curiosity; the former is one of the most important as well as instructive researches which can occupy the philosopher or historian. In order to complete the history of the human mind, and attain to a perfect knowledge of its nature and operations, we must contemplate man in all those various situations wherein he has been placed. We must follow him in his progress through the different stages of society, as he gradually advances from the infant state of civil life towards its maturity and decline. We must observe, at each period, how the faculties of his understanding unfold; we must attend to the efforts of his active powers, watch the various movements of desire and affection, as they rise in his breast, and mark whither they tend, and with what ardour they are exerted. The philosophers and historians of ancient Greece and Rome, our guides in this as well as every other disquisition, had only a limited view of this subject, as they had hardly any opportunity of surveying man in his rudest and

B O O K  
IV.

Condition  
and cha-  
racter of  
the Ame-  
ricans;

<sup>s</sup> Mémoires sur la Louisiane, par Dumont, tom. i. p. 119.

**B O O K** most early state. In all those regions of the earth  
 with which they were well acquainted, civil society  
 had made considerable advances, and nations had  
 finished a good part of their career before they be-  
 gan to observe them. The Scythians and Germans,  
 the rudest people of whom any ancient author has  
 transmitted to us an authentic account, possessed  
 flocks and herds, had acquired property of various  
 kinds, and, when compared with mankind in their  
 primitive state, may be reckoned to have attained  
 to a great degree of civilization.

less im-  
 proved  
 than in  
 any part  
 of the  
 earth.

But the discovery of the New World enlarged  
 the sphere of contemplation, and presented nations  
 to our view, in stages of their progress, much  
 less advanced than those wherein they have been  
 observed in our continent. In America, man ap-  
 pears under the rudest form in which we can con-  
 ceive him to subsist. We behold communities  
 just beginning to unite, and may examine the sen-  
 timents and actions of human beings in the in-  
 fancy of social life, while they feel but imperfectly  
 the force of its ties, and have scarcely relinquished  
 their native liberty. That state of primæval simpli-  
 city, which was known in our continent only by  
 the fanciful description of poets, really existed in  
 the other. The greater part of its inhabitants were  
 strangers to industry and labour, ignorant of arts,  
 imperfectly acquainted with the nature of property,  
 and enjoying almost without restriction or control  
 the blessings which flowed spontaneously from the  
 bounty of nature. There were only two nations in  
 this vast continent which had emerged from this  
 rude state, and had made any considerable progress

in acquiring the ideas, and adopting the institutions, which belong to polished societies. Their government and manners will fall naturally under our review in relating the discovery and conquest of the Mexican and Peruvian empires; and we shall have there an opportunity of contemplating the Americans in the state of highest improvement to which they ever attained.

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At present, our attention and researches shall be turned to the small independent tribes which occupied every other part of America. Among these, though with some diversity in their character, their manners, and institutions, the state of society was nearly similar, and so extremely rude, that the denomination of *savage* may be applied to them all. In a general history of America, it would be highly improper to describe the condition of each petty community, or to investigate every minute circumstance which contributes to form the character of its members. Such an inquiry would lead to details of immeasurable and tiresome extent. The qualities belonging to the people of all the different tribes have such a near resemblance, that they may be painted with the same features. Where any circumstances seem to constitute a diversity in their character and manners worthy of attention, it will be sufficient to point these out as they occur, and to inquire into the cause of such peculiarities.

This inquiry confined to the rudest tribes.

It is extremely difficult to procure satisfying and authentic information concerning nations while they remain uncivilized. To discover their true character under this rude form, and to select the features by which they are distinguished, requires

Difficulty of obtaining information



**B O O K** an observer possessed of no less impartiality than discernment. For, in every stage of society, the faculties, the sentiments, and desires of men are so accommodated to their own state, that they become standards of excellence to themselves; they affix the idea of perfection and happiness to those attainments which resemble their own, and, wherever the objects and enjoyments to which they have been accustomed are wanting, confidently pronounce a people to be barbarous and miserable. Hence the mutual contempt with which the members of communities, unequal in their degrees of improvement, regard each other. Polished nations, conscious of the advantages which they derive from their knowledge and arts, are apt to view rude nations with peculiar scorn, and, in the pride of superiority, will hardly allow either their occupations, their feelings, or their pleasures, to be worthy of men. It has seldom been the lot of communities, in their early and unpolished state, to fall under the observation of persons endowed with force of mind superior to vulgar prejudices, and capable of contemplating man, under whatever aspect he appears, with a candid and discerning eye.

from the incapacity of the first observers, The Spaniards, who first visited America, and who had opportunity of beholding its various tribes while entire and unsubdued, and before any change had been made in their ideas or manners by intercourse with a race of men much advanced beyond them in improvement, were far from possessing the qualities requisite for observing the striking spectacle presented to their view. Neither the age in which they lived, nor the nation to which they be-

longed, had made such progress in true science, as B O O K  
inspires enlarged and liberal sentiments. The con- IV.  
querors of the New World were mostly illiterate  
adventurers, destitute of all the ideas which should  
have directed them in contemplating objects so ex-  
tremely different from those with which they were  
acquainted. Surrounded continually with danger  
or struggling with hardships, they had little lei-  
sure, and less capacity, for any speculative inquiry.  
Eager to take possession of a country of such ex-  
tent and opulence, and happy in finding it occupied  
by inhabitants so incapable to defend it, they hastily  
pronounced them to be a wretched order of men,  
formed merely for servitude; and were more em-  
ployed in computing the profits of their labour, than  
in inquiring into the operations of their minds, or  
the reasons of their customs and institutions. The  
persons who penetrated at subsequent periods into  
the interior provinces, to which the knowledge and  
devastations of the first conquerors did not reach,  
were generally of a similar character; brave and  
enterprising in an high degree, but so uninformed  
as to be little qualified either for observing or de-  
scribing what they beheld.

Not only the incapacity but the prejudices of and their  
the Spaniards render their accounts of the people prejudices;  
of America extremely defective. Soon after they  
planted colonies in their new conquests, a difference  
in opinion arose with respect to the treatment of  
the natives. One party, solicitous to render their  
servitude perpetual, represented them as a brutish,  
obstinate race, incapable either of acquiring reli-  
gious knowledge, or of being trained to the func-

**B O O K** tions of social life. The other, full of pious concern for their conversion, contended that, though rude and ignorant, they were gentle, affectionate, docile, and by proper instructions and regulations might be formed gradually into good Christians and useful citizens. This controversy, as I have already related, was carried on with all the warmth which is natural, when attention to interest on the one hand, and religious zeal on the other, animate the disputants. Most of the laity espoused the former opinion; all the ecclesiastics were advocates for the latter; and we shall uniformly find that, accordingly as an author belonged to either of these parties, he is apt to magnify the virtues or aggravate the defects of the Americans far beyond truth. Those repugnant accounts increase the difficulty of attaining a perfect knowledge of their character, and render it necessary to peruse all the descriptions of them by Spanish writers with distrust, and to receive their information with some grains of allowance.

and from  
the sy-  
stems of  
philoso-  
phers.

Almost two centuries elapsed after the discovery of America, before the manners of its inhabitants attracted, in any considerable degree, the attention of philosophers. At length they discovered that the contemplation of the condition and character of the Americans, in their original state, tended to complete our knowledge of the human species; might enable us to fill up a considerable chasm in the history of its progress; and lead to speculations no less curious than important. They entered upon this new field of study with great ardour; but, instead of throwing light upon the subject, they have

contributed in some degree to involve it in additional obscurity. Too impatient to inquire, they hastened to decide; and began to erect systems, when they should have been searching for facts on which to establish their foundations. Struck with the appearance of degeneracy in the human species throughout the New World, and astonished at beholding a vast continent occupied by a naked, feeble, and ignorant race of men, some authors, of great name, have maintained that this part of the globe had but lately emerged from the sea, and become fit for the residence of man; that every thing in it bore marks of a recent original; and that its inhabitants, lately called into existence, and still at the beginning of their career, were unworthy to be compared with the people of a more ancient and improved continent<sup>t</sup>. Others have imagined, that, under the influence of an unkindly climate, which checks and enervates the principle of life, man never attained in America the perfection which belongs to his nature, but remained an animal of an inferior order, defective in the vigour of his bodily frame, and destitute of sensibility, as well as of force, in the operations of his mind<sup>u</sup>. In opposition to both these, other philosophers have supposed that man arrives at his highest dignity and excellence long before he reaches a state of refinement; and, in the rude simplicity of savage life, displays an elevation of sentiment, an independence of mind, and a warmth of attachment, for which it is vain to

B O O K  
III.

<sup>t</sup> M. de Buffon Hist. Nat. iii. 484, &c. ix. 103. 114.

<sup>u</sup> M. de P. Recherches Philos. sur les Americ. passim.

**B O O K** search among the members of polished societies<sup>\*</sup>.  
 III. They seem to consider that as the most perfect state of man which is the least civilized. They describe the manners of the rude Americans with such rapture, as if they proposed them for models to the rest of the species. These contradictory theories have been proposed with equal confidence, and uncommon powers of genius and eloquence have been exerted, in order to clothe them with an appearance of truth.

As all those circumstances concur in rendering an inquiry into the state of the rude nations in America intricate and obscure, it is necessary to carry it on with caution. When guided in our researches by the intelligent observations of the few philosophers who have visited this part of the globe, we may venture to decide. When obliged to have recourse to the superficial remarks of vulgar travellers, of sailors, traders, buccaneers, and missionaries; we must often pause, and, comparing detached facts, endeavour to discover what they wanted sagacity to observe. Without indulging conjecture, or betraying a propensity to either system, we must study with equal care to avoid the extremes of extravagant admiration, or of supercilious contempt for those manners which we describe.

Method  
 observed  
 in the in-  
 quiry.

In order to conduct this inquiry with greater accuracy, it should be rendered as simple as possible. Man existed as an individual before he became the member of a community; and the qualities which belong to him under his former capacity

\* M. Rousseau.

should be known, before we proceed to examine those which arise from the latter relation. This is peculiarly necessary in investigating the manners of rude nations. Their political union is so incomplete, their civil institutions and regulations so few, so simple, and of such slender authority, that men in this state ought to be viewed rather as independent agents, than as members of a regular society. The character of a savage results almost entirely from his sentiments or feelings as an individual, and is but little influenced by his imperfect subjection to government and order. I shall conduct my researches concerning the manners of the Americans in this natural order, proceeding gradually from what is simple to what is more complicated.

I shall consider, I. The bodily constitution of the Americans in those regions now under review. II. The qualities of their minds. III. Their domestic state. IV. Their political state and institutions. V. Their system of war, and public security. VI. The arts with which they were acquainted. VII. Their religious ideas and institutions. VIII. Such singular detached customs as are not reducible to any of the former heads. IX. I shall conclude with a general review and estimate of their virtues and defects.

I. The bodily constitution of the Americans.— The human body is less affected by climate than that of any other animal. Some animals are confined to a particular region of the globe, and cannot exist beyond it; others, though they may be brought to bear the injuries of a climate foreign to them, cease to multiply when carried out of that

The constitution of their bodies;

BOOK district which nature destined to be their mansion.  
 IV. Even such as seem capable of being naturalized in various climates, feel the effect of every remove from their proper station, and gradually dwindle and degenerate from the vigour and perfection peculiar to their species. Man is the only living creature whose frame is at once so hardy and so flexible, that he can spread over the whole earth, become the inhabitant of every region, and thrive and multiply under every climate. Subject, however, to the general law of Nature, the human body is not entirely exempt from the operation of climate; and when exposed to the extremes either of heat or cold, its size or vigour diminishes.

com-  
 plexion,  
 &c.

The first appearance of the inhabitants of the New World filled the discoverers with such astonishment, that they were apt to imagine them a race of men different from those of the other hemisphere. Their complexion is of a reddish brown, nearly resembling the colour of copper<sup>7</sup>. The hair of their heads is always black, long, coarse, and uncurled. They have no beard, and every part of their body is perfectly smooth. Their persons are of a full size, extremely straight, and well proportioned<sup>2</sup>. Their features are regular, though often distorted by absurd endeavours to improve the beauty of their natural form, or to render their aspect more dreadful to their enemies. In the islands, where four-footed animals were both few and small, and the earth yielded her productions almost sponta-

more  
 feeble;

<sup>7</sup> Oviedo Somario, p. 46. D. Life of Columbus, c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> See NOTE XLIV.

neously, the constitution of the natives, neither braced by the active exercises of the chase, nor invigorated by the labour of cultivation, was extremely feeble and languid. On the continent, where the forests abound with game of various kinds, and the chief occupation of many tribes was to pursue it, the human frame acquired greater firmness. Still, however, the Americans were more remarkable for agility than strength. They resembled beasts of prey, rather than animals formed for labour<sup>a</sup>. They were not only averse to toil, but incapable of it; and when roused by force from their native indolence, and compelled to work, they sunk under tasks which the people of the other continent would have performed with ease<sup>b</sup>. This feebleness of constitution was universal among the inhabitants of those regions in America which we are surveying, and may be considered as characteristic of the species there<sup>c</sup>.

B O O K  
IV.

The beardless countenance and smooth skin of the American seems to indicate a defect of vigour, occasioned by some vice in his frame. He is destitute of one sign of manhood and of strength. This peculiarity, by which the inhabitants of the New World are distinguished from the people of all other nations, cannot be attributed, as some travellers have supposed, to their mode of sub-

<sup>a</sup> See NOTE XLV.

<sup>b</sup> Oviedo Som. p. 51. C. Voy. de Correal, ii. 138. Wafer's Description, p. 131.

<sup>c</sup> B. Las Casas Brev. Relac. p. 4. Torquem. Monar. i. 580. Oviedo Somario, p. 41. Histor. lib. iii. c. 6. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. xi. c. 5. Simon. p. 41.



BOOK IV. <sup>IV.</sup> sistance<sup>d</sup>. For though the food of many Americans be extremely insipid, as they are altogether unacquainted with the use of salt, rude tribes in other parts of the earth have subsisted on aliments equally simple, without this mark of degradation, or any apparent symptom of a diminution in their vigour.

less appetite;

As the external form of the Americans leads us to suspect that there is some natural debility in their frame, the smallness of their appetite for food has been mentioned by many authors as a confirmation of this suspicion. The quantity of food which men consume varies according to the temperature of the climate in which they live, the degree of activity which they exert, and the natural vigour of their constitutions. Under the enervating heat of the torrid zone, and when men pass their days in indolence and ease, they require less nourishment than the active inhabitants of temperate or cold countries. But neither the warmth of their climate, nor their extreme laziness, will account for the uncommon defect of appetite among the Americans. The Spaniards were astonished with observing this, not only in the islands, but in several parts of the continent. The constitutional temperance of the natives far exceeded, in their opinion, the abstinence of the most mortified hermits<sup>e</sup>: while, on the other hand, the appetite of the Spaniards appeared to the Americans insatiably voracious; and they affirmed, that one Spaniard de-

<sup>d</sup> Charlev. Hist. de. Nouv. Fr. iii. 310.

<sup>e</sup> Ramusio, iii. 304. F. 306. A. Simon Conquista, &c. p. 39. Hakluyt, iii. 468. 508.

voured more food in a day than was sufficient for B O O K  
ten Americans<sup>f</sup>. IV.

A proof of some feebleness in their frame, still <sup>less vehe-</sup>  
more striking, is the insensibility of the Americans <sup>mence of</sup>  
to the charms of beauty, and the power of love. <sup>desire.</sup>  
That passion which was destined to perpetuate life,  
to be the bond of social union, and the source of  
tenderness and joy, is the most ardent in the human  
breast. Though the perils and hardships of the  
savage state, though excessive fatigue on some  
occasions, and the difficulty at all times of pro-  
curing subsistence, may seem to be adverse to this  
passion, and to have a tendency to abate its  
vigour, yet the rudest nations in every other part of  
the globe seem to feel its influence more powerfully  
than the inhabitants of the New World. The  
negro glows with all the warmth of desire natural  
to his climate; and the most uncultivated Asiatics  
discover that sensibility, which, from their situation  
on the globe, we should expect them to have felt.  
But the Americans are, in an amazing degree,  
strangers to the force of this first instinct of nature.  
In every part of the New World the natives treat  
their women with coldness and indifference. They  
are neither the objects of that tender attachment  
which takes place in civilized society, nor of that  
ardent desire conspicuous among rude nations.  
Even in climates where this passion usually ac-  
quires its greatest vigour, the savage of America  
views his female with disdain, as an animal of a  
less noble species. He is at no pains to win her

<sup>f</sup> Herrera, dec. 1, lib. ii. c. 16.

BOOK favour by the assiduity of courtship, and still less  
 IV. solicitous to preserve it by indulgence and gentleness<sup>f</sup>. Missionaries themselves, notwithstanding the austerity of monastic ideas, cannot refrain from expressing their astonishment at the dispassionate coldness of the American young men in their intercourse with the other sex<sup>h</sup>. Nor is this reserve to be ascribed to any opinion which they entertain with respect to the merit of female chastity. That is an idea too refined for a savage, and suggested by a delicacy of sentiment and affection to which he is a stranger.

Reflections  
 with re-  
 spect to  
 these.

But in inquiries concerning either the bodily or mental qualities of particular races of men, there is not a more common or more seducing error, than that of ascribing to a single cause, those characteristic peculiarities which are the effect of the combined operation of many causes. The climate and soil of America differ in so many respects from those of the other hemisphere, and this difference is so obvious and striking, that philosophers of great eminence have laid hold on this as sufficient to account for what is peculiar in the constitution of its inhabitants. They rest on physical causes alone, and consider the feeble frame and languid desire of the Americans, as consequences of the

<sup>f</sup> Hennepin *Mœurs des Sauvages*, 32, &c. Rochefort *Hist. des Isles Antilles*, p. 461. *Voyage de Correal*, ii. 141. Ramusio, iii. 309. F. Lozano *Descr. del Gran Chaco*, 71. Falkner's *Descr. of Patagon*, p. 125. *Lettere di P. Cataneo ap. Muratori Il Christian*. Felice, i. 305.

<sup>h</sup> Chanvalon, p. 51. *Lettr. Edif.* tom. xxiv. 318. *Tertre*, ii. 377. Venegas, i. 81. Ribas *Hist. de los Triumf.* p. 11.

temperament of that portion of the globe which they occupy. But the influences of political and moral causes ought not to have been overlooked. These operate with no less effect than that on which many philosophers rest as a full explanation of the singular appearances which have been mentioned. Wherever the state of society is such as to create many wants and desires, which cannot be satisfied without regular exertions of industry, the body accustomed to labour becomes robust and patient of fatigue. In a more simple state, where the demands of men are so few, and so moderate, that they may be gratified, almost without any effort, by the spontaneous productions of nature, the powers of the body are not called forth, nor can they attain their proper strength. The natives of Chili and of North America, the two temperate regions in the New World, who live by hunting, may be deemed an active and vigorous race, when compared with the inhabitants of the isles, or of those parts of the continent where hardly any labour is requisite to procure subsistence. The exertions of a hunter are not, however, so regular, or so continued, as those of persons employed in the culture of the earth, or in the various arts of civilized life, and though his agility may be greater than theirs, his strength is on the whole inferior. If another direction were given to the active powers of man in the New World, and his force augmented by exercise, he might acquire a degree of vigour which he does not in his present state possess. The truth of this is confirmed by experience. Wherever the Americans have been gradually ac-

B O O K  
IV.

**B O O K** <sup>IV.</sup> accustomed to hard labour, their constitutions become robust, and they have been found capable of performing such tasks, as seemed not only to exceed the powers of such a feeble frame as has been deemed peculiar to their country, but to equal any effort of the natives, either of Africa, or of Europe<sup>i</sup>.

The same reasoning will apply to what has been observed concerning their slender demand for food. As a proof that this should be ascribed as much to their extreme indolence, and often total want of occupation, as to any thing peculiar in the physical structure of their bodies, it has been observed, that in those districts where the people of America are obliged to exert any unusual effort of activity, in order to procure subsistence, or wherever they are employed in severe labour, their appetite is not inferior to that of other men, and in some places, it has struck observers as remarkably voracious<sup>k</sup>.

The operation of political and moral causes is still more conspicuous in modifying the degree of attachment between the sexes. In a state of high civilization, this passion, inflamed by restraint, refined by delicacy, and cherished by fashion, occupies and engrosses the heart. It is no longer a simple instinct of nature; sentiment heightens the ardour of desire, and the most tender emotions of which our frame is susceptible soothe and agitate the soul. This description, however, applies only to those, who, by their situation, are exempted

<sup>i</sup> See NOTE XLVI.

<sup>k</sup> Gumilla, ii. 12. 70: 247. Lafitau, i. 515. Ovalle Church. ii. 81. Muratori, i. 295.

from the cares and labours of life. Among persons of inferior order, who are doomed by their condition to incessant toil, the dominion of this passion is less violent; their solicitude to procure subsistence, and to provide for the first demand of nature, leaves little leisure for attending to its second call. But if the nature of the intercourse between the sexes varies so much in persons of different rank in polished societies, the condition of man while he remains uncivilized must occasion a variation still more apparent. We may well suppose, that amidst the hardships, the dangers, and the simplicity of savage life, where subsistence is always precarious and often scanty, where men are almost continually engaged in the pursuit of their enemies, or in guarding against their attacks, and where neither dress nor reserve are employed as arts of female allurements, that the attention of the Americans to their women would be extremely feeble, without imputing this solely to any physical defect or degradation in their frame.

It is accordingly observed, that in those countries of America, where, from the fertility of the soil, the mildness of the climate, or some further advances which the natives have made in improvement, the means of subsistence are more abundant, and the hardships of savage life are less severely felt, the animal passion of the sexes becomes more ardent. Striking examples of this occur among some tribes seated on the banks of great rivers well stored with food, among others who are masters of hunting grounds abounding so much with game, that they have a regular and plentiful supply of

**B O O K** nourishment with little labour. **IV.** The superior degree of security and affluence which these tribes enjoy, is followed by their natural effects. The passions implanted in the human frame by the hand of nature acquire additional force; new tastes and desires are formed; the women, as they are more valued and admired, become more attentive to dress and ornament; the men, beginning to feel how much of their own happiness depends upon them, no longer disdain the arts of winning their favour and affection. The intercourse of the sexes becomes very different from that which takes place among their ruder countrymen; and as hardly any restraint is imposed on the gratification of desire, either by religion, or laws, or decency, the dissolution of their manners is excessive<sup>1</sup>.

None of them deformed.

Notwithstanding the feeble make of the Americans, hardly any of them are deformed, or mutilated, or defective in any of their senses. All travellers have been struck with this circumstance, and have celebrated the uniform symmetry and perfection of their external figure. Some authors search for the cause of this appearance in their physical condition. As the parents are not exhausted or over-fatigued with hard labour, they suppose that their children are born vigorous and sound. They imagine that, in the liberty of savage life, the human body, naked and unconfined from its earliest age, preserves its natural form; and that all its limbs and members acquire a juster proportion than when fettered with artificial restraints, which stint its growth and dis-

<sup>1</sup> Biet. 389. Charlev. iii 423. Dumont. Mem. sur Louisiane, i. 155.

tort its shape<sup>m</sup>. Something, without doubt, may be ascribed to the operation of these causes ; but the true reasons of this apparent advantage, which is common to all savage nations, lie deeper, and are closely interwoven with the nature and genius of that state. The infancy of man is so long and so helpless, that it is extremely difficult to rear children among rude nations. Their means of subsistence are not only scanty, but precarious. Such as live by hunting must range over extensive countries, and shift often from place to place. The care of children, as well as every other laborious task, is devolved upon the women. The distresses and hardships of the savage life, which are often such as can hardly be supported by persons in full vigour, must be fatal to those of more tender age. Afraid of undertaking a task so laborious, and of such long duration, as that of rearing their offspring, the women, in some parts of America, procure frequent abortions by the use of certain herbs, and extinguish the first sparks of that life which they are unable to cherish<sup>n</sup>. Sensible that only stout and well formed children have force of constitution to struggle through such an hard infancy, other nations abandon and destroy such of their progeny as appear feeble or defective, as unworthy of attention<sup>o</sup>. Even when they endeavour to rear all their children without distinction, so great a proportion of the

<sup>m</sup> Piso, p. 6.

<sup>n</sup> Ellis's Voyage to Hudson's Bay, 198. Herrera, dec. 7. lib. ix. c. 4.

<sup>o</sup> Gumilla Hist. ii. 234. Techo's Hist. of Paraguay, &c. Churchill's Collect. vi. 108.



**B O O K** whole number perishes under the rigorous treatment which must be their lot in the savage state, that few of those who laboured under any original frailty attain the age of manhood<sup>p</sup>. Thus, in polished societies, where the means of subsistence are secured with certainty, and acquired with ease; where the talents of the mind are often of more importance than the powers of the body; children are preserved notwithstanding their defects or deformity, and grow up to be useful citizens. In rude nations, such persons are either cut off as soon as they are born, or, becoming a burden to themselves and to the community, cannot long protract their lives. But in those provinces of the New World, where, by the establishment of the Europeans, more regular provision has been made for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and they are restrained from laying violent hands on their children, the Americans are so far from being eminent for any superior perfection in their form, that one should rather suspect some peculiar imbecility in the race, from the extraordinary number of individuals who are deformed, dwarfish, mutilated, blind, or deaf<sup>q</sup>.

Uniformity  
of their  
appear-  
ance.

How feeble soever the constitution of the Americans may be, it is remarkable that there is less variety in the human form throughout the New World than in the ancient continent. When Columbus and the other discoverers first visited the different countries of America which lie within the torrid zone, they naturally expected to find people of the same complexion with those in the corre-

<sup>p</sup> Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 57.

<sup>q</sup> Voyages de Ulloa, i. 232.

sponding regions of the other hemisphere. To **BOOK**  
 their amazement, however, they discovered that **IV.**  
 America contained no negroes<sup>r</sup>; and the cause of  
 this singular appearance became as much the ob-  
 ject of curiosity, as the fact itself was of wonder.  
 In what part or membrane of the body that humour  
 resides which tinges the complexion of the negro  
 with a deep black, it is the business of anatomists  
 to inquire and describe. The powerful operation  
 of heat appears manifestly to be the cause which  
 produces this striking variety in the human species.  
 All Europe, a great part of Asia, and the temperate  
 countries of Africa, are inhabited by men of a white  
 complexion. All the torrid zone in Africa, some  
 of the warmer regions adjacent to it, and several  
 countries in Asia, are filled with people of a deep  
 black colour. If we survey the nations of our con-  
 tinent, making our progress from cold and tempe-  
 rate countries towards those parts which are ex-  
 posed to the influence of vehement and unremit-  
 ting heat, we shall find that the extreme whiteness  
 of their skin soon begins to diminish; that its co-  
 lour deepens gradually as we advance; and, after  
 passing through all the successive gradations of  
 shade, terminates in an uniform unvarying black.  
 But in America, where the agency of heat is checked  
 and abated by various causes, which I have already  
 explained, the climate seems to be destitute of that  
 force which produces such wonderful effects on the  
 human frame. The colour of the natives of the  
 torrid zone in America is hardly of a deeper hue

<sup>r</sup> P. Martyr, dec. p. 71.

**B O O K** than that of the people in the more temperate parts  
 IV. of their continent. Accurate observers, who had  
 an opportunity of viewing the Americans in very  
 different climates, and in provinces far removed  
 from each other, have been struck with the amaz-  
 ing similarity of their figure and aspect<sup>s</sup>.

But though the hand of nature has deviated so little from one standard in fashioning the human form in America, the creation of fancy hath been various and extravagant. The same fables that were current in the ancient continent, have been revived with respect to the New World, and America too has been peopled with human beings of monstrous and fantastic appearance. The inhabitants of certain provinces were described to be pygmies of three feet high; those of others to be giants of an enormous size. Some travellers published accounts of people with only one eye; others pretended to have discovered men without heads, whose eyes and mouths were planted in their breasts. The variety of Nature in her productions is indeed so great, that it is presumptuous to set bounds to her fertility, and to reject indiscriminately every relation that does not perfectly accord with our own limited observation and experience. But the other extreme, of yielding a hasty assent on the slightest evidence, to whatever has the appearance of being strange and marvellous, is still more unbecoming a philosophical inquirer; as, in every period, men are more apt to be betrayed into error by their weakness in believing too much, than by their arrogance in be-

• See NOTE XLVII.

lieving too little. In proportion as science extends, **B O O K**  
 and nature is examined with a discerning eye, the wonders which amused ages of ignorance disappear. **IV.**  
 The tales of credulous travellers concerning America are forgotten; the monsters which they describe have been searched for in vain; and those provinces where they pretend to have found inhabitants of singular forms, are now known to be possessed by people nowise different from the other Americans.

Though those relations may, without discussion, be rejected as fabulous, there are other accounts of varieties in the human species in some parts of the New World, which rest upon better evidence, and merit more attentive examination. This variety has been particularly observed in three different districts. The first of these is situated in the isthmus of Darien, near the centre of America. Lionel Wafer, a traveller possessed of more curiosity and intelligence than we should have expected to find in an associate of Buccaneers, discovered there a race of men few in number, but of a singular make. They are of low stature, according to his description, of a feeble frame, incapable of enduring fatigue. Their colour is a dead milk white; not resembling that of fair people among Europeans, but without any tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion. Their skin is covered with a fine hairy down of a chalky white; the hair of their heads, their eye-brows, and eye-lashes, are of the same hue. Their eyes are of a singular form, and so weak that they can hardly bear the light of the sun; but they see clearly by moon-light, and are most active and

BOOK IV. gay in the night<sup>t</sup>. No race similar to this has been discovered in any other part of America. Cortes, indeed, found some persons exactly resembling the white people of Darien among the rare and monstrous animals which Montezuma had collected<sup>u</sup>. But as the power of the Mexican empire extended to the provinces bordering on the isthmus of Darien, they were probably brought thence. Singular as the appearance of those people may be, they cannot be considered as constituting a distinct species. Among the negroes of Africa, as well as the natives of the Indian islands, nature sometimes produces a small number of individuals, with all the characteristic features and qualities of the white people of Darien. The former are called *Albinos* by the Portuguese, the latter *Kackerlakes* by the Dutch. In Darien the parents of those *Whites* are of the same colour with the other natives of the country; and this observation applies equally to the anomalous progeny of the Negroes and Indians. The same mother who produces some children of a colour that does not belong to the race, brings forth the rest with the complexion peculiar to her country<sup>w</sup>. One conclusion may then be formed with respect to the people described by Wafer, the *Albinos* and the *Kackerlakes*; they are a degenerated breed, not a separate class of men; and from some disease or defect of their parents, the peculiar colour and debility which mark their degradation are transmitted to them. As a decisive proof of this, it has been

<sup>t</sup> Wafer Descript. of Isth. ap. Dampier, iii. p. 346.

<sup>u</sup> Cortes ap. Ramus. iii. p. 241. E.

<sup>w</sup> Margrav. Hist. Rer. Nat. Bras. lib. viii. c. 4.

observed, that neither the white people of Darien, nor the Albinos of Africa, propagate their race: their children are of the colour and temperament peculiar to the natives of their respective countries<sup>x</sup>. BOOK  
IV.

The second district that is occupied by inhabitants differing in appearance from the other people of America, is situated in a high northern latitude, extending from the coast of Labrador towards the pole, as far as the country is habitable. The people scattered over those dreary regions, are known to the Europeans by the name of *Esquimaux*. They themselves, with that idea of their own superiority, which consoles the rudest and most wretched nations, assume the name of *Keralit* or *Men*. They are of a middle size, and robust, with heads of a disproportioned bulk, and feet as remarkably small. Their complexion, though swarthy, by being continually exposed to the rigour of a cold climate, inclines to the European white rather than to the copper colour of America, and the men have beards which are sometimes bushy and long<sup>y</sup>. From these marks of distinction, as well as from one still less equivocal, the affinity of their language to that of the Greenlanders, which I have already mentioned, we may conclude, with some degree of confidence, that the *Esquimaux* are a race different from the rest of the Americans.

We cannot decide with equal certainty concerning

<sup>x</sup> Wafer, p. 348. Demanet Hist. de l'Afrique, ii. 234. Recherch. Philos. sur les Amer. ii. 1, &c. NOTE XLVIII.

<sup>y</sup> Ellis Voy. to Huds. Bay, p. 131. 139. De la Potherie, tom. 1. p. 79. Wales Journ. of a Voy. to Churchill River, Phil. Trans. vol. lx. 109.

B O O K  
IV. } the inhabitants of the third district, situated at the southern extremity of America. These are the famous *Patagonians*, who, during two centuries and a half, have afforded a subject of controversy to the learned, and an object of wonder to the vulgar. They are supposed to be one of the wandering tribes which occupy the vast but least known region of America, which extends from the river de la Plata to the Straits of Magellan. Their proper station is in that part of the interior country which lies on the banks of the river Negro; but in the hunting season, they often roam as far as the straits which separate Tierra del Fuego from the main land. The first accounts of this people were brought to Europe by the companions of Magellan<sup>z</sup>, who described them as a gigantic race, above eight feet high, and of strength in proportion to their enormous size. Among several tribes of animals, a disparity in bulk as considerable may be observed. Some large breeds of horses and dogs exceed the more diminutive races in stature and strength, as far as the Patagonian is supposed to rise above the usual standard of the human body. But animals attain the highest perfection of their species only in mild climates, or where they find the most nutritive food in greatest abundance. It is not then in the uncultivated waste of the Magellanic regions, and among a tribe of improvident savages, that we should expect to find man possessing the highest honours of his race, and distinguished by a superiority of size and vigour, far beyond what he has reached in any other part of

<sup>z</sup> Falkner's Description of Patagonia, p. 102.

the earth. The most explicit and unexceptionable evidence is requisite, in order to establish a fact repugnant to those general principles and laws, which seem to affect the human frame in every other instance, and to decide with respect to its nature and qualities. Such evidence has not hitherto been produced. Though several persons, to whose testimony great respect is due, have visited this part of America since the time of Magellan, and have had interviews with the natives; though some have affirmed, that such as they saw were of gigantic stature, and others have formed the same conclusion from measuring their footsteps, or from viewing the skeletons of their dead; yet their accounts vary from each other in so many essential points, and are mingled with so many circumstances manifestly false or fabulous, as detract much from their credit. On the other hand, some navigators, and those among the most eminent of their order for discernment and accuracy, have asserted that the natives of Patagonia, with whom they had intercourse, though stout and well-made, are not of such extraordinary size as to be distinguished from the rest of the human species<sup>a</sup>. The existence of this gigantic race of men seems, then, to be one of those points in natural history, with respect to which a cautious inquirer will hesitate, and will choose to suspend his assent until more complete evidence shall decide whether he ought to admit a fact, seemingly inconsistent with what reason and experience have discovered concerning the structure and

B O O K  
IV.

<sup>a</sup> See NOTE XLIX.



**B O O K** condition of man, in all the various situations in  
 IV. which he has been observed.

Their state  
 of health.

In order to form a complete idea with respect to the constitution of the inhabitants of this and the other hemisphere, we should attend not only to the make and vigour of their bodies, but consider what degree of health they enjoy, and to what period of longevity they usually arrive. In the simplicity of the savage state, when man is not oppressed with labour, or enervated by luxury, or disquieted with care, we are apt to imagine that this life will flow on almost untroubled by disease or suffering, until his days be terminated in extreme old age by the gradual decays of nature. We find, accordingly, among the Americans, as well as among other rude people, persons whose decrepit and shrivelled form seems to indicate an extraordinary length of life. But as most of them are unacquainted with the art of numbering, and all of them as forgetful of what is past, as they are improvident of what is to come, it is impossible to ascertain their age with any degree of precision<sup>b</sup>. It is evident that the period of their longevity must vary considerably, according to the diversity of climates, and their different modes of subsistence. They seem, however, to be every where exempt from many of the distempers which afflict polished nations. None of the maladies, which are the immediate offspring of luxury, ever visited them; and they have no names in their languages by which to distinguish this numerous train of adventitious evils.

<sup>b</sup> Ulloa Notic. Americ. 323. Bancroft Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 334.

But whatever be the situation in which man is placed, he is born to suffer; and his diseases in the savage state, though fewer in number, are, like those of the animals whom he nearly resembles in his mode of life, more violent and more fatal. If luxury engenders and nourishes distempers of one species, the rigour and distresses of savage life bring on those of another. As men in this state are wonderfully improvident, and their means of subsistence precarious, they often pass from extreme want to exuberant plenty, according to the vicissitudes of fortune in the chase, or in consequence of the various degrees of abundance with which the earth affords to them its productions, in different seasons. Their inconsiderate gluttony in the one situation, and their severe abstinence in the other, are equally pernicious. For though the human constitution may be accustomed by habit, like that of animals of prey, to tolerate long famine, and then to gorge voraciously, it is not a little affected by such sudden and violent transitions. The strength and vigour of savages are at some seasons impaired by what they suffer from a scarcity of food; at others they are afflicted with disorders arising from indigestion and a superfluity of gross aliment. These are so common, that they may be considered as the unavoidable consequence of their mode of subsisting, and cut off considerable numbers in the prime of life. They are likewise extremely subject to consumptions, to pleuritic, asthmatic, and paralytic disorders<sup>c</sup>, brought on by the immoderate

<sup>c</sup> Charlev. N. Fr. lii. 364. Lafitau, ii. 360. De la Po-  
therie, ii. 37.

B O O K  
 IV. } hardships and fatigue which they endure in hunting and in war ; or owing to the inclemency of the seasons to which they are continually exposed. In the savage state, hardships and fatigue violently assault the constitution. In polished societies, intemperance undermines it. It is not easy to determine which of them operates with most fatal effect, or tends most to abridge human life. The influence of the former is certainly most extensive. The pernicious consequences of luxury reach only a few members in any community ; the distresses of savage life are felt by all. As far as I can judge, after very minute inquiry, the general period of human life is shorter among savages, than in well-regulated and industrious societies.

One dreadful malady, the severest scourge with which, in this life, offended Heaven chastens the indulgence of criminal desire, seems to have been peculiar to the Americans. By communicating it to their conquerors, they have not only amply avenged their own wrongs, but, by adding this calamity to those which formerly imbibittered human life, they have, perhaps, more than counterbalanced all the benefits which Europe has derived from the discovery of the New World. This distemper, from the country in which it first raged, or from the people by whom it was supposed to have been spread over Europe, has been sometimes called the Neapolitan, and sometimes the French disease. At its first appearance, the infection was so malignant, its symptoms so violent, its operation so rapid and fatal, as to baffle all the efforts of medical skill. Astonishment and terror accompa-

nied this unknown affliction in its progress, and men began to dread the extinction of the human race by such a cruel visitation. Experience, and the ingenuity of physicians, gradually discovered remedies of such virtue as to cure or to mitigate the evil. During the course of two centuries and a half, its virulence seems to have abated considerably. At length, in the same manner with the leprosy, which raged in Europe for some centuries, it may waste its force and disappear; and in some happier age, this western infection, like that from the East, may be known only by description<sup>d</sup>.

II. After considering what appears to be peculiar in the bodily constitution of the Americans, our attention is naturally turned towards the powers and qualities of their minds. As the individual advances from the ignorance and imbecillity of the infant state to vigour and maturity of understanding, something similar to this may be observed in the progress of the species. With respect to it, too, there is a period of infancy, during which several powers of the mind are not unfolded, and all are feeble and defective in their operation. In the early ages of society, while the condition of man is simple and rude, his reason is but little exercised, and his desires move within a very narrow sphere. Hence arise two remarkable characteristics of the human mind in this state. Its intellectual powers are extremely limited; its emotions and efforts are few and languid. Both these distinctions are conspicuous among the rudest and most unimproved

B O O K  
IV.

Power and  
qualities  
of their  
minds.

<sup>d</sup> See NOTE L.

**B O O K** of the American tribes, and constitute a striking part of their description.

IV.  
Intellectual faculties very limited.

What, among polished nations, is called speculative reasoning or research, is altogether unknown in the rude state of society, and never becomes the occupation or amusement of the human faculties, until man be so far improved as to have secured, with certainty, the means of subsistence, as well as the possession of leisure and tranquillity. The thoughts and attention of a savage are confined within the small circle of objects immediately conducive to his preservation or enjoyment. Everything beyond that, escapes his observation, or is perfectly indifferent to him. Like a mere animal, what is before his eyes interests and affects him; what is out of sight, or at a distance, makes little impression<sup>e</sup>. There are several people in America whose limited understandings seem not to be capable of forming an arrangement for futurity; neither their solicitude nor their foresight extends so far. They follow blindly the impulse of the appetite which they feel, but are entirely regardless of distant consequences, and even of those removed in the least degree from immediate apprehension. While they highly prize such things as serve for present use, or minister to present enjoyment, they set no value upon those which are not the object of some immediate want<sup>f</sup>. When, on the approach of the evening, a Caribbee feels himself disposed to go to rest, no consideration will tempt him to sell his hammock.

<sup>e</sup> Ulloa Noticias Americ. 222.

<sup>f</sup> Venegas Hist. of Calif. i. 66. Supp. Church. Coll. v. 693. Borde Descr. des Caraibes, p. 16. Ellis Voy. 194.

But, in the morning, when he is sallying out to the business or pastime of the day, he will part with it for the slightest toy that catches his fancy<sup>e</sup>. At the close of winter, while the impression of what he has suffered from the rigour of the climate is fresh in the mind of the North American, he sets himself with vigour to prepare materials for erecting a comfortable hut to protect him against the inclemency of the succeeding season ; but, as soon as the weather becomes mild, he forgets what is past, abandons his work, and never thinks of it more until the return of cold compels him, when too late, to resume it<sup>h</sup>.

If in concerns the most interesting, and seemingly the most simple, the reason of man, while rude and destitute of culture, differs so little from the thoughtless levity of children, or the improvident instinct of animals, its exertions in other directions cannot be very considerable. The objects towards which reason turns, and the disquisitions in which it engages, must depend upon the state in which man is placed, and are suggested by his necessities and desires. Disquisitions, which appear the most necessary and important to men in one state of society, never occur to those in another. Among civilized nations, arithmetic, or the art of numbering, is deemed an essential and elementary science : and in our continent, the invention and use of it reaches back to a period so remote as is beyond the knowledge of history. But among savages, who have no property to estimate, no hoarded

<sup>e</sup> Labat Voyages, ii: 114, 115. Tertre, ii. 385.

<sup>h</sup> Adair's Hist. of Amer. Indians, 417.

BOOK IV. treasures to count, no variety of objects or multiplicity of ideas to enumerate, arithmetic is a superfluous and useless art. Accordingly, among some tribes in America it seems to be quite unknown. There are many who cannot reckon further than three; and have no denomination to distinguish any number above it<sup>1</sup>. Several can proceed as far as ten, others to twenty. When they would convey an idea of any number beyond these, they point to the hair of their head, intimating that it is equal to them, or with wonder declare it to be so great that it cannot be reckoned<sup>k</sup>. Not only the Americans, but all nations while extremely rude, seem to be unacquainted with the art of computation<sup>1</sup>. As soon, however, as they acquire such acquaintance or connexion with a variety of objects, that there is frequent occasion to combine or divide them, their knowledge of numbers increases, so that the state of this art among any people may be considered as one standard by which to estimate the degree of their improvement. The Iroquois, in North America, as they are much more civilized than the rude inhabitants of Brazil, Paraguay, or Guiana, have likewise made greater advances in this respect; though even their arithmetic does not extend beyond a thousand, as in their petty transactions they have no occasion for any higher num-

<sup>1</sup> Condam. p. 67. Stadius ap. de Bry, ix. 128. Lery, *ibid.* 251. Biet. 362. Lettr. Edif. 23. 314.

<sup>k</sup> Dumont Louis. i. 187. Herrera, dec. 1. lib. iii. c. 3. Biet. 396. Borde, 6.

<sup>1</sup> This is the case with the Greenlanders, Crantz, i. 225. and with Kamchatkadales, M. l'Abbé Chappé, iii. 17.

ber<sup>m</sup>. The Cherokee, a less considerable nation on the same continent, can reckon only as far as a hundred, and to that extent have names for the several numbers; the smaller tribes in their neighbourhood can rise no higher than ten<sup>n</sup>.

In other respects, the exercise of the understanding among rude nations is still more limited. The first ideas of every human being must be such as he receives by the senses. But in the mind of man, while in the savage state, there seem to be hardly any ideas but what enter by this avenue. The objects around him are presented to his eye. Such as may be subservient to his use, or can gratify any of his appetites, attract his notice; he views the rest without curiosity or attention. Satisfied with considering them under that simple mode in which they appear to him, as separate and detached, he neither combines them so as to form general classes, nor contemplates their qualities apart from the subject in which they inhere, nor bestows a thought upon the operations of his own mind concerning them. Thus he is unacquainted with all the ideas which have been denominated *universal*, or *abstract*, or *of reflection*. The range of his understanding must, of course, be very confined, and his reasoning powers be employed merely on what is sensible. This is so remarkably the case with the ruder nations of America, that their languages (as we shall afterwards find) have not a word to express any thing but what is material or corporeal. *Time*, *space*, *substance*, and a thousand other

B O O K  
IV.  
No abstract ideas.

<sup>m</sup> Charlev. Nouv. Franc. iii. 402.

<sup>n</sup> Adair's Hist. of Amer. Indians, 77. See NOTE LI.



**B O O K** terms, which represent abstract and universal ideas, are altogether unknown to them<sup>o</sup>. A naked savage, cowering over the fire in his miserable cabin, or stretched under a few branches which afford him a temporary shelter, has as little inclination as capacity for useless speculation. His thoughts extend not beyond what relates to animal life; and when they are not directed towards some of its concerns, his mind is totally inactive. In situations where no extraordinary effort either of ingenuity or labour is requisite, in order to satisfy the simple demands of nature, the powers of the mind are so seldom roused to any exertion, that the rational faculties continue almost dormant and unexercised. The numerous tribes scattered over the rich plains of South America, the inhabitants of some of the islands, and of several fertile regions on the continent, come under this description. Their vacant countenance, their staring unexpressive eye, their listless inattention, and total ignorance of subjects which seemed to be the first which should occupy the thoughts of rational beings, made such impression upon the Spaniards, when they first beheld those rude people, that they considered them as animals of an inferior order, and could not believe that they belonged to the human species<sup>p</sup>. It required the authority of a papal bull to counteract this opinion, and to convince them that the Americans were capable of the functions and entitled to the privileges of humanity<sup>q</sup>. Since that time, persons more enlightened and impartial than the dis-

<sup>o</sup> Condam. p. 54.      <sup>p</sup> Herrera, dec. 2. lib. ii. c. 15.

<sup>q</sup> Torquem. Mon. Ind. iii. 198.

coverers or conquerors of America, have had an opportunity of contemplating the most savage of its inhabitants, and they have been astonished and humbled with observing how nearly man in this condition approaches to the brute creation. But in severer climates, where subsistence cannot be procured with the same ease, where men must unite more closely, and act with greater concert, necessity calls forth their talents and sharpens their invention, so that the intellectual powers are more exercised and improved. The North American tribes and the natives of Chili, who inhabit the temperate regions in the two great districts of America, are people of cultivated and enlarged understandings, when viewed in comparison with some of those seated in the islands, or on the banks of the Maragnon and Orinoco. Their occupations are more various, their system of policy, as well as of war, more complex, their arts more numerous. But even among them, the intellectual powers are extremely limited in their operations, and, unless when turned directly to those objects which interest a savage, are held in no estimation. Both the North Americans and Chilese, when not engaged in some of the functions belonging to a warrior or hunter, loiter away their time in thoughtless indolence, unacquainted with any other subject worthy of their attention, or capable of occupying their minds<sup>r</sup>. If even among them, reason is so much circumscribed in its exertions, and never arrives, in its highest attainments, at the

<sup>r</sup> Laftau, ii. 2.

**B O O K** knowledge of those general principles and maxims  
 IV. which serve as the foundation of science, we may  
 conclude that the intellectual powers of man in  
 the savage state are destitute of their proper object,  
 and cannot acquire any considerable degree of vi-  
 gour and enlargement.

Active ef-  
 forts of the  
 mind few  
 and lan-  
 guid.

From the same causes, the active efforts of the  
 mind are few, and on most occasions languid. If  
 we examine into the motives which rouse men to  
 activity in civilized life, and prompt them to perse-  
 vere in fatiguing exertions of their ingenuity or  
 strength, we shall find that they arise chiefly from  
 acquired wants and appetites. These are numerous  
 and importunate ; they keep the mind in perpetual  
 agitation, and, in order to gratify them, invention  
 must be always on the stretch, and industry must  
 be incessantly employed. But the desires of simple  
 nature are few, and where a favourable climate  
 yields almost spontaneously what suffices to gratify  
 them, they scarcely stir the soul, or excite any vio-  
 lent emotion. Hence the people of several tribes  
 in America waste their life in a listless indolence.  
 To be free from occupation, seems to be all the enjoy-  
 ment towards which they aspire. They will con-  
 tinue whole days stretched out in their hammocks,  
 or seated on the earth in perfect idleness, without  
 changing their posture, or raising their eyes from  
 the ground, or uttering a single word\*.

Improvi-  
 dent.

Such is their aversion to labour, that neither the  
 hope of future good, nor the apprehension of fu-  
 ture evil, can surmount it. They appear equally

\* Bouguer Voy. au Perou, 102. Borde, 15.

indifferent to both, discovering little solicitude, and taking no precautions to avoid the one, or to secure the other. The cravings of hunger may rouse them; but as they devour, with little distinction, whatever will appease its instinctive demands, the exertions which these occasion are of short duration. Destitute of ardour, as well as variety of desire, they feel not the force of those powerful springs which give vigour to the movements of the mind, and urge the patient hand of industry to persevere in its efforts. Man, in some parts of America, appears in a form so rude, that we can discover no effects of his activity, and the principle of understanding, which should direct it, seems hardly to be unfolded. Like the other animals, he has no fixed residence; he has erected no habitation to shelter him from the inclemency of the weather; he has taken no measures for securing certain subsistence; he neither sows nor reaps; but roams about as led in search of the plants and fruits which the earth brings forth in succession; and in quest of the game which he kills in the forests, or of the fish which he catches in the rivers.

This description, however, applies only to some tribes. Man cannot continue long in this state of feeble and uninformed infancy. He was made for industry and action, and the powers of his nature, as well as the necessity of his condition, urge him to fulfil his destiny. Accordingly, among most of the American nations, especially those seated in rigorous climates, some efforts are employed, and some previous precautions are taken, for securing subsistence. The career of regular industry is be-

B O O K  
IV.

Some variety with respect to all these.

BOOK IV. gun, and the laborious arm has made the first essays of its power. Still however the improvident and slothful genius of the savage state predominates. Even among those more improved tribes, labour is deemed ignominious and degrading. It is only to work of a certain kind that a man will deign to put his hand. The greater part is devolved entirely upon the women. One half of the community remains inactive, while the other is oppressed with the multitude and variety of its occupations. Thus their industry is partial, and the foresight which regulates it is no less limited. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the chief arrangement with respect to their manner of living. They depend for their subsistence, during one part of the year, on fishing; during another, on hunting; during a third, on the produce of their agriculture. Though experience has taught them to foresee the return of those various seasons, and to make some provision for the respective exigencies of each, they either want sagacity to proportion this provision to their consumption, or are so incapable of any command over their appetites, that, from their inconsiderate waste, they often feel the calamities of famine as severely as the rudest of the savage tribes. What they suffer one year does not augment their industry, or render them more provident to prevent similar distresses<sup>t</sup>. This inconsiderate thoughtlessness about futurity, the effect of ignorance and the cause of sloth, accompanies and characterizes man

<sup>t</sup> Charlev. N. Fr. iii. 338. Lettr. Edif. 23. 298. Descript. of N. France, Osborn's Collect. ii. 880. De la Potherie, ii. 63.

in every stage of savage life<sup>u</sup>; and, by a capricious singularity in his operations, he is then least solicitous about supplying his wants, when the means of satisfying them are most precarious, and procured with the greatest difficulty<sup>w</sup>.

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III. After viewing the bodily constitution of the Americans, and contemplating the powers of their minds, we are led, in the natural order of inquiry, to consider them as united together in society. Hitherto our researches have been confined to the operations of understanding respecting themselves as individuals; now they will extend to the degree of their sensibility and affection towards their species.

Their so-  
cial state.

The domestic state is the first and most simple form of human association. The union of the sexes among different animals is of longer or shorter duration in proportion to the ease or difficulty of rearing their offspring. Among those tribes where the season of infancy is short, and the young soon acquire vigour or agility, no permanent union is formed. Nature commits the care of training up the offspring to the mother alone, and her tenderness, without any other assistance, is equal to the task. But where the state of infancy is long and helpless, and the joint assiduity of both parents is requisite in tending their feeble progeny, there a more intimate connexion takes place, and continues until the purpose of nature be accomplished, and the new race grow up to full maturity. As the infancy of man is more feeble and helpless than that of any

Domestic  
union.

<sup>u</sup> Bancroft's Nat. Hist. of Guiana, 326. 333.

<sup>w</sup> See NOTE LII.

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other animal, and he is dependent during a much longer period on the care and foresight of his parents, the union between husband and wife came early to be considered not only as a solemn but as a permanent contract. A general state of promiscuous intercourse between the sexes never existed but in the imagination of poets. In the infancy of society, when men, destitute of arts and industry, lead a hard precarious life, the rearing of their progeny demands the attention and efforts of both parents; and if their union had not been formed and continued with this view, the race could not have been preserved. Accordingly in America, even among the rudest tribes, a regular union between husband and wife was universal, and the rights of marriage were understood and recognised. In those districts where subsistence was scanty, and the difficulty of maintaining a family was great, the man confined himself to one wife. In warmer and more fertile provinces, the facility of procuring food concurred with the influence of climate in inducing the inhabitants to increase the number of their wives<sup>x</sup>. In some countries the marriage-union subsisted during life; in others, the impatience of the Americans under restraint of any species, together with their natural levity and caprice, prompted them to dissolve it on very slight pretexts; and often without assigning any cause<sup>y</sup>.

Condition  
of women.

But in whatever light the Americans considered

<sup>x</sup> Lettr. Edif. 23. 318. Lafitau Mœurs, i. 554. Lery ap. de Bry, iii. 234. Journal de Grillet et Bechamel, p. 88.

<sup>y</sup> Lafitau, i. 580. Joutel Journ. Histor. 345. Lozano Desc. del Gran Chaco, 70. Hennepin Mœurs des Sauvages, p. 30. 33.

the obligation of this contract, either as perpetual, or only as temporary, the condition of women was equally humiliating and miserable. Whether man has been improved by the progress of arts and civilization in society, is a question which, in the wantonness of disputation, has been agitated among philosophers. That women are indebted to the refinements of polished manners for a happy change in their state, is a point which can admit of no doubt. To despise and to degrade the female sex is the characteristic of the savage state in every part of the globe. Man, proud of excelling in strength and in courage, the chief marks of pre-eminence among rude people, treats woman, as an inferior, with disdain. The Americans, perhaps from that coldness and insensibility which has been considered as peculiar to their constitution, add neglect and harshness to contempt. The most intelligent travellers have been struck with this inattention of the Americans to their women. It is not, as I have already observed, by a studied display of tenderness and attachment, that the American endeavours to gain the heart of the woman whom he wishes to marry. Marriage itself, instead of being an union of affection and interests between equals, becomes among them the unnatural conjunction of a master with his slave. It is the observation of an author whose opinions are deservedly of great weight, that wherever wives are purchased their condition is extremely depressed<sup>z</sup>. They become the property and the slaves of those who buy them. In what-

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<sup>z</sup> Sketches of Hist. of Man, i. 184.



BOOK IV. ever part of the globe this custom prevails, the observation holds. In countries where refinement has made some progress, women when purchased are excluded from society, shut up in sequestered apartments, and kept under the vigilant guard of their masters. In ruder nations they are degraded to the meanest functions. Among many people of America the marriage-contract is properly a purchase. The man buys his wife of her parents. Though unacquainted with the use of money, or with such commercial transactions as take place in more improved society, he knows how to give an equivalent for any object which he desires to possess. In some places, the suitor devotes his service for a certain time to the parents of the maid whom he courts; in others he hunts for them occasionally, or assists in cultivating their fields and forming their canoes; in others he offers presents of such things as are deemed most valuable on account of their usefulness or rarity<sup>a</sup>. In return for these he receives his wife; and this circumstance, added to the low estimation of women among savages, leads him to consider her as a female servant whom he has purchased, and whom he has a title to treat as an inferior. In all unpolished nations, it is true, the functions in domestic economy which fall naturally to the share of women are so many, that they are subjected to hard labour, and must bear more than their full portion of the common burden. But in America their condition is so peculiarly grievous, and their depression so complete, that servitude is

<sup>a</sup> Laftau Mœurs, &c. i. 560, &c. Charlev. iii. 285, &c. Herrera, dec. 4. lib. iv. c. 7. Dumont, ii. 156.

a name too mild to describe their wretched state. B O O K  
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 A wife among most tribes is no better than a beast of burden, destined to every office of labour and fatigue. While the men loiter out the day in sloth, or spend it in amusement, the women are condemned to incessant toil. Tasks are imposed upon them without pity, and services are received without complacence or gratitude<sup>b</sup>. Every circumstance reminds women of this mortifying inferiority. They must approach their lords with reverence; they must regard them as more exalted beings, and are not permitted to eat in their presence<sup>c</sup>. There are districts in America where this dominion is so grievous, and so sensibly felt, that some women, in a wild emotion of maternal tenderness, have destroyed their female children in their infancy, in order to deliver them from that intolerable bondage to which they knew they were doomed<sup>d</sup>. Thus the first institution of social life is perverted. That state of domestic union towards which nature leads the human species, in order to soften the heart to gentleness and humanity, is rendered so unequal as to establish a cruel distinction between the sexes, which forms the one to be harsh and unfeeling, and humbles the other to servility and subjection.

It is owing perhaps, in some measure, to this state of depression, that women in rude nations are Their wo-  
men not  
prolific.

<sup>b</sup> Tertre, ii. 382. Borde Relat. des Mœurs des Caraïbes, p. 21. Biet, 357. Condamine, p. 110. Fermin, i. 79.

<sup>c</sup> Gumilla, i. 153. Barrere, 164. Labat, Voy. ii. 78. Chanvalon, 51. Tertre, ii. 300.

<sup>d</sup> Gumilla, ii. 233, 238. Herrera, dec. 7. lib. ix. c. iv.

**B O O K** far from being prolific<sup>e</sup>. The vigour of their constitution is exhausted by excessive fatigue, and the wants and distresses of savage life are so numerous, as to force them to take various precautions in order to prevent too rapid an increase of their progeny. Among wandering tribes, or such as depend chiefly upon hunting for subsistence, the mother cannot attempt to rear a second child until the first has attained such a degree of vigour as to be in some measure independent of her care. From this motive, it is the universal practice of the American women to suckle their children during several years<sup>f</sup>; and as they seldom marry early, the period of their fertility is over before they can finish the long but necessary attendance upon two or three children<sup>g</sup>. Among some of the least polished tribes, whose industry and foresight do not extend so far as to make any regular provision for their own subsistence, it is a maxim not to burden themselves with rearing more than two children<sup>h</sup>; and no such numerous families as are frequent in civilized societies are to be found among men in the savage state<sup>i</sup>. When twins are born, one of them commonly is abandoned, because the mother is not

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<sup>e</sup> Laftau, i. 590. Charlevoix, iii. 304.

<sup>f</sup> Herrera, dec. 6. lib. i. c. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Charlev. iii. 303. Dumont, Mem. sur Louisiane, ii. 270. Deny's Hist. Natur. de l'Amerique, &c. ii. 365. Charlev. Hist. de Parag. ii. 422.

<sup>h</sup> Techo's Account of Paraguay, &c. Church. Collect. vi. 108. Lett. Edif. 24. 200. Lozano Descr. 92.

<sup>i</sup> Maccleur's Journal, 63.

equal to the task of rearing both<sup>k</sup>. When a mother dies while she is nursing a child, all hope of preserving its life fails, and it is buried together with her in the same grave<sup>l</sup>. As the parents are frequently exposed to want by their own improvident indolence, the difficulty of sustaining their children becomes so great, that it is not uncommon to abandon or destroy them<sup>m</sup>. Thus their experience of the difficulty of training up an infant to maturity, amidst the hardships of savage life, often stifles the voice of nature among the Americans, and suppresses the strong emotions of parental tenderness.

But though necessity compels the inhabitants of America thus to set bounds to the increase of their families, they are not deficient in affection and attachment to their offspring. They feel the power of this instinct in its full force, and as long as their progeny continue feeble and helpless, no people exceed them in tenderness and care<sup>n</sup>. But in rude nations the dependence of children upon their parents is of shorter continuance than in polished societies. When men must be trained to the various functions of civil life by previous discipline and education, when the knowledge of abstruse sciences must be taught, and dexterity in intricate arts must be acquired, before a young man is prepared to begin his career of action, the attentive feelings of a parent are not confined to the years of infancy,

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Parental  
affection  
and filial  
duty.

<sup>k</sup> Lett. Edif. x. 200. See NOTE LIII.

<sup>l</sup> Charlev. iii. 368. Lett. Edif. x. 200. P. Melch. Hernandez Memor. de Chერიკი. Colbert. Collect. Orig. Pap. i.

<sup>m</sup> Venega's Hist. of Californ. i. 82.

<sup>n</sup> Gumilla, i. 211. Biet, 390.

**B O O K** but extend to what is more remote, the establishment of his child in the world. Even then his solicitude does not terminate. His protection may still be requisite, and his wisdom and experience still prove useful guides. Thus a permanent connexion is formed; parental tenderness is exercised, and filial respect returned, throughout the whole course of life. But in the simplicity of the savage state the affection of parents, like the instinctive fondness of animals, ceases almost entirely as soon as their offspring attain maturity. Little instruction fits them for that mode of life to which they are destined. The parents, as if their duty were accomplished, when they have conducted their children through the helpless years of infancy, leave them afterwards at entire liberty. Even in their tender age, they seldom advise or admonish, they never chide or chastise them. They suffer them to be absolute masters of their own actions<sup>o</sup>. In an American hut, a father, a mother, and their posterity, live together like persons assembled by accident, without seeming to feel the obligation of the duties mutually arising from this connexion<sup>p</sup>. As filial love is not cherished by the continuance of attention or good offices, the recollection of benefits received in early infancy is too faint to excite it. Conscious of their own liberty, and impatient of restraint, the youth of America are accustomed to act as if they were totally independent. Their pa-

<sup>o</sup> Charlev. iii. 272. Biet, 390. Gumilla, i. 212. Lafitau, i. 602. Creuxii Hist. Canad. p. 71. Fernandez, Relac. Hist. de los Chequit. 33.

<sup>p</sup> Charlev. Hist. N. Fr. iii. 273.

rents are not objects of greater regard than other persons. They treat them always with neglect, and often with such harshness and insolence, as to fill those who have been witnesses of their conduct with horror<sup>a</sup>. Thus the ideas which seem to be natural to man in his savage state, as they result necessarily from his circumstances and condition in that period of his progress, affect the two capital relations in domestic life. They render the union between husband and wife unequal. They shorten the duration and weaken the force of the connexion between parents and children.

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<sup>a</sup> Gumilla, i. 212. Tertre, ii. 376. Charlev. Hist. de N. France, iii. 309. Charlev. Hist. de Parag. i. 115. Lozano Descript. del Gran Chaco, p. 68, 100, 101. Fernand. Relac. Histor. de los Chequit. 426.