

confessed, with the same degree of precision. This observation indeed may apply to many birds which naturalists and travellers have considered as distinct species in the genus which we are now describing; most probably many of these are misplaced. Error is inseparable from all incipient knowledge; and the most powerful genius cannot be secure from it, because nothing can supply the place of facts; when they are deficient, the field of conjecture, fertile in error, is thrown open without reserve. But surer observation finally comes to confirm or destroy conjecture, and to dissipate uncertainty.

These reflections often arise when we read in the work of a celebrated observer perpetual attacks (and those too strong to suppose that they are dictated by a love of the science) against Buffon and his excellent coadjutor Guenau de Montbeillard. Doubtless, the highest praises are due to the intrepid individual whom an ardour for discovery has engaged in distant and perilous voyages; but this admiration might be bestowed, and would be bestowed, more willingly, if we saw that individual possessing a manly consciousness of his own services, and a liberal candour towards the services of others, and not perpetually