

age of puberty is announced by a number of external and internal marks; it is the spring of life and the season of pleasure. Of that age may we be enabled to write the history with such circumspection as to excite in the imagination none but philosophical ideas! Puberty, however, and the circumstances that accompany it, as circumcision, castration, virginity, and impotency, are of too essential consequence in the History of Man to allow a suppression of facts to which they relate. In giving a detail of them we shall endeavour to maintain that modest reserve which constitutes the true decorum of style, that philosophical apathy which may destroy loose ideas, and give it in words confined to their literal import and original signification.

Circumcision is a custom very ancient, and which still subsists in the greatest part of Asia. Among the Hebrews this operation was performed within eight days after the birth. In Turkey they never perform it before the age of seven or eight years, and often not even till that of eleven or twelve. In Persia, the practice is general at the age of five or six. The wound thus occasioned is healed with caustic or astringent powders, or with burned paper, which