

fluence all individuals in the same manner. The defects or excesses which arise from these two causes, and which are so constantly and so sensibly felt in animals, are much less conspicuous in men. Besides, as there have been frequent migrations, as nations are mixed, and great numbers travel and are dispersed every where, it is no wonder that the human race should appear less subject to the influence of climate, and that there should be men strong, well-made, and even ingenious in all countries. Nevertheless, we may believe, from experience much further back than memory can trace, that men formerly knew the misfortunes which resulted from alliances with the same blood; since in the most uncivilized nations, it has rarely been permitted for the brother to marry the sister. This custom, which among Christians is a divine law, and which is practised by other people from political views, is perhaps grounded on this observation. Policy is never extended in so general and absolute a manner, unless supported by physical principles: but if men once discovered by experience that their race degenerated, when intercourse was admitted between children of the same family, they would soon have looked upon alliances with other families as a law of nature, and agreed in
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