

good works from those on an ill-constructed plan, can be strictly observed only when the traveller describes what has passed under his own eye ; and when his principal attention has been fixed less on scientific observations than on the manners of different people and the great phenomena of nature. Now, the most faithful picture of manners is that which best displays the relations of men towards each other. The character of savage or civilized life is portrayed either in the obstacles a traveller meets with, or in the sensations he feels. It is the traveller himself whom we continually desire to see in contact with the objects which surround him ; and his narration interests us the more, when a local tint is diffused over the description of a country and its inhabitants. Such is the source of the interest excited by the history of those early navigators, who, impelled by intrepidity rather than by science, struggled against the elements in their search for the discovery of a new world. Such is the irresistible charm attached to the fate of that enterprising traveller,\* who, full of enthusiasm and energy, penetrated alone into the centre of Africa, to discover amidst barbarous nations the traces of ancient civilization.

In proportion as travels have been undertaken by persons whose views have been directed to researches into descriptive natural history, geography, or political economy, itineraries have partly lost that unity of composition, and that simplicity which characterized those of former ages. It is now become scarcely possible to connect so many different materials with the detail of other events ; and that part of a traveller's narrative which we may call dramatic gives way to dissertations merely descriptive. The numerous class of readers who prefer agreeable amusement to solid instruction, have not gained by the exchange ; and I am afraid that the temptation will not be great to follow the course of travellers who are incumbered with scientific instruments and collections.

To give greater variety to my work, I have often interrupted the historical narrative by descriptions. I first represent phenomena in the order in which they appeared ; and I afterwards consider them in the whole of their individual relations. This mode has been successfully followed in the journey of M. de Saussure, whose most valuable work has contributed more than any other to the advancement of science. Often, amidst dry discussions on meteorology, it contains many charming descriptions ; such as those of the modes of life of the inhabitants of the mountains, the dangers of hunting the chamois, and the sensations felt on the summit of the higher Alps.

There are details of ordinary life which it may be useful to

\* Mungo Park.