

note in an itinerary, because they serve for the guidance of those who afterwards journey through the same countries. I have preserved a few, but have suppressed the greater part of those personal incidents which present no particular interest, and which can be rendered amusing only by the perfection of style.

With respect to the country which has been the object of my investigations, I am fully sensible of the great advantages enjoyed by persons who travel in Greece, Egypt, the banks of the Euphrates, and the islands of the Pacific, in comparison with those who traverse the continent of America. In the Old World, nations and the distinctions of their civilization form the principal points in the picture; in the New World, man and his productions almost disappear amidst the stupendous display of wild and gigantic nature. The human race in the New World presents only a few remnants of indigenous hordes, slightly advanced in civilization; or it exhibits merely the uniformity of manners and institutions transplanted by European colonists to foreign shores. Information which relates to the history of our species, to the various forms of government, to monuments of art, to places full of great remembrances, affect us far more than descriptions of those vast solitudes which seem destined only for the development of vegetable life, and to be the domain of wild animals. The savages of America, who have been the objects of so many systematic reveries, and on whom M. Volney has lately published some accurate and intelligent observations, inspire less interest since celebrated navigators have made known to us the inhabitants of the South Sea islands, in whose character we find a striking mixture of perversity and meekness. The state of half-civilization existing among those islanders gives a peculiar charm to the description of their manners. A king, followed by a numerous suite, presents the fruits of his orchard; or a funeral is performed amidst the shade of the lofty forest. Such pictures, no doubt, have more attraction than those which portray the solemn gravity of the inhabitant of the banks of the Missouri or the Marañon.

America offers an ample field for the labours of the naturalist. On no other part of the globe is he called upon more powerfully by nature to raise himself to general ideas on the cause of phenomena and their mutual connection. To say nothing of that luxuriance of vegetation, that eternal spring of organic life, those climates varying by stages as we climb the flanks of the Cordilleras, and those majestic rivers which a celebrated writer* has described with such graceful accuracy, the resources which the New World affords for the study of geology and natural

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