

formed by thunder and fallen from the clouds, but which are, nevertheless, only the first examples of man's art in a pure state of Nature. He will soon draw fire from these same flints, by striking them against each other ; he will seize the flames of the burning volcano, or profit by the fire of the red-hot lava to light his fire of brushwood in the forest ; and by the help of this powerful element he cleanses, purifies, and renders wholesome the place he selects for his habitation. With his hatchet of stone he chops wood, fells trees, shapes timber, and puts it together, fashions instruments of warfare and the most necessary tools and implements ; and after having furnished themselves with clubs and other weighty and defensive arms, did not these first men find means to make lighter weapons to reach the swift-footed stag from afar ? A tendon of an animal, a fibre of the aloe-leaf, or the supple bark of some ligneous plant, would serve as a cord to bring together the two extremities of an elastic branch of yew, forming a bow ; and small flints, shaped to a point, arm the arrow. They will soon have snares, rafts, and canoes ; they will form themselves into communities composed of a few families, or rather of relations sprung from the same family, as is still the case with some savage tribes, who have their game, fish, and fruits in common. But in all those countries whose area is limited by water, or surrounded by high mountains, these small nations, becoming too numerous, have been in time forced to parcel out the land between them ; and from that moment the earth has become the domain of man ; he has taken possession of it by his labour, he has cultivated it, and attachment to the soil follows the very first act of possession ; the private interest makes part of the national interest ; order, civilisation, and laws succeed, and society acquires force and consistency.* We love to quote the sentiments of a great writer—but how much more eloquent would the words of the naturalist have been, if he had added to his own grand eloquence of language, the knowledge which science has placed within reach of the writers of the present time—if he could have painted man in the early days of his creation, in presence of the immense animal population which then occupied the earth, and fighting with the wild beasts which filled the forests of the ancient world ! Man, comparatively very weak in organisation, destitute of natural weapons of attack or defence, incapable of rising into the air like the birds, or living under water like the fishes and some reptiles, might seem doomed to speedy destruction. But he was marked on the forehead with the Divine seal. Thanks to the superior gift of

* "Epoques de la Nature," vol. xii., pp. 322—325. 18mo. Paris, 1778.