

verity of thought impart decency and decorum, and a sort of philosophic dignity, and which wisdom itself may contemplate without a blush !

Before writing the history of each species of animal, Buffon thought that he ought to study the qualities common to all, which distinguish them from beings of other classes. Similar to man in almost every thing which relates to body, having in their senses, in their organs, only those differences which might exist between beings of the same nature, and which only indicate an inferiority in congruous qualities; are animals separated from us by their intellectual faculties? Buffon endeavoured to solve this problem, but we dare not say that he has resolved it with success. Fearing to alarm, by presenting his opinions without a veil, he has, in fact, covered them with one so thick, that it is not always penetrable. He may also be reproached, with some justice, for not having observed animals with sufficient scrupulosity, for not having attended to details, minute in themselves, but necessary to catch the fine shades of their operations. He seems to have perceived in each species only a uniformity of procedure and habit, which conveys the idea of a blind and mechanical force; whereas, had he observed them more closely, he would have perceived very sensible differences between individuals and actions, which seem to belong to reasoning, which indicate even abstract and general ideas.

The first class of animals described by Buffon is that of quadrupeds; the second, that of birds; and to these two classes he has limited his labours. So extensive a series of descriptions might be monotonous; but talent triumphed over this obstacle. To the history of quadrupeds and birds preceded that of the mineral substances. In this part of his work, Buffon has not, perhaps, attached sufficient importance to the labours of modern chemistry; to that mass of precise and well authenticated facts with which they have enriched the science of nature; to that analytical method which conducts with such certainty to truth. In fact, the chemical analysis of mineral substances can alone give to their nomenclature a solid basis, and shed light on their history, on their origin, on the ancient events which have determined their formation.

Still, however, in the history of minerals may be found the talent and philosophy of Buffon, his ingenious perceptions, his grand and general views, that art of seizing in the results of facts every thing that can support those
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