

ture, have attributed to them general ideas of policy and government. They have asserted that when their society is formed, they reduce travellers and strangers of their own species into slavery ; that they employ them in carrying their clay and wood ; that they treat in the same manner the idle who will not, and the old who cannot, work ; that is, they throw them upon their backs, and use them as so many vehicles to carry their materials ; that they never assemble in an even number, for the purpose of having, in all their deliberations, a casting voice ; that each tribe has its peculiar chief ; that they have sentinels established for the public security ; that when chased they tear off their testicles to satisfy the avarice of their pursuers ; that when thus mutilated they turn about and present themselves to obtain mercy,* &c. Although we discredit these exaggerations, yet we must not reject those facts which have been established by moral certainties. A thousand times have the works of the beaver been viewed, overturned, measured, designed, and engraved ; and every doubt is banished, by some of their fabrics still subsisting ; for though less common than when North America was first

* This is affirmed by Ælian, and all other ancient writers, Pliny excepted, who absolutely denies it.