

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE
ON
THE STUDY
OF
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART I.

**OF THE GENERAL NATURE AND ADVANTAGES OF THE
STUDY OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES.**

CHAPTER I.

**OF MAN REGARDED AS A CREATURE OF INSTINCT, OF
REASON, AND SPECULATION.—GENERAL INFLUENCE
OF SCIENTIFIC PURSUITS ON THE MIND.**

(1.) THE situation of man on the globe he inhabits, and over which he has obtained the control, is in many respects exceedingly remarkable. Compared with its other denizens, he seems, if we regard only his physical constitution, in almost every respect their inferior, and equally unprovided for the supply of his natural wants and his defence against the innumerable enemies which surround him. No other animal passes so large a portion of its existence in a state of absolute helplessness, or falls in old age into such protracted and lamentable imbecility. To no other warm-blooded animal has