

the influence of animal gratifications but they can be fully enjoyed only by those who are alive to all the impressions of beauty and sublimity that external appearances are calculated to produce. The man of intellect, too often harassed with the feverish excitement of prolonged thought, or raised to a state of high sensibility by the cold indifference or unmerited taunts of the world and of friends, requires some such considerations as these to subdue his overwrought and sensitive mind. With a consciousness of his superiority to the crowd who affect to despise his pursuits and to pity him, he is sometimes ready to persuade himself that he is a being of higher order than they. But when he feels in necessity the result of that peculiar character of mind which he knows to distinguish him from his fellow-men, he is ready to imprecate a curse on the predominant principle that raises him in his own estimation. At such a moment the proud and discontented thought of the man is subdued by a remembrance of the condition in which he is placed; the benevolent wisdom that has set in order the laws of material existence; the immensity of the universe; the littleness of the earth; and the provisions that have been made in it for the support and happiness of animated being, according to their wants and capabilities of enjoyment.

But although the earth appears so trifling a thing when compared with the system of the universe, it will not be uninteresting to attempt an explanation of the many curious phenomena by which it is distinguished. Things are great or small by comparison, for all our conceptions are relative. It is important that we should know something of the system with which the earth is connected, and something of the universe of which it is a member. In the review of these, we are struck by their magnitude and sublimity; and when we compare the earth with them, we are startled with the idea of its minuteness. But the mind which feels these impressions will not fail to be struck with the grandeur of a mountain scene, and the violence of the causes that produced it; the volcano will not appear the less terrible, or the lightning the less grand. Our investigation of the relation that the earth bears to the universe may therefore, it is hoped, rather stimulate than repress our anxiety to know something more of the globe on which we dwell, and the appearances by which we are surrounded.