

MISCELLANY.

FOR THE GAZETTE.

*Of the first peopling of America.*

NUMBER III.

quantity of electrical fluid, I took my station as far as possible from any covering; chusing rather to be exposed to the peltings of the storm than to receive a fatal stroke. At this the Indians were much surprized, and drew conclusions from it not unfavourable to the opinion they already entertained of my resolution. Yet I acknowledge that I was never more affected in my life; for nothing scarcely could exceed the terrific scene. The peals of thunder were so loud that they shook the earth; and the lightning flashed along the ground in streams of sulphur; so that the Indian chiefs themselves, although their courage in war is usually invincible, could not help trembling at the horrid combustion. As soon as the storm was over, they flocked around me, and informed me that it was a proof of the anger of the evil spirits, whom they were apprehensive that they had highly offended.

When we arrived at the great cave, and the Indians had deposited the remains of their deceased friends in the burial place that stands adjacent to it, they held their great council, into which I was admitted, and at the same time had the honour to be installed or adopted a chief of their bands. On this occasion I made the following speech, which I insert to give my readers a specimen of the language and manner in which it is necessary to address the Indians, so as to engage their attention, and to render the speaker's expressions consonant to their ideas.

“ My brothers, chiefs of the numerous and powerful Naudowessies! I rejoice that through my long abode with you, I can now speak to you (though after an imperfect manner) in your own tongue, like one of your own children. I rejoice also that I have had an opportunity so frequently to inform you of the glory and power of the great king that reigns over the English and other nations; who is descended from a very ancient race of sovereigns, as old as the earth and waters, whose feet stand on two great Islands, larger than any you have ever seen, amidst the greatest waters in the world; whose head reaches to the sun, and whose arms encircle the whole earth. The number of whose warriors are equal to the trees in the vallies, the stalks of rice in yonder marshes, or the blades of grass on your great plains.—Who has hundreds of canoes of his own, of such amazing bigness, that all the waters in your country would not suffice for one of them to swim in: each of which have guns, and small like mine which you see before me, and of such magnitude, that a hundred of your stoutest young men would with difficulty be able to carry one.

HAVING now sufficiently prepared the reader's mind, I shall with great deference, and due submission, although under the impressions of *Elibu* of old, when he declared that “ Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment; therefore” I now say as he formerly did, “ hearken unto me, I also will shew mine opinion”.

Although we cannot ascertain with any degree of exactness, the various operations of nature, by which the present figure of the earth was brought about, yet we must necessarily conclude, that it must have been an effect resulting from an extreme deranged combination of elementary causes: this tremendous struggle of nature, would first bring forth the interior parts of continents, and extended oceans: Islands, straights and bays, &c. would be the product of her abated pangs. Lastly, minor continents and remote islands would announce the approach of peace unto the elementary world. How long might have been this travail of nature, rational conjecture alone must determine: not only ages will be taken in, but even yet her struggles are not entirely over.

The great continent, taking in all Asia, the contiguous parts of Europe, the pacific and indian oceans are here first born. The interior and southern parts of Africa, and western parts of Europe, the baltic and mediterranean seas, with their several dependencies, are her younger children. America, with her numerous train of islands, are younger still, perhaps by many centuries. Remote islands, which have been the subjects of recent discovery, are the product of the detached remains of the grand, and primary derangement of the elements, which frequently issue in earth-quakes, volcanoes, &c. and which every succeeding age evidences to become more and more languid.

Causes and effects, are one corresponding whole, in all the unerring operations of nature: for where causes are mighty and progressive, effects will follow at the established distance, and in an order equally unerring and progressive. The first cause creates the elements, the elements, the secondary cause, gradually brings forward and prepares the earth: the first cause brings forth the most necessary furniture, such as the most noble of the animal and feathered creation, and

lastly, the beginning of the rational world as lord over all the rest. Here ends the exertions of the first cause, as it regards the first plantation prepared by nature, and how the sphere of secondary causes, became infinitely extended, in the vegetable, animal and rational world. Thus far I am shielded by our infallible standard—the writings of the most eminent of the inspired penmen. Thus far we have seen part of the earth got into being, and the divine power displayed in bringing forth the various parts of creation. But whether its immediate exertions became suspended as it respects new rational, and animal creation, as different and remote parts of the earth were prepared? this is the question which sets us upon the very threshold of all the difficulties which have hitherto baffled the conclusions of the inquisitive inquirer, and to which I answer not.

The garden of Eden we find is the happy spot that is blest with the origin of the rational world, from which stock, by secondary causes, the earth as it would emerge, and become prepared, should, with a corresponding progression, be furnished with inhabitants: thus we find this progressive extension of this mighty first-born continent, is answered by a corresponding increase of inhabitants. This first exertion of a first cause in favour of this first part of the earth, constitutes and makes up the whole of the Mosaic account of the creation. That the inspired penman should have told us that after ages had passed away, that new continents and islands would emerge, severed from the old by an infinite stretch of the sea, and that it should be blessed with inhabitants in the same manner in which the prior continent had; I say, because he has not told us these things (when, very probably he knew nothing of it himself) shall we deny it, when the whole œconomy of the natural and moral world incontestibly evinces it? The primary exertions of the infinite Architect, in this first stage of the creation, will take in the whole period contemplated by the infallible penman; and when he tells us that by the children of Noah was the whole earth overspread, that is, that which had then emerged, and to which his knowledge extended. As this doctrine may alarm the clergy, and perhaps some minor philosophers, let us halt a moment and reason upon the subject, that the first may be quieted and the latter convinced.

Who among us shall limit the Almighty in the most noble of his miraculous works—I mean the creation of intelligent beings?—when, for a stiff-necked and ungrateful people, He commanded the surging sea to erect liquid walls for their flank guards; and at the