

lieve with a German naturalist, whose name has escaped me, that the negro colour is owing to an ancient custom in Africa of dying the skin black. Let a European for years expose himself to the sun in a hot climate, till he be quite brown, his children will nevertheless have the same complexion with those in Europe. The Hottentots are continually at work, and have been for ages, to darken their complexion; but that operation has no effect on their children. From the action of the sun is it possible to explain, why a negro, like a European, is born with a ruddy skin, which turns jet black the eighth or ninth day?

Different tribes are distinguishable, not less by internal disposition than by external figure. Nations are for the most part so blended by war, by commerce, or by other means, that vain would be the attempt to trace out an original character in any cultivated nation. But there are savage tribes, which, so far as can be discovered, continue to this day pure without mixture, who act by instinct not art, who have not learned to disguise their passions: to such I confine the inquiry. There is no propensity in human nature more general than aversion to strangers, as will be made evident in a following sketch (a). And yet some nations must be excepted, not indeed many in number, who are remarkably kind to strangers; by which circumstance they appear to be of a peculiar race. In order to set the exceptions in a clear light, a few instances shall be premised of the general propensity. The nations that may be the most relied on for an original character, are islanders at a distance from the continent and from each other. Among such, great variety of character is found. Some islands adjacent to New Guinea, are inhabited by negroes, a bold, mischievous, untractable race; always ready to attack strangers when they approach the shore. The people of New Zealand are of a

(a) Book 2, sketch 1.