fewer than we ſhould otherwiſe fancy them ; yet the knowledge which we thus acquire will be more uſeful and ſolid, and our ſpeculations more conſiſtent with the ſpirit of true philoſophy. Here, though we learn from the information of the ſacred writings, that the firſt family of mankind was not cruelly expoſed in this world, as children whom the inhumanity of their parents induces them to deſert ; yet we are not, in conſequence of admitting this fact, laid under any neceſſity of deny­ing or explaining away any of the other phenomena which occur to our obſervation when tracing the natu­ral hiſtory of ſociety. Tradition may be corrupted ; arts and ſciences may be loſt ; the ſublimeſt religious doctrines may be debated into abſurdity.

If then we are deſirous of ſurveying ſociety in its rudeſt form, we muſt look, not to the earlieſt period of its exiſtence, but to thoſe diſtricts of the globe where external circumſtances concur to drive them into a ſtate of ſtupidity and wretchedneſs. Thus in many places of the happy clime oſ Asia, which a variety of ancient re­cords concur with the ſacred writings in repreſentiug as the firſt peopled quarter of the globe, we cannot trace the form of ſociety backwards beyond the ſhepherd ſtate. In that ſtate indeed the bonds which connect ſociety extend not to a wide range of individuals, and men remain for a long period in diſtinct families ; but yet that ſtate is highly favourable to knowledge, to happineſs, and to virtue. Again, the torrid and the frozen regions of the earth, though probably peopled at a later period, and by tribes ſprung from the ſame ſtock with the ſhepherds of Aſia, have yet exhibited mankind in a much lower ſtate. It is in the parched deſerts of Africa and the wilds of America that human beings have been found in a condition approaching the neareſt to that of the brutes.

We may therefore with ſome propriety deſert the order of time, and take a view of the different ſtages through which philoſophers have conſidered mankind as advancing, beginning with that of rudeneſs, though we have ſhown . that it cannot have been the firſt in the progrefs.

Where the human ſpecies are found in the loweſt and rudeſt ſtate, their rational and moral powers are very faintly diſplayed ; but their external ſenſes are acute, and their bodily organs active and vigorous. Hunting and fiſhing are then their chief employments on which they depend for ſupport. During that portion of their time which is not ſpent in theſe purſuits, they are ſunk in liſtleſs indolence. Deſtſtute of foreſight, they are rouſed to active exertion only by the preſſure of imme­diate neceſſity or the urgent calls of appetite. Accuſ­tomed to endure the ſeverity of the elements, and but ſcantily provided with the means of ſubſiſtence, they ac­quire habits of reſignation and fortitude, which are be­held with aſtoniſhment by thoſe who enjoy the plenty and indulgence of cultivated life. But in this ſtate of want and depreſſion, when the powers and posſeſſions of every individual are ſcarce sufficient for his own ſup­port, when even the calls of appetite are repreſſed be­cauſe they cannot always be gratified, and the more re­fined paſſions, which either originate from ſuch as are merely animal, or are intimately connected with them, have not yet been felt—in this ſtate all the milder af­fections are unknown ; or if the breaſt is at all ſenſible to their impulse, it is extremely feeble. husband and

wife, parent and child, brother and brother, are united by the weakeſt ties. Want and misfortune are not pitied. Why indeed ſhould they, where they cannot be relieved ? It is impoſſible to determine how far be­ings in this condition can be capable of moral diſtinctions. One thing certain is, that in no ſtate are the human race entirely incapable of theſe. If we liſten, however, to the relations of reſpectable travellers, we muſt admit that human beings have ſometimes been found in that abject ſtate where no proper ideas of subordination, government, or diſtinction of ranks, could be formed. No diſtinct notions of Deity can be here enter­tained. Beings in ſo humble a condition cannot look through the order of the univerſe and the harmony of nature to that Eternal Wiſdom and Goodneſs which contrived, and that Almighty Power which brought into exiſtence, the ſyſtem of things. Of arts they muſt be almoſt totally deſtitute. They may uſe ſome inſtruments for fiſhing or the chace ; but theſe muſt be ex­tremely rude and ſimple. If they be acquainted with any means to ſhelter them from the inclemency of the elements, both their houſes and clothing will be awkward and inconvenient.

But human beings have net been often found in ſo rude a ſtate as this. Even thoſe tribes which we deno­minate ſavage, are for the moſt part farther removed from mere animal life. They generally appear united under ſome ſpecies of government, exerciſing the powers of reaſon, capable of morality, though that morality be not always very refined ; diſplaying ſome degree of ſocial virtues, and acting under the influence of religious ſentiments. Thoſe who may be conſidered as but one degree higher in the ſcale than the ſtupid and wretched beings whoſe condition we have ſurveyed, are to be found ſtill in the hunting and fiſhing ſtate ; but they are farther advanced towards ſocial life, and are become more ſenſible to the impulſe of ſocial affection. By unavoidable intercourſe in their employments, a few individual hunters or fiſhers contract a certain elegree of fondneſs for each other’s company, and are led to take ſome part in each other’s joys and ſorrows ; and when the ſocial affections thus generated (ſee Passion) be­gin to exert themſelves, all the other powers of the mind are at the fame time called forth, and the cir­cumſtances oſ the little ſociety are immediately impro­ved. We behold its members in a more comfortable condition, and find reaſon to view the human character with more complacency and reſpect. Huts are now built, more commodious clothes are faſhioned, inſtruments for the annoyance of wild beaſts and even of enemies are contrived ; in ſhort, arts, and science, and ſocial order, and religious ſentiments, and ceremonies, now make their appearance in the riſing ſociety, and ſerve to characterize it by the particular form which diſtinguiſhes each of them. But though ſocial order is no longer unknown nor unobſerved, yet the form of government is ſtill extremely ſimple, and its ties are but looſe and feeble. It will perhaps bear ſome reſemblance to the patriarchal ; only all its members are on a more equal footing, and at the ſame time leſs cloſely con­nected than in the ſhepherd ſtate, to which that form of government ſeems almoſt peculiar. The old men arc treated with veneration ; but the young are not entire­ly ſubject to them. They may liſten reſpectfully to their advice ; but they do not submit to their arbitrary