joy prevailed, and banquets were moſt royally ſerved. They fed, carouſed, and gave a looſe to indulgence, which at other times was not permitted. They ima­gined that there was ſomething myſterious in the number nine; for which reaſon theſe feaſts were in ſome places celebrated every ninth year, in others every ninth month; and continued for nine days. When all was ended, they waſhed the image of the deity in a pool; and then diſmiſſed the aſſembly. Their ſervants were numerous, who attended during the term of their feaſting, and partook of the banquet. At the cloſe of all, they were ſmothered in the fame pool, or other- wiſe made away with. On which Tacitus remarks, how great an awe this circumſtance muſt neceſſarily infuſe into thoſe who were not admitted to theſe myſteries.

Theſe accounts are handed down from a variety of authors in different ages; many of whom were natives of the countries which they deſcribe, and to which they ſeem ſtrongly attached. They would not there­fore have brought ſo foul an imputation on the part of the world in favour of which they were each writing, nor could there be that concurrence of teſtimony, were not the hiſtory in general true.

The like cuſtom prevailed to a great degree at Me­xico, and even under the mild government of the Peru­vians; and in moſt parts of America. In Africa it is ſtill kept up; where, in the inland parts, they ſacriſice ſome of the captives taken in war to their fetiches, in order to ſecure their favour. Snelgrave was in the king of Dahoome's camp, after his inroad into the countries of Ardra and Whidaw; and ſays, that he was a witneſs to the cruelty of this prince, whom he ſaw ſacriſice multitudes to the deity of his nation.

The ſame abominable worſhip is likewiſe practiſed occaſionally in the iſlands viſited by Captain Cook, and other circumnavigators, in the South Sea. It ſeems indeed to have prevailed in every country at one period of the progreſs of civilization, and undoubtedly had the origin which we have aſſigned to it.

The ſacriſices of which we have been treating, if we except ſome few inſtances, conſiſted of perſons doomed by the chance of war, or aſſigned by lot, to be offered. But among the nations of Canaan, the victims were pe­culiarly choſen. Their own children, and whatever was neareſt and deareſt to them, were deemed the moſt worthy offering to their god. The Carthaginians, who were a colony from Tyre, carried with them the religion of their mother-country, and inſtituted the ſame worſhip in the parts where they fettled. It con­ſiſted in the adoration of ſeveral deities, but particular­ly of Kronus; to whom they offered human ſacriſices, and eſpecially the blood of children. If the parents were not at hand to make an immediate offer, the magiſtrates did not fail to make choice of what was moſt fair and promiſing, that the god might not be defrauded of his dues. Upon a check being received in Sici­ly, and ſome other alarming circumſtances happening, Hamilcar without any heſitation laid hold of a boy, and offered him on the ſpot to Kronus; and at the ſame time drowned a number of prieſts, to appeaſe the deity of the ſea. The Carthaginians another time, upon a great defeat of their army by Agathocles, imputed their miſcarriages to the anger of this god, whoſe ſervices had been neglected. Touched with this, and ſeeing the

enemy at their gates, they ſeized at once 300 children of the prime nobihty, and offered them in public for a ſacriſice. Three hundred more, being perſons who were ſomehow obnoxious, yielded themſelves volunta­rily, and were put to death with the others. The ne­glect of which they accuſed themſelves, conſiſted in ſacriſicing children purchaſed of parents among the poorer ſort, who reared them for that purpoſe, and not ſelecting the moſt promiſing, and the moſt honour­able, as had been the cuſtom of old. In ſhort, there were particular children brought up for the altar, as ſheep are fattened for the ſhambles; and they were bought and butchered in the ſame manner. But this indiſcriminate way of proceeding was thought to have given offence. It is remarkable, that the Egyptians looked out for the moſt ſpecious and handſome perſon to be ſacrificed. The Albanians pitched upon the belt man of the community, and made him pay for the wickedneſs of the reſt. The Carthaginians choſe what they thought the moſt excellent, and at the ſame time the moſt dear to them; which made the lot fall heavy upon their children. This is taken notice of by Silius Italicus in his fourth book.

Kronus, to whom theſe ſacriſices were exhibited, was an oriental deity, the god of light and fire; and therefore always worſhipped with ſome reference to that ele­ment. See Phoenicia.

The Greeks, we find, called the deity to whom theſe offerings were made *Agraulos;* and feigned that ſhe was a woman, and the daughter of Cecrops. But how came Cecrops to have any connection with Cy­prus? Agraulos is a corruption and tranſpoſition of the original name, which ſhould have been rendered *Uk El Aur,* or *Uk El Aurus;* but has, like many other orien­tal titles and names, been ſtrangely ſophiſticated, and is here changed to Agraulos. It was in reality the god of light, who was always worſhipped with fire. This deity was the Moloch of the Tyrians and Canaanites, and the Melech of the eaſt; that is, the great and prin­cipal god, the god of light, of whom fire was eſteemed a ſymbol; and at whoſe ſhrine, inſtead of viler victims, they offered the blood of men.

Such was the Kronus of the Greeks, and the Mo­loch of the Phoenicians: and nothing can appear more ſhocking than the ſacriſices of the Tyrians and Carthaginians, which they performed to this idol. In all emergencies of ſtate, and times of general cala­mity, they devoted what was moſt neceſſary and va­luable to them for an offering to the gods, and parti­cularly to Moloch. But beſides theſe undetermined times of bloodſhed, they had particular and preſcribed ſeaſons every year, when children were choſen out of the moſt noble and reputable families, as before men­tioned. If a perſon had an only child, it was the more liable to be put to death, as being eſteemed more ac­ceptable to the deity, and more efficacious for the ge­neral good. Thoſe who were ſacriſiced to Kronus were thrown into the arms of a molten idol, which ſtood in the midſt of a large fire, and was red with heat. The arms of it were ſtretched out, with the hands turned upwards, as it were to receive them; yet ſloping downwards, ſo that they dropt from thence into a glowing furnace below. To other gods they were otherwiſe ſlaughtered, and, as it is implied, by the very hands of their parents. What can be more