

that it should float as little a distance as possible from the place of human habitation. But, by the action of the sun upon the atmosphere, currents would be produced, by which the ark would be borne away, in a southerly and then a western direction. To bring it back into such a situation as would correspond to its grounding in Armenia, or any part of Asia, it must first circumnavigate the globe. But, this was impossible in the time, even if it had possessed the rate of going of a good sailing vessel. It might, perhaps, advance as far as the middle of Europe, or the more westerly part; and *there* it would ground, at the end of the three hundred days.

Upon the supposition that the words of the narrative require to be understood in the sense of a strict and proper universality, another difficulty arises with respect to the preservation of animals. Ingenious calculations have been made of the capacity of the ark, as compared with the room requisite for the pairs of some animals, and the septuples of others: and it is remarkable that the well-intentioned calculators have formed their estimate upon a number of animals below the truth, to a degree which might appear incredible. They have usually satisfied themselves with a provision for three or four hundred species at most; as in general they show the most astonishing ignorance of every branch of Natural History. Of the existing mammalia (animals which nourish their young by breasts) considerably more than one thousand species are known; of Birds, fully five thousand; of Reptiles, very few kinds of which can live in water, two thousand; and the researches of travellers and naturalists are making frequent and most interesting additions to the number of these and all other classes.* Of Insects (us-

* Among the numerous and satisfactorily authentic works of this description, it is a pleasure to mention two as an honour to our country,