

W O M A N ,

IN

All Ages and Nations;

A COMPLETE AND AUTHENTIC

HISTORY OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, CHARACTER AND CON-
DITION OF THE FEMALE SEX, IN CIVILIZED
AND SAVAGE COUNTRIES,

FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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With a Preface,

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religions often take their character from moralities. Mahomet allowed his followers four wives, and an extra allowance of concubines, to such as required them, because he had to deal with men who demanded this license. In the same way the Mormon prophet, Joe Smith, engrafted the spiritual wife system, upon the religion of Christianity, that he might draw around him numbers of men and women, who require a sanction for the indulgence of their appetites.

Most of the religions of antiquity, like those of Egypt and Assyria, were of a sensual character. The priestesses of Oriental temples have been, and are professed courtezans. Could it be expected that the devotees of Venus, of Bacchus, of Jupiter himself should be more moral in their conduct than the deities they worshipped? There scarcely existed a single religion, in the early ages of the world, some of whose rites were not solemnized with debauchery. The lives of eastern deities, from those worshipped on the banks of the Indus and Ganges, to the gods of Greece and Rome, were famous for lust and intrigue.

A corresponding corruption of manners reigned but too universally among the ancients. The Messagetæ, a people of Scythia, being confined to one wife, while the nations around them were indulged with the liberty of polygamy and concubinage, in order to put themselves in some degree on a footing with their neighbors, introduced a kind of community of wives, and thus violated every principle of decency. The Lydians were still more debauched, so that it was with difficulty that even the daughters of their monarchs could protect themselves from outrage.

The Ausi, a people of Lybia, had all their women in common, without any distinction of husband and wife, and the children, when able to walk alone were brought by their mothers into an assembly of the people, when the man to whom a child first spoke was obliged to acknowledge himself its father. The wives of the Bactrians were for a long period famed for licentiousness, and custom gave such a sanction to their crimes, that their husbands had no power to restrain them.

But amid all this dissoluteness of manners, in the times of which we are treating, there were not wanting instances