

once in force from some great lake. Such is the Rio de la Plata, the river St Laurence, and the mighty streams which issue in all directions from the Baical lake. But, like the sons of Adam, they are all of equal descent, and should take their name from one of the feeders of these lakes. This is indeed the case with a few, such as the Rhone, the Rhine, the Nile. These, after having mixed their waters with those of the lake, resume their appearance and their name at its outset.

4. But in general their origin and progress, and even the features of their character, bear some resemblance (as has been prettily observed by Pliny) to the life of man. The river springs from the earth; but its origin is in heaven. Its beginnings are insignificant, and its infancy is frivolous; it plays among the flowers of a meadow; it waters a garden, or turns a little mill. Gathering strength in its youth, it becomes wild and impetuous. Impatient of the restraints which it still meets with in the hollows among the mountains, it is restless and fretful; quick in its turnings, and unsteady in its course. Now it is a roaring cataract, tearing up and overturning whatever opposes its progress, and it shoots headlong down from a rock; then it becomes a sullen and gloomy pool, buried in the bottom of a glen. Recovering breath by repose, it again dashes along, till, tired of the uproar and mischief, it quits all that it has swept along, and leaves the opening of the valley strewed with the rejected waste. Now, quitting its retirement, it comes abroad into the world, journeying with more prudence and discretion through cultivated fields, yielding to circumstances, and winding round what would trouble it to overwhelm or remove. It passes through the populous cities and all the busy haunts of man, tendering its services on every side, and becomes the support and ornament of the country. Now increased by numerous alliances, and advanced in its course of existence, it becomes grave and stately in its motions, loves peace and quiet; and