



An Introduction to Entomology

William Kirby, William Spence

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One principal cause of the little attention paid to Entomology in this country, has doubtless been the ridicule so often thrown upon the science. The botanist, sheltered now by the sanction of fashion, as formerly by the prescriptive union of his study with medicine, may dedicate his hours to mosses and lichens without reproach; but in the minds of most men, the learned as well as the vulgar, the idea of the trifling nature of his pursuit is so strongly associated with that of the diminutive size of its objects, that an entomologist is synonymous with every thing futile and childish. Now, when so many other roads to fame and distinction are open, when a man has merely to avow himself a botanist, a mineralogist, or a chemist—a student of classical literature or of political economy—to ensure attention and respect, there are evidently no great attractions to lead him to a science which in nine companies out of ten with which he may associate promises to signalize him only as an object of pity or contempt. Even if he have no other aim than self-gratification, yet "the sternest stoic of us all wishes at least for some one to enter into his views and feelings, and confirm him in the opinion which he entertains of himself:" but how can he look for sympathy in a pursuit unknown to the world, except as indicative of littleness of mind?



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