

From this fond dream he'll soon recover,
When debts shall drive him back to Dover.

Hoping, though poor, to live in clover,
Once safely past the straits of Dover.
But he alone's his country's lover,
Who, absent long, returns to Dover,
And can by fair experience prove her
The best he has found since last at Dover.

On Female Authorship.

RANK, character, and situation, make a material difference in the circumstances of good and evil. What excites our admiration in one person, in another may provoke our censure. The gaiety of youth becomes not the gravity of age; and the passive obedience of the clergy would prove a poor substitute for active valour in the soldier.

No age has been more distinguished by the learning of its women than the eighteenth century. It must be confessed, that many female pens are wielded with an ability that would by no means discredit the most enlightened understanding; nor has the world been slow in bestowing the tribute to applause so justly due to their writing. But we admire them more as authors, than esteem them as women. Few men would (I imagine) wish their wives and daughters to prefer Horace and Virgil to the care of their families, or a sedulous pursuit of intricate points in Epictetus, to a prudent management, of domestic affairs.

To forbid the use of pen and ink to ladies, is far from my intention. I think poetry a pleasing employment for their vacant hours, and novel-writing well adapted to female ingenuity. It is classical knowledge that I would wish to withhold (as useless) from their study; and female pedantry is the object of my ridicule.

If, whilst beholding an elegant building, we learn that it was planned by the owner, whose fortune, inadequate to the expence, fell a sacrifice to the costliness of his edifice; though we cannot refuse our admiration to the productions of his genius, yet that imprudence, which engaging in pursuits ill adapted to its situation in life, prepares its own ruin, must ever meet with our contempt. In like manner we admire the diligence and classical knowledge which could give us a correct translation of an obsolete author, form a perfect edition, or compile a lexicon; yet, when we learn that it is the work of a Lady, however highly we may prize her productions, we must pity that error of judgment which could engage her in pursuits so derogatory to the natural character of her sex.

That we applaud even this exertion of her talents is true, but not with that kind of ad-

miration which a judicious woman would wish to obtain. Such applause has often been afforded to the masculine bravery of madam D'Eon, Hannah Snell, and others, who, forgetting the characteristic softness of their sex; have successfully braved all the horrors of war, and signalized their courage at the hazard of their persons.

It is my opinion that a sensible man would hesitate whether he chose a wife strong enough to beat him, and possessed of courage in an eminent degree, or one whose mind was unnecessarily employed in the contemplation of ancient authors. I wish not to see any lady assume the toga virilis; however highly ornamented, nor on any consideration enlist under the banners of Bellona; and I know no way of rendering classical knowledge so ridiculous, as by clothing it in petticoats.

Amelia was the only child of a clergyman, whose learning had been distinguished at the university, and whose judgment was never thought erroneous, except in his conduct towards her. The death of his wife, a few years after their marriage, had thrown a gloom over his spirits, which nothing but his increasing fondness for his child, and the care of her education, could remove; in which, as no expence was spared, at the age of sixteen she was what the world calls perfectly accomplished; and her affection to her parent alone prevented her from forming an advantageous and honourable alliance.

The labours of the needle ill suited so masculine an understanding; and having arrived (as she thought) at the summit of female knowledge, she joyfully accepted the offer made by her father to instruct her in the Greek and Latin languages, and by his assistance, in a few years, made a rapid progress in both.

The evil influence of classical knowledge was quickly perceptible: she became negligent of her dress, and satirical in her temper. What were formerly deemed accomplishments, such as music, drawing, &c. were now laid aside as useless, and beneath the dignity of one whose lips poured forth the doctrines of Socrates with the sublimity of Plato. When gently reproved by her friends for the neglect of what formerly diffused so much amusement through the circle of her acquaintance, and reflected so much honour on herself, she had always a Greek, or Latin sentence at command, proving the facility of music and the superiority of mental gratifications over those of the senses; the explanation of which to her illiterate companions, afforded her much amusement.

The death of her father, though for a short time it put a stop to her studies, by no means

means effected her reformation. At first, indeed, her grief, which she concealed from the world with the apathy of a Spartan damsel, preyed on her mind, and when retired to her closet, burst forth with redoubled vigour; for, although ancient writers had taught her the vanity of lamenting the dead, she still found her newly-acquired philosophy painful in the practice, and unable to calm the perturbation of her mind, when solitude exempted her from the painful efforts of assuming a fictitious calmness, and where every surrounding volume served only to remind her of the loss she had sustained. But "Time, which on all things lays its lenient hand," at length calmed her grief. She again applied herself to her study, and pride and pedantry grew up with learning in her breast. She now began to adopt a pompous and latinized style of writing, which rendered her letters by no means intelligible to many of her female friends, who on that account dropped her correspondence with very little ceremony.

Dancing was an accomplishment in which she particularly excelled, and to which she was extremely attached; but her appearance at the ball room now served only to expose herself to fresh mortifications. The country squires dreaded the exposition of their rustic conversation to the ordeal of her criticism, and studiously avoided that learning which they almost instinctively disliked, and the rudiments only of which in their puerile years had caused them much corporeal smart.

Deserted by both sexes, the fable of the white-washed jackdaw (who aiming at a station from which nature had placed him at a distance, found himself deserted by his own species, and driven out of every society) seems formed to ridicule this eccentric character, who, thus disappointed in her favourite plan, by observing that, instead of that deference and respect which she had vainly expected, desertion and contempt were the natural consequences of learning, retired to her closet to discover why the same causes in subjects scarcely different, should produce such discordant effects: for she well knew that learning in men was the road to preferment, an introduction to the best company; that it was patronized by the rich, and admired by the poor, and that both sexes united in the applause of learned men, whilst sad experience convinced her, that consequences very opposite were the result of the same quality in women; that with them learning was obnoxious to envy, and exposed to neglect and desertion. Thus she could account for no otherwise than by supposing a wonderful perversion of human nature to have taken place; which opinion drove her to solitude from her breast, and placed mi-

santhropy in the room. A closer application to study was the consequence of this investigation, and a more rooted antipathy to human-kind. Satirical authors, who painted mankind in the gloomiest colours, became now her chief delight. In this situation, a fondness for the brute creation took possession of her mind. Indeed her books might with propriety have been called an hospital for dogs and cats, for when age and infirmities had rendered these animals useless to their masters, and hitherto to themselves, her mansion afforded an asylum to all. To feed and take care of these, to reward their attachment by her bounty she esteemed a grateful relaxation from study, and amusement of her leisure hours.

But as ambition was a ruling passion in Amelia's breast, popular applause was still the object of her warmest wishes; for the attainment of which (after much study and deliberation) she submitted a tragedy to public inspection: but her ignorance of the world was the occasion of her failure in this attempt. It is true that the language was correct, that it was formed on the rules of Aristotle, and that the unities were strictly adhered to: but her characters were drawn more from books than nature, and her play seemed rather a compilation from different authors, than the spontaneous off-spring of her own imagination. In addition to this, her total ignorance of stage-effect, in a great measure, contributed to the condemnation of her tragedy.

The disapprobation of a sickle audience by no means convinced her of her inability in dramatic writing, which she entirely attributed to the perverted taste of the nation. Her pen was again employed in poetical essays, but as her seclusion from the world prevented her success in that, so her misanthropy repelled her advancement to fame in this attempt. Her pen seemed dipped in gall, and mankind were depicted in the gloomiest characters. The churchman was a hypocrite, the lawyer a knave, the soldier a coward, and the whole group were rather representatives of Satan's infernal companions, than portraits of men that ever had existence. Of course the Reviewers were not more lenient to the poem, than the critical Templars had before been to the tragedy.

Thus frustrated in the principal attempts of her life, and exasperated at her treatment, she withdrew herself entirely from the world, who left her unlamented to the society of her cats; since she has dwindled into obscurity, and her name is now scarcely ever mentioned but to record her follies.

Such were the effects of an ill directed study, and such must ever be the consequence of a desertion from nature. This story was intended (at a time when the pro-

ceeds with the productions of female pens to check, or at least keep in its proper channel, that cacothetic scribendi lately become prevalent amongst women, to admonish them, that more amiable accomplishments than reading Greek are attainable by a female mind; and not that, because a few have gained applause by studying the dead languages, all woman-kind should assume their Dictionaries and Lexicons; else we might soon expect to see Westminster-school a Female Academy, or (as the Ladies make rapid advances towards manhood) we might in a few years behold a sweepstakes rode by women, or a second battle at Otisdam fought with superior skill by Messdames Humphries and Mendosa.

Enquiry into the Cause why all Animals swim naturally, while Man is deprived of that Faculty.

THE ancients would undoubtedly have made a surer and more rapid progress in the study of philosophy, had they applied themselves to examine nature, rather than to form conjectures concerning her operations; but they wished to teach others before they themselves had acquired sufficient knowledge by experience. From this precipitancy have proceeded all those ridiculous opinions, words destitute of sense, explanations which explain nothing, and, in short, all those confused systems of which they composed their philosophical theory. These productions of the imagination, however, for many centuries formed the basis of their knowledge, and excited the admiration of the vulgar; who conceived to religiously respect them, as was more likely to obscure than to enlighten their understanding. Hence the minds of mankind became filled with such a number of errors. It was not an enterprize of little moment to dissipate those clouds of darkness which veiled truth from the eye. We may therefore consider as conquerors those who first dared to pass the barrier; to brave prejudice, and subject to a more rigorous examination opinions concerning the nature of things which were conceived to be beyond the reach of doubt. Mult it not have been almost temerity, to attack the horror of a vacuum, antipathies and sympathies, and a great many other ridiculous ideas of the same kind, and to establish incontestible truths in their stead? It was not without great difficulty, and after obstinate disputes, that more enlightened minds were able to destroy the absurd opinion, that corruption gives birth to an infinite number of living creatures. It is only our being accustomed daily to see philosophy enrich itself with new truths by the help of experience, that has convinced us without any disputes, and almost without bring-

astonished, that what weighs a pound under the Polar Circle, does not weigh the same at the Equator. In the summer time we observe ants transporting to their nests with incredible diligence, grains of corn, chips of wood, and bits of straw, and people have never hesitated in assigning a reason for their making this provision. For more than three thousand years it was strongly believed that this wood and straw were for the purpose of constructing a magazine, and that the corn was to supply them with food during the severity of winter. Whoever should have denied this in the time of our ancestors, would have been in danger of incurring the imputation of being a fool. It is however certain, that ants as well as all other insects, pass the winter in a state of profound sleep, and that they neither eat nor stir during all that time. This a modern philosopher has demonstrated beyond all doubt. We no longer are afraid of showing want of respect to fables, which age has rendered in some measure venerable. It was necessary for the interest of truth, that people should appear who could start doubts, and who had the courage to do it; and it is to these prudent and cautious doubts, which were not checked by any regard for popular prejudices, nor by a tame acquiescence in the decision of the ancients, that we are indebted for our deliverance from a great number of errors which they had handed down to us. Every thing not founded upon experience requires to be often examined anew. Experience itself has sometimes need of being verified by new experiments, and much more so, opinions supported by probabilities alone. Truth is perhaps not far from us, but it never goes to meet indolence; it appears only to those who seek for it, and, if we may use the expression, it wishes absolutely to be persecuted. The subject of the following dissertation is among the number of those which have need of revision, and concerning which no sufficient explanations have been given. The different sentiments which philosophers have entertained on this head, shall leave room for new ones; we shall therefore offer a few observations upon this question, so often propounded, why animals swim naturally, while man is deprived of that faculty?

The most universal opinion, but not the most philosophical is, that brutes not being susceptible of fear, preserve in danger that kind of reason which nature has given them, and that acting coolly, they easily find the surest means of extricating themselves from it, while man, confused, and losing his judgment, is incapable of doing that which would save him. It is, however, true, that brutes are susceptible of fear as well as man, and that we often see them, when in danger, pursue a bad plan to avoid it. This, therefore,