

LETTER II.

From Thomas Gilles, Esq; to John Orme, Esq.

SIR, I understand by Mr Wood, who was present, that on occasion of high words between you and Mr Crisp, you have sent him a challenge, and that next Saturday is appointed for the decision of the affair. I am heartily concerned for it; for I respect you both very much; and must beg you, as I have wrote to him to the same effect, to reflect in time on this vindictive measure, in which two angry young gentlemen think fit to arrogate to themselves the province that least belongs to them, no less than assuming a power over one another's lives, and to be their own judge and jury too. I have conjured Mr Crisp, by the duty he owes to God, to his parents, to himself, and the regard I claim for my affection for him, to waive this matter, and submit the affair to arbitration. I take upon me to do the same by you; and beg you will let these considerations have their proper weight with you. For why should ye, from a few rash words and misapprehension, precipitate yourselves on so fatal a measure, which may be equally pernicious to your souls and bodies? There is more true bravery in forgiving an injury than in resenting it. And I am sure you will both thank me for my interposition, if you will coolly consider what next Saturday may bring forth, if you should proceed, and how many happy years of life you may rob one another of; and even the survivor be haunted with such remorse as may make all his future days unhappy. Once more, I hope these friendly remonstrances will have their due weight with you; for they proceed from the honest heart of the true friend of you both,

THOMAS GILLES.

LETTER III.

From Andrew Crisp, Esq; to Thomas Gilles, Esq.

GOOD SIR,

I AM infinitely obliged to you for this fresh instance of your kind and ten-

der concern for me. It is true, I thought of nothing less than of meeting Mr Orme to-morrow, according to his appointment. But if he has the same sentiments with which your kind and affectionate letter has inspired me; I am not averse to make the matter up with him, for the sake of all the considerations you so kindly mention. But as he gave the challenge, I judge the motion must come from him. And as you have wrote a letter to him, I cannot say but I should be glad he has in this instance (for I wish no other arbitrator than yourself,) as much deference and respect to your kind interposition, as has, dear good Sir,

Your most obliged humble servant,
ANDREW CRISP.

LETTER IV.

From John Orme, Esq; to Thomas Gilles, Esq.

SIR,

It is true I have desired a meeting of Mr Crisp, for I think he has used me in such a manner as one gentleman should not use another. But if he is willing to acknowledge his error, I shall not, for the sake of your kind interposition, and the motives you mention, decline putting it up. He may very safely leave his concerns to such a friend as yourself; and as I desire only a satisfaction for my honour, which I think has suffered from the usage I have received from Mr Crisp, I am willing to leave the matter to your arbitration, being well assured of your honour and impartiality, and desirous to convince you how much I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN ORME.

LETTER V.

From Thomas Gilles, Esq; to John Orme, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

You have greatly favoured me by your kind confidence in me, in this the most desirable instance which you could give of your consideration for me. Mr Crisp has equally obliged me, by sub-

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mitting the difference between you to my arbitration. Give me leave then, in pursuance of the trust you have reposed in me of arbitrating between you, to appoint one o'clock Saturday noon, at the Bedford-head, Covent-garden, for the place of meeting, over a small collation; and I hope, Sir, you will come with a hearty disposition to be reconciled, as I shall to do impartial justice between you. I give the same invitation by a line or two to Mr Crisp. I shall only bring with me Mr Wood and Mr Erskine, who were present when the offence was given and taken; and I hope we five shall have reason to be pleased and rejoice in one another's company; and particularly in the happy change of the time, place, and occasion of meeting.

To avoid all matter for fresh provocation, on the first meeting of two such high-spirited gentlemen, I have ordered two rooms till I know each of your sentiments, that I may, by a just and impartial arbitration, gather each of your demands, and be the better able to remove all difficulties when I bring you together, to the happy reconciliation I hope to see effected between you. I am, Sir,

Your sincere friend and servant,
THOMAS GILLES.

LETTER VI.

From Thomas Gilles, Esq; to Andrew Crisp, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

MR ORME has obliged me by consenting to leave the matter in dispute, between you, to my arbitration, as you have also done. I have therefore appointed to-morrow, one o'clock, at the Bedford-head, Covent Garden, over a little collation that I shall order to be on the table by two. As Mr Wood and Mr Erskine were present when the offence was given and taken, and are

both men of honour, and common friends, I shall bring them with me. All I have to beg of you is, that you will not, by any youthful heat, frustrate the good end of this amicable meeting; for either you did intend by the words which Mr Orme took amiss, to affront him, or you did not: if you did not, a ready and candid acknowledgement that you did not, will not fail, as I hope, of being accepted as is ought; if you did, and had no just cause, it will become a man of honour to own his fault, rather than by persisting in it to bring matters to extremities. The method I intend to take shall be this: I have ordered two rooms to be taken, in one of which I will attend Mr Orme, to know what he takes amiss, and what he insists upon: and in the other I will attend you, to know your sentiments in like manner. This I shall do, because as you may both meet otherwise in high spirits, and with a sense of having been injured in your honours, all fresh provocations may be avoided; and when I know both your sentiments, I shall be better able to arbitrate with that justice and impartiality which it will become me to observe; and I hope the event will be answerable to my wishes, and a sincere reconciliation be effected between you; and that you may equally rejoice for all your future lengthened lives, in the return of a day which might have been fatal to one or both.

I have given Mr Orme notice in writing of the time and place, and besought him, as I do you, to come with a hearty disposition to a reconciliation; which if it can be effected, as I make no doubt, from the good sense of the gentlemen I have to deal with, will be a most desirable event to

Your truly affectionate
and faithful friend,
THOMAS GILLES.

LITERARY HISTORY OF THE PRESENT PERIOD.

IN comparing the present century with those immediately preceding, it will not be found, that so much has been done toward the improvement of science, as may

may be imagined by superficial observers, these alterations will produce a more genuine religion; time, the greatest instructor, will shew how far our mistrust is grounded. One thing, however, may be advanced as true: religion in general wears a more amiable face; intolerance is no more her inseparable companion; and mankind seem willing to go to heaven without jostling one another on the road. The principles of religion too have been more minutely examined; many inveterate prejudices explored; revelation grounded upon more rational motives of credibility; a number of various corruptions eliminated from the sacred volumes with which the hand of time had tarnished them; and biblical criticism established on such principles, and guided by such rules, as must necessarily tend to its perfection. This, therefore, is all well: yet if all this conduce not to meliorate the heart of man, to inspire him with a greater degree of the love of God and of his neighbour; what will religion profit by it?

Such are the parts of science, with respect to which our age can boast some sort of superiority: for, with regard to the fine arts, as they are termed, we apprehend they are rather languishing than acquiring vigour. A partial or local improvement, in some of them, may have taken place, and has, no doubt, taken place in this nation; but we greatly mistake, if, on the whole, they have not lost more than they have gained.

Whether in political, moral, or religious knowledge, we are a whit wiser than our forefathers, appears to us a problem, that may be disputed with equal plausibility on both sides of the question.

New systems of ethics have been created, and bases of various forms have been contrived for the statue of Virtue; yet we think it must be confessed, that the goddess is not more sincerely worshipped, nor her votaries more numerous than in the days of our predecessors; we fear the reverie is true.

As to theology, or the science of religion, it has certainly undergone some considerable changes within these fifty years, and is apparently on the eve of still greater alterations; but whether

these alterations will produce a more genuine religion; time, the greatest instructor, will shew how far our mistrust is grounded.

One thing, however, may be advanced as true: religion in general wears a more amiable face; intolerance is no more her inseparable companion; and mankind seem willing to go to heaven without jostling one another on the road. The principles of religion too have been more minutely examined; many inveterate prejudices explored; revelation grounded upon more rational motives of credibility; a number of various corruptions eliminated from the sacred volumes with which the hand of time had tarnished them; and biblical criticism established on such principles, and guided by such rules, as must necessarily tend to its perfection. This, therefore, is all well: yet if all this conduce not to meliorate the heart of man, to inspire him with a greater degree of the love of God and of his neighbour; what will religion profit by it?

On the other hand, it is but too true, that irreligion has made great strides during the same period. The metaphysics of Hume, the eloquence of Bolingbroke, the learning of Freret, the wit of Voltaire, and the fascinating logic of Rousseau (not to mention a numerous but less formidable tribe of inferior writers) have inflicted severe wounds on Christianity, and spread the contagion of infidelity far and wide: even Atheism, who before lurked in corners, and covered his face with a deceitful veil, has recently shown himself without disguise; and *Hammonds* and *Danton* have appeared, have boldly dared the Devil to punish them for disbelieving his existence. And this is called *The Age of Reason*!

Having thus given a short view of the present state of literature in general, we will next, in as few words as possible, and we flatter ourselves with strict distributive justice, assign to the different nations of Europe their respective shares.

(To be Continued.)

March 1796.

REMARKABLE HISTORY OF DON PEDRO KING OF PORTUGAL,

AND OF HIS UNFORTUNATE CONSORT DONA IGNEZ DE CASTRO.

CONIGUOUS to the transept of thought it prudent then to conceal the the church belonging to the royal manse of Alcobaca, fifteen leagues north of Lisbon, there is a Gothic mausoleum of hewn stone, in the midst of which are two magnificent sepulchres, of white marble, containing the remains of Don Pedro the first, King of Portugal, and of Dona Iguéz de Castro, his consort.

There are but few personages recorded in history, who have been oftener celebrated by dramatic writers than this Princess. There have been no less than five tragedies formed from her piteous narrative; viz. two in English, one in French, one in Spanish, and one in Portuguese. The latter, perhaps, approaches the nearest to the truth of history, and is not inferior in point of poetical merit. The author, *Senhor Nicola Luis*, had no occasion to resort to fiction to heighten the passions of an audience, as the simple facts are sufficient to fill up all the scenes of pity and terror, and to shew to what lengths love and revenge are capable of transporting the human mind.

The subject of this tragical piece is as follows: Don Pedro, son of Alfonso the fourth, King of Portugal, and heir apparent to the crown, having fallen in love with a lady of the court, named Dona Iguéz de Castro, thought he could not share the crown which awaited him with a more amiable person. She united to all the charms of beauty, the most graceful and accomplished manners. The prince, waving all considerations of birth and fortune, was privately married to her by the bishop of Guarda.

Notwithstanding the nuptials were performed with all the secrecy imaginable, yet they reached the King's ear, who had premeditated a consort for Don Pedro in the King of Castile's daughter. He questioned him as to the truth of the report; but knowing his father's arbitrary disposition, he

The nobility also had intimation of the marriage, and the preference given to Iguéz had awakened their jealousy. Hence they took every opportunity of representing her as a woman of the greatest ambition, and pretended that very fatal consequences were to be apprehended from such an alliance: they also condemned the prince as a rash and disobedient son.

The King, who was a man of weak understanding, gave ear to their calumny, and they worked upon his passions to that degree, that he resolved to murder the unfortunate Princess. Accordingly, he set out to perpetrate the horrid deed, accompanied by three of his courtiers, and a number of armed men.

Dona Iguéz at this time resided in Coimbra, in the palace of Santa Clara, where she passed her time in the most private manner, educating her children, and attending to the duties of her domestic affairs.

The Prince, unfortunately, was abroad on a hunting party, when the King arrived. The beautiful victim came out to meet him, with her two infant children, who clung about his knees, screaming aloud for mercy. She prostrates herself at his feet, bathes them with tears, and supplicates pity for her children, beseeching him to banish her to some remote desert, where she would gladly wander an exile with her babes.

The feelings of nature arrested his arm, just raised to plunge a dagger into her breast. But his counsellors, urging the necessity of her death, and reproaching him for his disregard to the welfare of the nation, he relapsed into his former resolution, and commanded them to dispatch her; at which they rushed forward, regardless of the cries of innocence and beauty, and instantly struck off her head!

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this time pretty well exhausted, and he only told Gordon, that, as he had not been punctual to his time, he was very lucky in being *so far* behind it. "For," added he, "I am already sufficiently fatigued with beating these scoundrels; and I understand that a Scotch constitution does not agree well with a drubbing."

The private infliction of the knout seems to be the legitimate offspring of this ready discipline. The Russian sceptre has, you know, been held, since the days of Peter the Great, only by women, except during the short reign of Peter the second, and the few months which Peter the third survived his aunt. Although some of the Princesses who have succeeded to the throne of Peter the Great, have showed themselves qualified to sway his sceptre, none of them have been able to wield his cudgel. Hence this duty has devolved on the knout master general.

How far the nation has lost or gained by the change, I shall not pretend to guess. But it seems to be owing to the respectable origin of this mode of chastigation that there is less of disgrace connected with it than could easily be imagined. It is well known that chastisements which Peter the Great inflicted with his own hand were never supposed to disgrace those who suffered them. When a courtier was soundly drubbed, or pulled by the nose, or had a tooth torn out by the Emperor, at all which exercises Peter was remarkably dextrous, he suffered only the bodily pain of the operation. His honour was not in the least affected. And as it seldom happened that his master put less confidence in him after such an accident, than he had done before it, his credit suffered as little as his honour. Menzikoff used to appear in all his native haughtiness and presumption, even when his countenance bore the most unequivocal marks of his master's resentment. In like manner the private infliction of the knout is hardly supposed to disgrace a Russian gentleman more than flagellation does an English school boy.

On these accounts this species of disci-

pline is less atrocious, and excites less abhorrence, than you seem to imagine. When an instance of it occurs, those who hear of it thank their good fortune that they were not the victims, and continue to treat the sufferer with the same consideration as before. I must also add, that the instances of it which now occur are very rare.

Yet with all the alleviations I can suggest (and I am willing to suggest all that truth will allow) you will say, that the government must be abominable which authorises such enormities. I shall not dispute this point with you; for I think little can be argued in favour of that system of legislation which is held together only by the fear of corporal infliction, which must degrade before it can govern, and make of the human species bad men, in order to render them good subjects.

But, although I cannot survey without abhorrence the system of despotism that prevails in this empire, I think there are insuperable difficulties in the way of speedily introducing any considerable improvement. The corruption of the people seems to keep pace in every nation with the vices of the government. Perhaps tyranny in the people act mutually in producing one another; just as, in certain diseases, the derangement of the body induces mental debility, and the debility thus induced increases the bodily disorder from which it arose. Whatever there may be in this supposition, the spirit of the Russian government and the manners of the Russians are well adapted to one another. A free government would hardly be resisted by the nation in its present state, and a more enlightened nation would not tamely submit to such a government.

I have often, indeed, heard bold theorists propose to annihilate at once whatever is vicious in the government of this empire, and to create a free constitution in its stead. A surgeon might as well cut off a limb in order to remove the pain of a corn on the toe. The cure might, to be sure, be in both cases accomplished; but I acknowledge, I should not choose to trust either my person to such radical practice, or my political quiet to such active theory.

ory. Such men seem to consider the science of legislation as analogous to mechanical art, in which, from previously calculating the power of every constituent part, you can deduce with mathematical certainty the general effect of the whole. But legislators have not like mechanics inert matter to act upon, which they can mould into whatever shape they please. They have for the object of their science, beings refractory to the hand of the manager—unreasonable in their prejudices, in their predilections and antipathies, and

who retain the original impression and bent of their character with an obstinacy proportioned to the force that is applied to change them. It is impossible to calculate the effect that may be produced by an attempt to introduce a great and sudden change into the situation of a nation of such beings; because it is impossible to foresee the various accidents that may and must occur to accelerate, or retard, or change the motion you have communicated to the national spirit.

(To be continued.)

LITERARY HISTORY OF THE PRESENT PERIOD.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 172.

ITALY.

EVERY one knows that, on the revival of letters, Italy was their first, foster-mother; and the golden age of Leo will ever be accounted a remarkable era in the history of human knowledge. For a century, at least, it retained its superiority; and although it has since been visibly sinking in the public scale, yet it still holds a considerable rank in every branch of science, where religion is not directly or indirectly concerned. It has produced excellent historians, most ingenious poets, and some tolerable orators; it has greatly embellished its fine melodious language, and was the first modern nation that had a good lexicon. In mathematics and experimental philosophy, it is not below its neighbours; and it has always been deemed the best school for music, painting, and sculpture. Divinity alone (and philosophy in as far as it is connected with divinity) has been bound in fetters by monachism, superstition, and inquisitorial tribunals. But these fetters will probably soon be shaken off by that ingenious people: God grant that they may not at the same time shake off religion herself, under the idea that she had forged their chains: this is no uncommon process in national revolutions. Some change in the religious creed of Italy, appears to be inevitable. The scriptures are more generally studied, and have

been translated into the vulgar tongue; the bishops of particular dioceses, supported by their respective sovereigns, begin to exercise a jurisdiction independently of Rome; papal infallibility is scouted every where, save in the papal territories, and even there feebly defended, perhaps not believed; superstitious rites and usages are daily diminishing, and freedom of thought pervades all ranks of men who have any sort of liberal education. What may we not augur from such symptoms?

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

Although these nations have, for almost two centuries, made very little figure in the field of science, it is not hence to be concluded, that this has been owing to want of capacity: they are naturally a thinking and acute people, and, in the sixteenth century, held a respectable rank among the nations of Europe; but here the inquisition, more rigid and bloody than that of Italy, has stifled every spark of genius that has come within its reach, and plunged the inhabitants into an ignorance hardly to be credited. The time, however, seems to approach, when that diabolical tribunal must be abolished; and, to do justice to this and the last reign, its power has already been greatly curtailed: still, however, it has power enough to prevent a general dissemination of knowledge; and few, comparatively, are the works of value that have yet been written.

ten on the other side of the Pyrenees. Yet the Spanish language seems peculiarly formed for fine composition, whether in prose or verse; and they have now a national dictionary that vies with any in Europe.

FRANCE.

Unhappy France! Thou wast once a nation of learned men. Although thou didst not embrace the muses so early as thy southern neighbour, thou receivest them with not less tenderness, and cultivatest them with more industry. In what species of writing (Epic poetry excepted) didst thou not excel? what art or science didst thou not improve and adorn? what charms didst thou not give to one of the most barbarous tongues in the universe? Thy Gothogallie jargon, embellished by the skill of thy grammarians and orators, became the language of the world, and the vehicle of knowledge to the ends of the earth. "Ah! how are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of learning perished?"

Reader, we mean not, by this apostrophe, to debase the French nation, nor to throw any slur upon their late exertions to shake off the yoke of despotism, and vindicate their just rights; we are only penetrated with sorrow and regret, that the vindication of those rights should be attended with consequences so fatal to Learning, and we fear to liberty itself, at least for a long portion of time. But is France at present without learned men? are the arts and sciences there totally neglected? Neither the one nor the other! But, alas! the number of truly learned men in France, at this moment, are like the gleanings of the field: old age, exile, or the guillotine, has swept the great harvest away; and it will be yet a long, long winter, before such another crop can appear. The arts and sciences are not altogether extinct; but they shed only a faint light: the rays of which serve chiefly to show what Vandalic devastation has been made among their best productions. Let us turn our eyes

from so dismal a prospect, and cherish a hope, that the genius of France may yet trim his withered bays, and rise to his former renown.

GERMANY, HOLLAND, &c.

A petulant French Jesuit once made it a question, Whether a German was capable of wit? And not less petulant was the observation of an Englishman, that the Dutch carried their genius in their backs. Odious assertion! The German Luther had at least as much wit as Father Bouhours; and the Colloquies of Erasmus, of Rotterdam, contain more Attic humour than can be collected from the whole mass of English writers, from Chaucer to Swift.

That the French, a vain and jealous nation, should condemn German literature, is not much to be wondered. They have sometimes affected to despise their masters, the Italians: But that we, a Saxon colony, should join in the affront, is certainly a matter of surprise. The truth is, that, although the German be the parent of our own tongue, or at least a sister dialect, we have not, until very lately, paid any attention to German books, unless they were written in Latin. Yet Germany has, in the course of the present century, produced as many good works, in German, as any country in the world. We know not even if it be saying too much, to affirm, that more German books are annually published than in one half of the world besides: they are not all excellent, to be sure, but most of them are good, and few intolerable; and there is not a branch of science which is not highly cultivated, especially in the Protestant universities. Formerly, the Germans wrote in various dialects, as numerous as their various provinces; and still there are shades of difference in the languages of Berlin, Leipzig, and Vienna: But having now an excellent lexicon, and several good grammars, they seem to aim at some sort of uniformity, both in style and phraseology. Their poetry is greatly improved, and every day improving; in novel writing, they are

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more natural than we; of their oratory we cannot say so much; in mathematics, natural history, physics, experimental philosophy, they are second to none; in rational theology, they have made great progress: and in biblical criticism, hold the very first rank.

What we have said of Germany is more or less applicable to Holland, Sweden, Denmark, and the other northern regions that border on Germany, and speak Teutonic dialects. To them the German has been chiefly the great vehicle of knowledge, which they have generally diffused into their own tongues; but in Sweden, of late, many very learned men have arisen, who, in philology, and every species of critical knowledge, are not inferior to the Germans; and they have one of the best translations of the Bible that has been made into modern languages.

The literature of Holland is, in some measure, peculiar to itself. Although their language be a German dialect, it has not been much written in; their principal works are in Latin or French. This latter was imported by the French refugees, who fled from the persecution of Louis XIV. and, through them, soon became familiar to the Dutch themselves; almost as many French works have issued from the presses of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague, as from those of Paris and Lyons. We speak not at all of the Netherlands, because we know no works of any great merit in the Flemish dialect. It has, for many years, been giving place to the French, which now bids fair to extinguish it. The language of Lisle is become the language of Brussels; and, in half a century more, perhaps, there will be no other dialect spoken on this side the Rhine.

It might be expected that we should say something of Polish and Russian literature; but we confess we are little acquainted with either, except through the medium of German reviews. We know only that the Russian language has been improved in later times, and is

said to be copious and harmonious: if any works of great importance shall appear in it, we will endeavour to give an account of them. The number of Polish publications is not great; and now, we imagine, that unfortunate nation will be taught to lispen in the respective language of its new masters.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Having thus made the *grand tour* as rapidly as most of our modern travellers, we return with pleasure to our native soil; and are happy in the thought that it has not been less productive of every sort of knowledge, than climes that enjoy a warmer sun. Montesquieu was wont to say, "That England was a country to think in;" and this concession from a French writer is no small eulogy. In fact, we are a thinking, more than an ingenious nation: we have seldom been guilty of invention; but we are bold and persevering imitators, and have generally perfected what had been invented by others: of this our various manufactures are a sensible and striking proof. "*Vos machines sont mieux montées*," said to us an intelligent Frenchman, whom we met some years ago at Birmingham; and this is pure truth. The employers of our artists spare no cost; and our artists, patient and well paid, leave nothing unfinished in their various operations, from the mill that grinds the sugar-cane, to the screw that draws a cork. Hence the great demand for our wares all over the globe.

If our learning and science had but kept pace with our mechanics, we should have been the most learned and enlightened people under the sun: as it is, we have no reason to blush. Let us see what we have done in the lapse of a hundred years.

In the first place, we have considerably polished and, at the same time, perhaps, enervated our language; we write more grammatically, but not more forcibly nor eloquently; we have a good dictionary of our language, but far from being a perfect one, or even equal

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to those of some other nations, though we are sometimes apt to boast the contrary. Its defects are great and numerous; and we can not but lament, that a gentleman*, who has long laboured to improve it, and supply its deficiencies, has not met with that encouragement to which he had a claim; and without which he could not carry on so expensive an undertaking.

On oratory and elocution, several useful tracts and lectures have appeared, but there is very little new in them. Dr Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, and Mr J. Walker's *Melody of Speaking delineated*, are the only works of the kind that possess originality; yet they have been little read.

History has had a better fate. We have many good historians; but Hume and Robertson shine among them like the moon among inferior stars.

From history to novels, the transition is short; and here, if number prevail, we are invincible. Since the fertile pen of Richardson poured forth its sentimental torrent, a thousand streamlets have emulated its course, and purified away, with an uniform similarity through the enchanted plains.

An inundation of pretty poetry has also deluged the land; but the grand, the sublime, the Shakespearian, and the Miltonic, seem beyond the grasp of modern bards. Two or three good comedies have graced the stage; but the Tragic Muse has been in a deep lethargy for many years.

Natural history and experimental philosophy, more especially botany and chemistry, have made great progress among us; but the Swedes and Germans led the way.

The chair of Newton has not been refilled; and this is no matter of astonishment, since academical honours have been made the reward and badge of a party.

Politics have been cultivated with uncommon ardour, especially since the French Revolution; and some new in-

* Mr Herbert Croft.

genious systems have been broached, which have not yet received the sanction of public approbation. We avoid mentioning names, that we may avoid the imputation of partiality.

In theology, a wonderful revolution has happened in this country. The principles of Calvin, which were once common to Presbyterians and Episcopalians, are now, in a great measure, exploded by both; and Arminianism has had a complete triumph over the gloomy system of Gomarus.—There were some few Socinians in the days of Charles II. and in every succeeding reign; but they were individuals, who had no public conventicles, nor ostensible communion. At present, they are a numerous and respectable body, and are daily increasing. The acrimonious opposition which they have met with from the established church and the obstinate refusal of government to repeal the *test* and *corporation* acts, have not a little contributed to this increase.

Sanguis martyrum semen sanctorum, is an axiom that will always be found to be true, whatsoever be the principles of the persecuted. We say persecuted; because we are thoroughly convinced, that every sort of restraint, in matters merely religious, is a species of persecution; although it be not persecution unto death. This latter, indeed, is happily abolished, or, at least, gone gradually into disuse. We no longer hang a Popish priest for saying mass, nor bore the tongue of an Unitarian with a hot iron for denying the Trinity. The times will not bear such severities; yet we have no hesitation in asserting, that as long as a single Briton is, on account of his religious tenets, excluded from any place which he is capable of filling, genuine liberty he does not enjoy. To oblige men, by penal laws, to think alike, is to renew the bed of Procrustes, which philosophy ought to have broken in pieces for ever. Difference in opinion is as natural as difference in complexion; and one may be as justly persecuted for being black, brown, or fair, as for being

ing of this or that religious persuasion. Theological knowledge is promoted by divisions; every party exert their talents and sagacity, to seek and draw, from the common arsenal of controversy, arms to support their own cause; and from the clash of arms meeting aims, some sparks of unquestionable truth are now and then elicited. In one point of divinity, we seem almost agreed, namely, that the scriptures, our common rule of faith, have not been handed down to us in their original purity; and both the orthodox and the dissenter have acknowledged the expediency of correcting them by the canons of sound criticism. The collation of the MSS of the New Testament, by Mills, and of the Old Testament, by Kennicott, does honour to the University of Oxford; and, from the same seminary of learning, we expect with avidity, a collation of the MSS of the most an-

cient and valuable Greek version, known by the name of *Sephvngint*. No doubt, the other more ancient versions, particularly the Syriac and Latin Vulgate, will, in time, be also collated; and each of these collations will contribute to remove from the sacred Books, the grubs and straws that have stuck to their amber in the course of time.

The fine arts have flourished in England since the commencement of this century, and particularly since the institution of the Royal Academy. The late President, both by precept and example, inspired our painters with a spirit of emulation, which has produced as many good artists, as, perhaps, any other nation, during the same period. We have also sculptors, who do honour the nation; and our engravers are equal to any that France or Italy have produced.

FOR THE SCOTS MAGAZINE. ON COINS.

SIR,

AFTER considering the remarks by *Gir*, in your last, p. 184, I cannot help going into his opinion, that coins would be an excellent mean of preserving traces of architecture, or remarkable events. How valuable would any coin be on which was struck, a good design of the elegant porch which ornamented the approach to Holyroodhouse, or of the arch and spire which terminated the High Street at the Nether Bow. Would not this also be a very proper method of handing down likenesses of eminent men? Who would not wish to be possessed of a good medalion of Smith, Hume, Robertson, &c.

Another observation occurred to me, namely, that there is surely a most supine negligence in the persons to whom the duty of supplying coinage is entrusted by Government. I am well informed, that the provincial halfpence throughout the kingdom at present amounts to

upwards of 420 varieties. I have seen a printed catalogue containing a description of 361 different kinds, published some months ago. Artists remark, too, that our gold coinage is but indifferently executed, and in a much worse style than that of any former period. As to the state of the silver coinage, that has been the subject of daily complaint for many years back. Such is the rage for provincial halfpence, or tradesmen's tokens, as they are called, that, in one instance, the dye broke when the third token was striking; of course, of that impression only two exist; and I am informed, that the present possessor of one of them has refused ten guineas for his impression. There is such a demand, from the number of collectors, that, in some instances, the specimens sell at several shillings. I understand that the first impressions bring generally sixpence a-piece. All this serves to mark one feature, at least, of the present times.

Edinr. 14th April 1796.

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