

The Port Folio

A MONTHLY MISCELLANY, (PUBLISHED IN PHILADELPHIA.)

Dedicated, in chief, to Original Communications in the popular departments of Science combined with occasional Criticism, Classical Dissertations, Miscellaneous Essays, Records of the Progress of the Fine and Useful Arts, with all the extensive and varied departments of Polite Literature, Merriment, and Wit.

CONDUCTED

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, Esq.

Assisted by a Confederacy of Men of Letters.

- Welay, exulting, as the fruits refine,
Our annual offering at the public shrine.
Dread it not, ye critics, nor decay;
Your country's arts, nor view with adverse eye;
Indulgent still, the rigid brow unbend,
And e'en in censure, show that you befriend.
Prize not the skill of foreign realms alone,
Nor think it Taste to stigmatize your own;
But lean with bias to your country's arts,
And rather wrong your judgement, than your hearts.
Nor deem in soot, beseeching tone the Muse
From kindness courts what Candour might refuse;
No, - from her soul, though rising to her eye
What times remote, and realms around supply,
She hails, with honest pride, her Country's claim,
And calls on Taste to ratify her Fame.

IN the form of an Advertisement of extensive circulation, the Proprietors, Assistants, and Editor of The Port Folio, have announced that work, as on the point of publication, in a new dress, and upon an improved plan. On the first vernal month, a Phoenix Port Folio rises from the ashes of its predecessor. A light and imperfect sheet is changed into a copious pamphlet, an ample repository for the fruits of Science, the blossoms of Genius, and the fruits of Industry. Rigidly excluding party politics and the intractable topics of Theology, all the Gentlemen, who are interested in the work, are resolved that it shall vindicate the literary reputation of America. A rational hope is cherished that whether the exterior, or the interior of The Port Folio be curiously scanned, it may bear a comparison with any of the foreign Journals. Philosophy and Poetry, the Inventor and the Critic, the Classical Scholar, and the voluble Lounger, within the Literary Circle we have drawn, may meet in that charming concert where all the instruments are in perfect unison.

As the objects of this liberal undertaking are equally numerous and valuable, so the beneficial results will be manifold. If ably conducted, The Port Folio may contribute to the interest of individuals, to the power of Philadelphia, and the aggrandizement of our empire. The place of publication is unquestionably auspicious to all the projects of Genius, Science, and Art. A magnificent metropolis, continually widening her sphere of splendor, distinguished by the possession of the best libraries in the United States, memorable for the liberality of her institutions, and the grandeur of her views, must be the genuine Alma Mater, the foster nurse of the rising generation of the Citizens of America.

Independently of this consideration, Philadelphia is a town destitute of the votaries both of the grave, and the lighter Muse. A very large number of the Gentlemen of the Bar are eminently distinguished for their literary power and their liberal spirit. Most of our accomplished Physicians, while with every healing art they mitigate corporeal pain, can contribute largely to the stock of mental pleasure. The curious eye of many a dignified Clergyman ranges excurtively beyond the verge of his Church. Our Merchants and Manufacturers, the adventurous heroes of enterprise, are continually projecting something, which may contribute, either to the benefit of individuals, or the welfare of the community. Our catalogue of scientific scholars is copious; and those pacific and gentle Friends, who have given Philadelphia its name, and constitute so important a section of its population and interests, are prompt to aid the labours of those who are zealous to INCREASE THE POWER OF USEFUL INFORMATION.

As it was exemplified, at the commencement of the Gentleman's Magazine, and the Monthly Review in England, a Literary Journal, though it may appear uncouth to the million, and irksomely task an Editor, yet, at least, it may prove the Herald of Merit, and advance the reputation of others, though it procure but little for itself. If the conductor of such a miscellany be persevering, like Cave, he may, possibly, at length, obtain aid like Johnson's, and a patronage, liberal as his plan, and wide as its currency. If such a work cannot instantly boast of the inspiration of Genius, or the rewards of Munificence, or the breath of Fame, still the triple force of Enterprise, Assiduity, and Perseverance may, at

The bloom of life, the flowers of heaven that blow,
To deck the soul's dark gloomy grave below;
That breathe the refining fragrance through the air,
And purify this atmosphere of care.

The subsequent passage from a fascinating writer not only eloquent but just. The poetry is an honest tribute to our literary friends. The prose, may be profitably raised by the public.

O rare assemblage! rich amount of mind!
Collective light of intellect refined!
Scarcely once an age from Nature's niggard hand
Bestowed on man, yet such the Muse demands;
Such, where'er found, let grateful states hold dear,
Reward them, Wisdom! Wealth and Bankers here.

Great talents, when directed to improve and adorn society, can never be too highly esteemed, nor too conspicuously distinguished. Men of Genius are seldom mercenary: as the qualities which characterize them, are above all price, so money alone, however necessary to their wants, can never be considered the adequate reward of their exertions.

They require and deserve a nobler recompense: the homage of Wisdom and Virtue: the respect of their own times, and the regard of posterity.

There is no other description of persons from which a state can derive so much reputation, and so little expense. They are the pillars of its present dignity, and the foundations of its future fame. The acts of heroes live only in the enterprises of mind, and Caesar has done more to immortalize him than his sword.

Men of Genius are luminous persons on the great disk of society, which shine even after the sun of power and prosperity has withdrawn its beams, and rescue the nations they adorn from total darkness, by the long eclipse of time.

Commerce may make a poor rich, and Power may render them formidable: in one case, they excite envy without admiration; in the other, fear without respect. But exploits of intellect only ensure that genuine estimation, that grateful homage of the heart, which it is almost as honourable to give as to receive. The powers of Genius consecrate the name of Greatness, and break Wealth with Dignity.

...the success of The Port Folio has been of no inconsiderable magnitude. Commenced at a similar period, and pursued through all the vicissitudes of party, exposed to the caprice of Party, though parts of any but highest purpose, and neglected, in consequence of the bad health and misfortune of the Editor, it supported, and worse paid, still he made it a point of Honour never to abandon it ingloriously. When a crazy vehicle is to be driven over rugged roads, and jolted at every turning, Good Nature, perhaps, may commend that driver, who keeps his seat, and holds the reins.

After an irksome experience of many years of solicitude, it was plainly perceived by the Editor that no individual, however endowed with the gifts of Nature, or of Fortune, might presumptuously hope to conduct, without assistance, a work whose essence consists in endless variety. Scrow may depress, Sickness invade, or Misfortune overwhelm any man. In any of these situations, however entertaining, laborious, and gallant, at other times, he resembles the Knight of ancient Chivalry, under the subduing spell of the Enchanter, and is compelled to leave the adventure unfinished. On the other hand, as it has been justly observed, an alliance of men of Genius, Industry, and Property, is a perfect pledge for the merit, the resources, the durability, and fair character of a periodical publication. Such a union, has, for more than seventy years, maintained, with unabating spirit, The Monthly Review, which now shines with superior lustre in the metropolis of Britain. Such a union gives all its wisdom and all its wit to the best Critical Journal in Scotland. Such a union began and continued The Gentleman's Magazine. Such a union, and nothing but such a union, stamps value upon The Monthly Magazine of Phillips, and The Athenaeum of London. If Edward Cave had been the lone Editor of his Magazine, it never would have reached its twelfth number. This inevitable consequence did not escape the sagacity of that prudent Printer. Though conscious of his strength, he was conscious that it was but the vigour of one. In a just balance he weighed himself and he weighed others, and then wisely leaned on the solid column of LITERATURE. He was in confederacy with all the men of letters in the metropolis, and with both Universities; and hence a degree of success, unparalleled in the annals of Learning. During the Augustan age of French Genius, MARMONTEL undertook the management of The Mercure, a Miscellany which gained the countenance of the Court, and the contributions of the Literati. This ingenious man, perhaps the most accomplished Editor of his time, blessed with all the glorious gifts of Genius, endowed with that happy versatility of talent so indispensable to the character, polished by a liberal intercourse with the Court, the Learned, and the Fair; guided by a mind most powerful and wise, and memorable for his untiring industry, avows, with all the frankness of a Frenchman, that alone he was wholly incompetent to the task.

Beyond all controversy, the basis of our contemplated establishment is the best and broadest, which can be adopted. There never was a periodical work conducted to universal satisfaction by a single mind. Even in England, where readers are numerous and Curiosity keen, and at a period so auspicious to Genius and Learning, as the year 1759, The Rambler itself, supported by the strength of JOHNSON, failed to interest the public curiosity, and to enhance the bookseller's profits. Men complained, and not without reason, of the unvaried gloom of his thoughts, and the equality of his expression.

But without authorities, and without argument, the Public will soon perceive, with the perspicacity of the Royal Preacher, that a THREE-FOLD GOOD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN; that He who calls in the aid of an equal understanding, doubles his own, and that He, who profits of a superiour understanding, raises his powers to a level with the height of the superiour understanding he unites with.

On these principles, an alliance of literary characters has been recently formed in Philadelphia. Gentlemen of various talents, but all to be directed to objects both splendid and useful, have banded together, and pledged themselves to support the spirit, and increase the power of The Port Folio. An extensive correspondence will be maintained with Men of Genius and Science throughout the United States. Nor is the Editor unwarranted in asserting that he cherishes no visionary hope of assistance from a broad. He obtains the aid now contemplated, he has a right to declare that it will be of the first importance.

As we have remarked, on another occasion, this was a party, which, under his judicious direction, combined with a powerful aid of a numerous tribe of wits, attained a degree of celebrity, little short of that of the Tatler or Spectator. Indeed, it is believed that there never was a Journal of such variety of contents, and upon a plan so liberal and comprehensive, conducted with more address and ability. The proprietor, who was eminently endowed with all the talents requisite for a work so arduous, so boundless, and so versatile, had the rare good fortune to form a league with many of the finest scholars of France, and this combination, which undoubtedly contributed essentially to the success of the work, was never broken by the malignant machinations of the envious or the petty pretensions of the vain. Nothing can be more charming than his description of the alacrity with which men of Genius and Learning embarked in his cause, and nothing more conclusive can be offered with respect to the efforts produced by such a harmonious concert of the disciples of Literature. It was a favourite opinion of Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, that such an alliance among a few men of acknowledged ability, would be potent enough not only to form the taste, but to chastise all the knavery and folly of a nation. We believe implicitly in the truth of this sentiment, and, indeed, it has been remarkably verified both in England and France. The satyrists, and others, represented the dunces of the age, quelled the spirit of false criticism, formed the taste of the town, excited a general passion for elegant letters, and effected a complete revolution in the national character. A band of literary brothers of the finest genius and the soundest principles, gloriously accomplished what no single mind could perform, no, not BURKE, nor JOHNSON, nor ADDISON, nor Chancellor BACON himself.

This Marmontel and his companions diffused elegant and instructive literature among the remotest provinces of the French monarchy, soothed trembling Men with all the blandishments of candid criticism, promoted the interests both of the Fine and the Useful Arts, assisted the cause of science, successfully conducted Thalia and Melpomene to the stage, and above all, ROUSED AND FOSTERED INFERIOR GENIUS IN THE CRADLE.

We cannot resist the temptation to cite a pertinent passage from one of the wisest of mankind: "The opinion of King Solomon is not only perfectly just, but his fortification of it is impregnable: 'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labours. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but if he alone shall be alone, when he falleth, he hath not another to help him up.' - Ecclesiastes.

As it is well known that our country has been distinguished into The Port Folio, and that there is a valuable Library, as a source of a fashionable Miscellany, follows, that which will be a source of the most pleasing variety. The attention to the State, and political events of the Church will be habitually assumed, by all the production of a public policy. Hence we shall have no concern among the orthodox high, and the orthodox low, among the English, Scotch, and Irish, among Whigs and Tories, Secretaries and Churchmen. As we shall not see the stooping gait of phisians, nor the lofty step of the aristocratical buck, in any great us as a party of Gentlemen, studious to please according to the laws of urbanity.

Filtering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grows civil at its sound.
Whatever may be the public reception of our Miscellany, its plan is equally laudable and liberal. Our work is inscribed to the Gentlemen of the Sable, the Philosopher, the Merchant, the Manufacturer, and the Man of the World.

It is proposed to preserve in The Port Folio Sketches of Original Character, Narratives of Memorable Events, and of every thing remarkable, occurring in the vicissitudes of the times. To these crude materials our accomplished associates, delineating the sugar track, can give both a body and a soul. They can display not only industry and accuracy, but genius and taste. In a style of elegance, they can show all the adroitness of abridgement and perfect skill in the classing, grouping, and tinting of objects, which inferior artists might despair even to sketch.

A department of The Port Folio will exhibit a Gallery of the Portraits of Great Men, Than Biography, nothing is more fascinating, nothing more instructive, nothing that is perused, with greater avidity, or that excites a stronger interest. The lives of the illustrious in our own country, and the mighty mass of foreign Biography, will always furnish excellent entertainment to the most fastidious reader.

Characters, well portrayed, would challenge a fixed attention; and America, as well as Europe, contains a multitude of originals.

Remarkable Trials, Law Reports, and Pleadings of a peculiarly interesting, interesting, and eloquent character, would not only edify the Gentlemen of the Bar, but may be selected with so much taste and judgment as to amuse the mere miscellany reader.

The Epistolary Correspondence of men of literary eminence may form a very agreeable article.

The Drama will, sometimes attract our attention. Papers on topics of Moral and Physical Science, Rural Economy, Useful Projects, Miscellaneous Essays, Romantic Adventures, Tours and Travels, Foreign and Domestic Literature, Criticism and Poetry, Levity, Merriment, Wit and Honour will variegate this Journal.

To please the Ladies, we shall take care to arrange occasionally The Toilet of Fashion.

A Meteorological Journal, and agricultural Report, and Notices of Marriages and Deaths, under the heads of Nuptial and Obituary, will be attended to.

To fill this comprehensive outline, man pencils are requisite, and we have engaged the artists. Their subjects are numerous and their colors are brilliant. Genius, like that of Sir Joshua Reynolds is not a stranger to our Literary Circle. If that commanding Power, indefatigable Industry be associated, the liberal Public will sufficiently appreciate the labour. We appeal to America.

For THESE remains to prove what radiant fires Gild the clear heaven, where liberty inspires. To show what springs of bounty from thy hand, As gush'd the rock at Moses' high command, O'er Art's impoverish'd plains refreshing flow And cheer the fainting tribes of Taste below.

From all the impulses of Gratitude as well as the principles of Admiration, the Editor has insisted with emphasis, on the talents and liberality of his associates in this enterprise. As it has been nobly expressed, on another occasion, Generosity always receives part of its value from the manner in which it is bestowed. The kindness of the Editor's friend has included every circumstance that can gratify Delicacy, or enforce Obligation. They voluntarily conferred favours on a man, who has neither alliance, nor interest, who has not merited them by services, nor courted them by officiousness: they have spared him the shame of solicitation, and the anxiety of suspense.

On the stage of critical scrutiny, this is not the Editor's first appearance. On this occasion, though he is not oppressed by morbid terrors, he feels all the emotions of an adventurer's solicitude. By the benignity of the public, he has often been received with a degree of favour, equal to his hopes, and more than his merits. To that Public, in the last resort, must the apostrophe of an author be addressed. In the shape of a fawning publican, or a sobbing mendicant, he does not approach his Judges, but he comes forward, with a firm step, in the guise of a Cavalier, and a man of letters, anxious to please the Polite and the Learned, the Witty and the Fair.

And confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts without fear, to Merit and to you.

TERMS.

The price of The Port Folio, though the quantity of matter will be augmented, will continue as usual at 6 Dollars per annum; with this deviation from a former rule, that we shall not demand the subscription money, until the expiration of the year.

The Work will be embellished with elegant engravings.

A School

FOR the instruction of young men in the Latin and Greek Languages, English Grammar, Geography, &c. will be opened on the first of March next, in Rowan county, about fifteen miles above Salisbury, under the immediate direction of the Rev. JOSEPH D. KILPATRICK. The price of Tuition will be TWELVE Dollars, and of boarding, Forty Dollars a year. Boarding may be had in genteel houses in the neighbourhood, and tolerably convenient. The utmost care will be taken to preserve the morals of young men who may be sent to this place for instruction. February 20th, 1809.

Seine Fishery.

The Subscriber has a FISHERY on Roanoke River, 2 miles below Norfolk's Ferry, in Scotland Neck, Halifax county, where he will buy Fish for Tobacco, Cotton, Flour, or Brandy, &c. JAMES SMITH, jun. February, 20, 1809.