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[EDINBURGH, AUGUST 1790.]

PROSPECTUS

OF AN INTENDED NEW PERIODICAL WORK,

TO BE CALLED

THE BEE,

OR

UNIVERSAL LITERARY INTELLIGENCER.

To be published Weekly;

AND TO CONTAIN,

Besides Original Miscellaneous Essays on Literature and the Belles Lettres,

Early accounts of new discoveries in science and useful arts; an occasional review of valuable publications at home and abroad; extracts from foreign journals, academical dissertations and domestic performances of merit; biographical anecdotes and memoirs of eminent persons; notices of the heroic achievements of ancient and honourable families; observations on the topography and natural history of Britain and other countries; disquisitions concerning civil history and the progress of the human mind; poetical essays and translations; debates and distinguished speeches in parliament, and in the political assemblies of other states; remarkable laws, and interesting decisions in courts of justice; a concise chronicle of recent events; and a complete list of new publications in Britain, with the prices.

THE WHOLE BEING CALCULATED

To furnish an instructive amusement for the present hour, and to transmit to posterity a faithful picture of the acquirements, modes of thinking, prevailing habits, and chief pursuits of men, in Europe at least, during the period that this work shall continue to be published.

BY

JAMES ANDERSON, LL.D.

F.R.S. F.S.A. S.

Honorary Member of the Society of Arts, Agriculture, &c. at Bath; of the Philosophical, and of the Agricultural Societies in Manchester; and of the Academy of Arts, Sciences and Belles Lettres, Dijon; Author of several Performances.*

Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis.

HOR.

CONDITIONS.

- I. This Work will be published in Numbers, weekly; each Number to contain two sheets and a half (40 pages), small octavo.
- II. Nine Numbers will complete a Volume, and six Volumes a year; two intercalary Numbers being incorporated with the others to keep the Publication regular.
- III. It will be printed on three kinds of paper, to suit the taste of different classes of purchasers, viz. coarse, common, and fine writing paper.
- IV. Subscriptions will be taken in by the Volume only; and no separate Numbers will be sold.
- V. The price will be, for the coarse paper, if called for at the printing house, 1s. 10½d. per Volume (at the rate of twopence-halfpenny a-number);—if delivered in any house in Edinburgh, 2s.:—And if sent by post, the price will be, 2s. 3d. for the coarse, 3s. for the common, and 4s. for the fine paper per volume, delivered in numbers, regularly as published, in any post town in Great Britain. The same allowance will be made for each kind, if delivered in Edinburgh, as is specified above for the coarse paper.
- VI. The time of commencement, to those who subscribe after this work is begun, will be understood to be at the beginning of the volume printing at the date of the order, if not otherwise expressed; and the preceding numbers of that volume will be accordingly forwarded, if they be not out of print:—But should that be the case, the commencement will be at the beginning of the succeeding volume; as no separate numbers can be sent.
- VII. It will be understood that those who once begin to take in this work intend to continue it, till they give notice in writing that they mean to give it up; and that those who begin a volume are to continue till that volume be finished. If, therefore, such notice of discontinuance be received during the currency of a volume, the remaining numbers only of that volume shall be forwarded.

* The principal of these performances that have been printed separately, are, Essays relating to Agriculture and Rural Affairs, 2 volumes 8vo; Observations on the means of exciting a spirit of National Industry, &c. 4to; An Inquiry into the Causes that have retarded the Progress of Agriculture in Europe, &c. 4to; An Essay on Quicklime as a Cement and as a Manure, 8vo; Observations on Planting and Training Timber Trees, &c. 8vo; A Practical Treatise on Chimneys, with full Directions for preventing or removing Smoke in Houses, 12mo; The Interest of Great Britain with regard to her American Colonies considered, &c. 8vo; A Proposal for establishing the Northern British Fisheries, &c. 12mo; An Inquiry into the nature of the Corn Laws, &c. of Britain, 8vo; An Account of the present State of the Hebrides, &c. 8vo; &c.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY MUNDELL AND SON, PARLIAMENT STAIRS;

Where all Orders and Literary Communications, addressed to the Editor, post paid, will be gratefully received and punctually acknowledged.

TO THE PUBLIC.

The editor of this work has frequently had occasion to remark, in the course of reading, that numerous facts, and important observations, have been published many years, without having ever come to the knowledge of those classes of men who are engaged in the active pursuits of business, though it is, for the most part, by such men only, that practical improvements can be applied to useful purposes in life.

He has likewise observed, that among those who are engaged in arts, agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, there are many individuals of great ingenuity and conspicuous talents, who, from experience and observation, have made important discoveries in their respective employments; but that these men being at present in a great measure excluded from the circle of literary intelligence, have neither an opportunity, nor any inducement to communicate their discoveries to others.

He has also often remarked, with extreme regret, that clergymen*, and others in remote parts of the country, whose minds in their early youth have been delighted with the charms of scientific pursuits, must in the present state of things, unless they be possessed of affluence, reluctantly forego the pleasures that result from a familiar intercourse with the republic of letters, and suffer themselves to sink into a sort of mental annihilation.

" Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
And many a rose is born to bluish unseem,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

GRAY.

Alike unknown indeed, and useless to the world, are the mental treasures which thus are buried in obscurity, as the inanimate objects here described; but not alike are the effects of neglect on the animate and the inanimate objects themselves. The gem loses none of its valuable qualities, though it should remain for ages hid in the bosom of the dark abyss; the bursting rose bud also, covered with the dews of heaven, unfolds its opening charms with equal beauty in the tangled glade, and diffuses its balmy fragrance with the same profusion in the lonely desert, as in the polished garden, where it ministers to the delight of admiring princes.

Such was the general train of reasoning that suggested the idea of the present work: Nor does the editor scruple to own, that the pleasure he has felt in anticipating the happiness he may thus eventually be the means of procuring to many deserving persons who are now lost in obscurity, and in contemplating the benefits that will probably result to the community at large from the revivification of so much genius, which now lies dormant and useless, have tended greatly to incite him to attempt the present arduous undertaking; and have influenced him in adopting the particular form of this work, the mode of its publication, and the price at which it is offered to the public, as being better adapted than any other he could think of, for removing the inconveniences pointed out, and for diffusing knowledge very universally among those classes of men who are at present excluded from the literary circle.

Nor will those even in the busiest scenes of life find any difficulty in glancing over the whole at leisure hours; and the price is so exceedingly moderate as to bring it within the reach of even the most economical members of the community.

* This observation chiefly applies to clergymen in Scotland.

the whole human race, as constituting but one great society, whose general advancement in knowledge must tend to augment the prosperity of all its parts. He wishes, therefore, to break down those little distinctions which accident has produced to set nations at variance, and which ignorance has laid hold of to disunite and to render hostile to each other such a large proportion of the human race. Commerce hath naturally paved the way to an attempt, which literature alone could not perhaps have hoped to achieve. British traders are now to be found in all nations on the globe; and the English language begins to be studied as highly useful in every country. By means of the universal intercourse which trade occasions, and the general utility of this language, he hopes to be able to establish a mutual interchange of knowledge, and to effect a friendly literary intercourse among all nations; by which man shall come gradually to know, to esteem, to aid, and to benefit his fellow creatures wherever he finds them. The human heart is nearly the same at all times; and it is perhaps alike susceptible of piety, beneficence and generosity among all people, if errors that too often pervert the understanding were eradicated. The proper business of philosophy is to eradicate those errors which estrange mankind from each other, and to extend the sphere of beneficence among men wider and wider still, till it shall comprehend every individual of the human race.

Should the editor of this work be enabled to establish the foundation of this system of universal civilization, he would reckon himself singularly fortunate indeed, and think that he had accomplished one of the most glorious achievements that can fall to the lot of man to perform. Animated with this hope, his exertions have been great; and he trusts they will not in future be unworthy of the object he has in view. He is happy in being able to say, that he has been more fortunate in forming connections with men of eminence in the literary world than he had any reason to expect; and were he here to mention the names of those who are to honour him with their correspondence, it is hard to say whether it would most expose him to be censured as vain, or bring his veracity in question. Suffice it therefore at present only to say, that there is scarcely a civilized nation on the globe in which he has not a reasonable assurance of having some confidential correspondents, on whose knowledge and zeal in the cause of science he can fully rely.

It is indeed to that ardour for knowledge among them that he is solely indebted for the favourable countenance he has obtained. Into all nations, therefore, where the English language is in any way known, this work will probably find its way; and of course it may be expected that the useful discoveries, or literary essays of ingenious men, will have a better chance of being generally read, and the writers of them made known among men of letters, if inserted in it, than perhaps in any other publication. To give this work, therefore, the full value of which it is susceptible, the editor warmly solicits communications from ingenious men of all nations. Brevity and originality in scientific disquisitions, utility with respect to arts, accuracy and the most scrupulous fidelity in regard to experiments, nature and truth in the delineation of real life, and elegance in polite literature; and the belles lettres, are what he chiefly wishes to obtain. Though utility shall ever be his chief aim, he is well aware, that to be able to accomplish this aim, it is necessary that the work should be as agreeable as possible. Dry and intricate details, therefore, it shall be his study to avoid. To polish the manners and to humanize the heart, he believes to be the first steps required in an attempt to inspire a taste for literary excellence, and to excite exertions for attaining the highest perfection in arts. This he hopes to be able to effect, by a careful selection of elegant dissertations, characteristic anecdotes, entertaining tales, and lively sallies of wit and humour, that shall be naturally calculated to awaken the attention of youth, and to afford a desirable entertainment to those of more enlarged understanding and cultivated taste.

It is not, however, on account of the dissemination of knowledge alone that the editor calls the attention of the public to this work; but because it is equally adapted to the extirpation of error. Facts, especially when they respect distant objects, are often imperfectly known, or much misrepresented by those who communicate them to the public. When this happens, in the ordinary modes of publication, such misrepresentations cannot be easily discovered. It may be long before such publications fall in the way of those who know the facts with precision; and when this at last does happen, it requires so great an exertion, in these circumstances, to put matters to rights, that few persons find themselves disposed to undertake the task. Even when this difficulty is overcome, the task is but imperfectly accomplished. Thousands may have been misled by the supposed fact, who may never have an opportunity of meeting with its refutation. These, in their turn, may reason upon the fact, and publish it in other works. Error may thus be propagated among millions who never shall have an opportunity of getting these false notions corrected. This could not happen, should the intended miscellany meet with as general a circulation as it is naturally susceptible of. In that case, the publication would soon fall into the hands of some one who would know with precision the facts that occurred in it, even with respect to very distant objects: And as errors of this sort might be rectified, in many cases, by a few lines, which would cost little trouble to write, and be attended with no expense, nor be ac-

companied with obloquy nor any other disagreeable effect to the writer, there seems to be no room to doubt, that the native love of truth, which is congenial to the human mind, would prompt such persons cheerfully to point out errors wherever they occurred; and as these corrections would come in succession to be read by the very persons who had been at first misled, the evil would be quickly rectified, and this great inlet to error be stopped up nearly at its source. Doubtful facts also, that occurred in other writings, might thus be ascertained; and error be at last so thoroughly ferretted out from all its intricate retreats, as to make TRUTH to reign triumphantly over all the regions of science. Such, then, being the great objects aimed at in this apparently humble work, it will not be wondered at that the editor not only does not wish to conceal his name from the public, but is even proud to have given birth to such an undertaking. If his former writings possess any merit at all, they owe it entirely to an unreformed desire in him to promote the general good of mankind; and his more useful performance, may entitle him to hope for a continuance, and an increase of that favour, which he has, on all former occasions, so liberally experienced from an ever indulgent public. Should he fail in this attempt, he shall regret it as a misfortune, and ascribe it to the weakness of his powers, that have not been sufficient to rouse the public attention to a subject of such universal moment; and to the accidental waywardness of the times. If, however, he meet with the encouragement that the boldness of the attempt, and probable utility of the work, seem to merit, no exertion on his part shall be wanting. Of his own application at least, while health shall be continued, he can speak with a reasonable degree of certainty; on the liberal assistance of his literary friends in Britain, he can with a well grounded confidence rely; and he has every reason to expect that his communications from abroad will be valuable alike for their authenticity, variety and importance. It is not, however, on the communications from ariety and importance. It is not, however, on the communications from ariety and importance. It is not, however, on the communications from ariety and importance.

to attempt in the present work. Instead of giving a diary of the transactions of parliament, as in a newspaper, he proposes to give a separate history of the rise and progress of each particular bill, announcing always at the beginning the particular objects of the bill, and tracing the amendments it received in each step of its progress through the house; and thus explaining the state in which it is left when passed into a law, or finally rejected; adding himself such occasional remarks as the subject naturally suggests. By this mode of procedure, the account of parliamentary proceedings must indeed be delayed till towards the end of each session of parliament, as it is proposed never to lose sight of one bill till it be finally passed into a law, or rejected. But as the daily proceedings in parliament can be found in every newspaper, this delay can be attended with little inconvenience to the reader; and it is hoped he will receive a satisfaction, in seeing the same subject discussed soon after, and placed in a light somewhat new; and which, from the manner of treating it, if the execution be tolerable, should be more clear and satisfactory than the ordinary accounts of parliamentary proceedings. How far he shall succeed in this department, the public will decide: but it is extremely obvious, that few things are so much wanted in this country, as a more general publication than at present takes place of the laws that affect individuals; and he hopes that this attempt, in a work so much within the reach of all ranks of people, will be received with indulgent candour.

The uncommon lowness of price at which this work is offered to the public, has been adopted, that its circulation might be the more extensive, with a view to render this, and other articles of useful information, accessible to the great body of the people: and the editor warmly begs leave to solicit the attention and patronage of the public at large in this attempt; for it is by an extensive circulation alone, that the general attention can be so much engaged, as to effect all the purposes this publication is naturally fitted to accomplish. His utmost zeal, however, can prompt him to go no farther, than to be anxious that those who wish well to the undertaking may have an opportunity of once seeing the work, and of judging for themselves of its merit; and if upon trial they shall find it unworthy of their patronage, it is but just and proper they should then give it up. Had private emolument been the chief object with the editor, he is well aware that he would have better succeeded by affixing a much higher price to it: The more general extension of knowledge, however, is certainly a much greater object to aim at.

Still farther to stimulate the attention of the public, and to call forth the latent sparks of genius that may lie hid from public view; it is the wish of the editor to give a set of premiums, annually, rather honorary than lucrative, for the best dissertations on literary subjects. The extent of these premiums, and the variety of subjects selected for them, must ultimately depend upon the encouragement the public shall give to this undertaking. As a beginning however, the following incitements are humbly offered to such ingenious youths as are willing to engage in the honourable contest for literary glory. It is needless to add, that it is the honour of the victory, rather than the value of the premium, that must constitute the principal reward.

To conclude, the editor will thankfully avail himself of every hint, tending to render his work more perfect in any respect; nor does he despair of being able to furnish a miscellany, that shall be entitled to some share of the public attention.

** A particular time cannot be fixed for beginning this publication; as many necessary arrangements must first be made, which may require a longer time than is at present expected. The editor is indeed too anxious to have the work well done, to think of commencing it prematurely. Those at a distance, however, who incline to encourage it, should lose no time in forwarding their orders, as it is probable it may be begun by the time that a return from them can be obtained. It will be advertised in the newspapers before it commences.

†† Subscriptions for this paper will be taken in by all booksellers, or others entrusted with copies of the prospectus, in every part of Great Britain. Or orders and literary communications may be transmitted, post paid, to the Editor, at the printing house of Mundell and Son, Edinburgh, where they will be gratefully received and punctually acknowledged.

* In order to prevent mistakes, it is requested that subscribers will please to write their name and address in very distinct characters; and mention the place, or the post town, where their copies are to be left. Let these directions be as distinct and precise as possible.

** It is also requested that such subscribers as reside in the country, will be pleased to appoint some person in a post town to pay this paper for them when it falls due; and to mark that person's name, &c. as well as their own when they give their order for it. From those very remote parts of the country, especially, lying beyond Inverness, Fort William and Inveraray, where little commercial intercourse takes place, no orders can be answered, unless this requisite be complied with.

†† If no particulars are marked, it will be understood that the common paper is intended, and it will be forwarded accordingly. Those, therefore, who wish to be furnished either with the coarse, or with the fine paper, will please to mention it in their order.

§ In the first, or some early number of this work, will be given, original memoirs, and authentic anecdotes of the late ingenious Doctor William Cullen, the respected preceptor and much esteemed patron and friend of the editor, accompanied with a portrait, which no pains shall be spared to render as exact a likeness as possible, of that truly great and worthy man. As few copies will be thrown off at any time more than are subscribed for, those who wish to be possessed of this work will please to send their orders soon.

** On account of the mode of publication, and other circumstances, it becomes impossible for booksellers to circulate this work, in the usual way.

PREMIUMS PROPOSED FOR LITERARY ESSAYS, &c.

FIRST. For the best written, and the most characteristic sketch of the life of any of the great men or philosophers that follow; viz. Galileo; Columbus; Don Henry of Portugal; Tycho Brahe; Friar Bacon; Alfred; Charlemagne; Cosmo, or Lorenzo de Medicis; Cardinal Ximenes; Gustavus Vasa; The Czar Peter the Great; Bacon Lord Verulam; The Bishop of Chiapa; The Abbd de Saint Pierre; or any other great statesman or philosopher who appeared in Europe between the revival of letters, and the beginning of the present century; A GOLD MEDAL,—OF FIVE GUINEAS.

In these sketches, striking characteristic traits, expressive of the peculiar genius and cast of mind of the person, contrasted with the prevailing manners of the people, and modes of thinking at the time, will be chiefly valued. Brevity and force will be high recommendations; but pompous panegyric will be viewed in a very different light. Let facts speak for themselves: For it is facts, when fairly represented, that constitute the chief, and indeed the only excellence of the kind of painting here aimed at. The firm boldness and accuracy of the touches, not the allurements of gaudy colouring, are here wanted.

SECOND. For the best and most striking characteristic sketch of any eminent statesman, philosopher, or artist now living, or who has died within the present century; A GOLD MEDAL,—OF FIVE GUINEAS.

In these sketches, originality and strength of thought, and an exact knowledge of the human mind, will be principally sought for: Brevity and elegance in the style and manner will be greatly esteemed; but without candour and impartiality, they cannot be admitted. The censure and the praise of party writers tend alike to disfigure all truly characteristic traits, and to disguise instead of elucidating the subject. This must be here avoided.

THIRD. For the best original miscellaneous essay, story, apologue, or tale, illustrative of life and manners; or effusion or disquisition on any subject that tends to interest the heart, and amuse the imagination, in prose; A GOLD MEDAL,—OF FIVE GUINEAS.

An original turn of thought; a correctness and purity of language; ease and elegance of arrangement, and sprightliness of style, when devoid of affectation; will be accounted principal excellencies. Subjects that are cheerful and sportive will be preferred to those that are grave and solemn. But let not affectation be mistaken for ease, nor pertinence for wit and humour: Neither should solemnity be confounded with pathos; for the truly pathetic can never fail to please.

He begs leave to repeat, that in these sketches or essays, comprehensiveness of brevity is principally required. It is not by quantity that the editor of this miscellany means to estimate the value of the performances offered to him; but much the reverse. Those essays which comprehend much in small bounds will therefore be always deemed the most valuable. He can never be at a loss for materials to fill his pages; and therefore is anxious that the essays offered to him should be compressed into as small a space as is consistent with elegance and perspicuity.

FOURTH. For the best original essay, in verse; ode, tale, epistle, sonnet, or short poetic effusion of any kind; A SILVER MEDAL,—OF TWO GUINEAS.

FIFTH. For the most spirited translation, or elegant imitation of any select poem in foreign languages, whether ancient or modern; A SILVER MEDAL,—OF TWO GUINEAS.

The editor, when he offers these two last premiums, does it not without fear and hesitation. All the fine arts are pleasing and attractive; but none of them, he believes, is so generally seductive to youthful minds, as the allurements of poetry. While imagination is warm, and before a faculty of observing things accurately, has formed a just taste for imitative beauties, a facility in making verses is often mistaken for a poetic talent; and the seductions of self love keep up the illusion. To these causes, he is sensible, we owe those numerous uninteresting verses that are perpetually issuing from the press, which serve to disgust the man of taste, and make him turn from the sight of verse, though he would be enraptured with genuine poetry, should it fall in his way. Should these small allurements call forth a number of trifles of this sort, the editor would feel he had placed himself in very disagreeable circumstances; for if it be unpleasing even to read such things, it would become in this case extremely distressing, from the unavoidable recollection, that pain must be given by rejecting them. The pleasure, however, he would feel at calling forth, were it but a single line of genuine poetry, that modest merit might have otherwise suppressed, induced him to propose these small premiums. The effect they produce will determine whether in future they shall be continued or withdrawn.

It may not be improper also to hint, that it will be requisite that translations and imitations from the poets in foreign or dead languages, be made chiefly from such passages as have not already appeared in English. A repetition of what has already been done cannot be admitted, unless it possess very superior excellence. There is a spirit, and fire, and heroic ardour, conspicuous in "The Songs of a Prussian Grenadier," by Gleim; and a yet higher degree of artless energy in "The Songs of an Amazon," by Weisse, that would be highly captivating to most readers, were they known; and among the Lyric pieces of Metastasio, there is a brevity, a simplicity, an elegance and sonnet could be written in English, that could possess those seductive charms that had been admired for two hundred years in the writings of Petrarch, till a lady, well known in the annals of polite literature, very lately shewed, that for this species of poetry, no language was more happy than our own. Under the plastic power of genius, language becomes an instrument capable of every thing: Where genius is wanting, it is a tool of very circumscribed powers.

* * Essays intended for this competition, written in the English language, will be received any time before the 1st of January 1791, addressed, post paid, to the Editor, at the printing house of Muddell and Son, Edinburgh. To each essay must be prefixed a few words as a motto; the same motto, in the same hand writing, being inscribed upon a sealed paper inclosed in it, containing the name and address of the competitor, or such name and address as he pleases to put in its stead, if he wishes to remain unknown. The sealed paper belonging to each of these essays to which the premiums shall be adjudged, will be opened when the premiums are awarded, and the essays referred, and if agreeable to the writer. At any rate, however, none of the sealed papers, unless it be those belonging to the essays to which premiums are adjudged, shall be opened; but will be returned, if desired, to any person who shall call for them: Or, if not called for within six months after the premiums shall be adjudged, they will then be burnt, in the presence of respectable witnesses, who shall attest that the seals were unopened. The strictest honour in this respect may be depended on.

* * * Orders or communications may be occasionally addressed to the editor, under cover, to Sir John Sinclair, Baronet, M. P. Edinburgh.

N. B. Whoever shall procure twelve subscribers for this work, and remit the price, at the end of each volume, to the editor, will be furnished with a copy for themselves regularly as published, gratis; and so in proportion for any greater number.