Cumberland's Anecdotes of the Life of Julio Bonasoni.

...dressing potatoes which renders that vegetable far more palatable than it is to be found in England.

Pray, good Sir, what is that method? If you had bestowed a few words to teach our countrymen how to eat potatoes in greater perfection than they now do, we, who are fond of this excellent root, scruple not to add, that such an article of information would have added a positive merit to your volume.

Remarks of this nature may all, perhaps, be flighted by so spirited a writer; but we are no admirers of those hasty sketches which the reader will find so loosely thrown together; and as the writer intimates an intention of hastening among the wider regions of continental domain, in search of materials for a more important superstructure, we wish that, as he then means to throw aside his 'anonymous pen,' he really might assume a more respectable appearance; for which, Nature does not seem to have denied him sufficient talents. Before he reveals his name, however, we advise him to make himself master of the small sword and pistol shooting.

N.

We cannot conclude without remarking that, in our opinion, much of the blame which the author so liberally befalls on the inhabitants of Haverfordwest, respecting the strange story of Mr. G.—th, may be retorted on himself for leaving in confinement an object so worthy of relief. A really benevolent man would not have quitted Haverford without obtaining Mr. G.'s liberation, if the means were in his power; and that the comparatively small sum necessary for this purpose might have been commanded by our author, we have every right to suppose from his amending himself with so long and so expensive a ramble.


In the 'Plan for improving the Arts in England,' prefixed to this work, Mr. Cumberland, like a good patriot, endeavours to advance the interests of his country, by exciting a greater attention to the antique; and we do not think that his scheme is a bad one, though we strongly doubt its adoption. We will give the general outline of the proposal in the author's own words:

* Not the author of The Observer, W. G. Indian, &c. whose Christian name is Richard.

† That
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"That a subscription be commenced (and if the Dilettante Society
would begin it out of their funds, it would be consistent with their
own generous efforts to improve the arts), in order to raise the sum
of ——, which when completed, application should be made to Par-
liament for further assistance; the total of which sums, under their
function, should be consolidated into a perpetual fund, to which
proper trustees may be nominated, for the declared purposes, out of
the annual interest, of commencing two galleries, and filling them,
as fast as the interest accrues, with plaster casts from antique statues,
bas-reliefs, fragments of architecture, fine bronzes, &c. collected
not only from Italy, but from all parts of Europe.

"That these galleries should be placed, so as to enjoy a north light,
being parallel to each other, and consist of strong but simple forms;
void at first of all ornament, and solely calculated for the purpose of
containing, in a good point of view, and well lighted, the several
specimens of art. A convenient space for visitors to pass in view
of them below and between the objects and the artificers, who should
be possessed of a raised stage, under a continued window, contrived
to as to illuminate at once their drawing desk, and the images on the
opposite wall.

"These galleries, one for statues and architectural models, and one
for bas-reliefs, should be each commenced, at the same time, in par-
allel directions, and each annually extended and furnished with casts,
in the proportion that the funds would admit. They should be in-
discriminately opened to all students in the arts, and the public, un-
der proper regulations, during the greater part of the day through-
out the year.

"All fine bas-reliefs, &c. should, if possible, be sent to England in
molds, with a cast in them, by which means they not only come the
safest from injury, but it would enable the managers to place in the
gallery two or three casts of such as best deserved imitation; and
then the molds might be sold to our molders in plaster of Paris, by
which means other cities would be enriched with many fine objects at
a reasonable expense, to the great advantage of architects, schools,
and the public in general.

"There are not wanting people, who think, that such objects, by
being cheaply multiplied, would injure the progress of our artists:
but experience teaches otherwise; for those nations which most
abound in such things, most abound in artists; and the more any
thing is multiplied by casts or impressions, the more is the original
esteemed; for while the narrow-minded amateur hides his fine
Cameo, lest a fulgur should be obtained from it, both he and his
ring are forgot; when, on the other hand, the liberal collector,
whole chief pleasure it is to gratify all lovers with a copy of the fine
originals he possesses, finds, to his surprize, the fame of his antique,
and the credit of its owner, increased in the same proportion; and
hence we may rest assured, that the multiplication of works of art al-
ways ends in a multiplied demand for the labours of artists.

"The cheapness of paste has by no means decreased the esteem of
diamonds; and man, happily for the multitude, has always considered
suchness and rareness of materials as no final addition to the merit of
workmanship;
workmanship; even pictures have been painted, by good artists, on silver, to enhance their value. And here I cannot avoid observing the utility it would be of to sculpture, if our artists would, as was done by the ablest of both Greece and Rome, make models for architects in terra-cotta, at reasonable prices; for there are many who cannot afford marble, that would gladly encourage them in this effort in monuments, friezes, &c. The frequency of which in churches would probably increase the ambition of the wealthy to be represented in more expensive materials; and hence afford the artists more numerous opportunities of displaying their talents.

' To return from this digression; as each bas-relief, &c. must of necessity be placed at some distance from the ground, the space below I should propose to fill with the concise history of the café, such as what have been the conjectures of antiquarians as to its history, author, &c. to which should be added, the time and place, when and where it was found, and the name of the country and situation the original at present ornaments.

'The pedestal of each statue might contain the like inscriptions, in painted letters, the more easily to correct them on any new information.

' How useful such inscriptions would be to travellers, antiquarians, and artists, I need not point out; neither need I add the utility that would arise from marking with a line on each object the division of the restored parts; which lines might be made, by whatever artist was employed to send home the molds, on the spot: for the baneful effects of partial ignorance, which, like a weed, springs up among the belittled crops of human learning, are seldom more manifest than among those whose labours are directed to the elucidation of fine art in antique monuments.

'Such galleries, when finished, would possess advantages that are wanting in numerous museums; where often, to gratify the love of ornament in the architect, fine bas-reliefs are placed so high, as to be of little use to students, and as traps only to the antiquarian; of which, having with younger limbs, and younger eyes, often followed the enthusiastic Winkelmann, I could give many instances.

'Here, however, all would be brought to a level, and to light; all the restorations carefully distinguished; and such men of learning, as, without great detriment to their affairs, can never see Italy, would hence find daily opportunities of benefiting and crediting the nation, as well as themselves, by their erudite remarks on monuments that relate entirely to classic ground.

'In a word, well prepared, both by the knowledge and study of these calls, our artists would be less confused on their arrival in Italy among the originals; and a much shorter stay would then suffice: lastly, on their return, these galleries would help to perpetuate in their memories the result of their studies; a fund of employment would be afforded to young artists in copying these antiques for foreigners, as well as natives; and our engravers would here always find objects from whence great works might be executed, equally interesting to all Europe, and much more correct, as well as less expensive, than any that have hitherto appeared in elucidation of antiquities.'

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All this seems rational, and of easy accomplishment: but where is munificence to execute the idea? Mr. Cumberland's wish that the Cartons of the immortal Raphael were more open to public inspection, will not, we fear, be productive of much effect.—The difficulty of viewing the easel chef d'œuvres of that astonishing painter has been long a subject of complaint: but the time may possibly arrive, when the Royal Academy may be the depository of those ineffable treasures; and, by removing every difficulty of access, improve as well as delight a nation so strenuous in its progress to refinement, and already so respectable for its works of taste, elegance, and grandeur.

We cannot avoid reprobing an unfairness (not to use a more severe yet justifiable expression,) in Mr. C.'s mention of two or three artists only, as worthy of the public attention, at a time when he might have brought forward men of superior abilities. This gentleman [to us unknown, and new, as a writer,] should take care that, while he wishes to impress the world with an idea of his liberality in elevating two or three favourite characters, he does not create a contrary sentiment by a partial neglect of others.

There is also a vein of sphenetic aperity in the following note, which we think ill founded, and consequently reprehensible:

There are men in London, who, speculating in the labours of artists, have acquired great fortunes, not without speculating on the credulity of the public as largely. These people, encouraged by the respect that wealth infuses in a commercial country, and, perhaps, self- persuaded by the vanity that attends success, are now taking upon themselves the importance of patriots among fellow-citizens, and (which cannot smitingly be passed over, because prejudicial to the art they profess to serve) patronizers of art itself. But if the public are to estimate the progress of fine art, by the abotion their struggles for profit produce, we shall soon arrive at a period, when the errors their barbarous impatience and rapacity have introduced, will, by excess, cure themselves; and then the few, who have patiently pursued the direct path, will rise, and find their reward in the employment and approbation of the disabused public.

Although no names are mentioned, it is impossible to mistake the illiberal allusion.—The objects of his attack have extended a patronage beyond the reach of Kings.

The anecdotes of the celebrated Italian engraver, Julio Bonafoni, are dry and uninteresting. He was an artist of note in his day *, almost unknown in the present: but he has

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* He is supposed to have flourished during the greatest part of the sixteenth century.

Morris's False Colours: a Comedy.

met with a champion in Mr. C. to rescue him from that oblivion into which he was rapidly descending.

Wolfe.

Art. XIII. False Colours, a Comedy in five Acts. As performed at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, by his Majesty's Company from the Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane. By Edward Morris, Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge. 8vo. 1s. 6d. Cadell. 1793.

Of the difficulty of writing comedy with success, few authors, who have not made the attempt, are aware. Knowledge so minute and varied, judgment so strong and self-denying, imagination so ardent, and humour, wit, and passion, so incessant, are required, that few indeed are found equal to the task. To succeed even indifferently is a proof of talents which cannot be called common. In this predicament we rank the author of the play under consideration. He has seen much, has made many observations on men and manners, and often has arranged his materials with effect: but, on the whole, not with effect enough. Character should be displayed, and the recedes of the heart developed: but, in order that emotion may be created, we must have it directed toward some certain point. When an author places any dependence on his story, that story must be progressive; and not scene after scene be left in total neglect till it is forgotten. Wit and humour generally become impertinent when they do not answer this purpose: character itself must contribute; or, from a beauty of the first order, it will become an excrescence. We have but little anxiety for the hero and heroine (Sir Harry Cecil and Constance) of this play; and the little that is excited is soon suffered to slumber, and, like a man ashamed of sleeping in company, often endeavours to awake, but cannot. Various efforts are also made to pourtray character, and certainly we meet with many touches of true painting: but the failures and mistakes are much more numerous. Lord Visage we think particularly objectionable. He is a physiognomist, and in his character Lavater is satirized, or, to speak more accurately, burlesqued. A poet, who does not deeply consider the moral effects of his satire, is, in our opinion, highly culpable. Any attempt to make men believe that the countenance of man does not bear visible signs of individual propensities, and of vicious or of virtuous habits, is immoral, because it is false; and though there may be persons who pretend to more physiognomical science than they have acquired, and who therefore individually may deserve ridicule, yet, to ridicule the science itself without this discrimination, or without making the audience understand that the satire is levelled at such mistaken individuals but not at the
Some Anecdotes of the Life of Julio Bonasoni, a Bolognese Artist, who followed the Styles of the best Schools in the Sixteenth Century. Critical Review, or, Annals of literature, 9 (1793:Nov.) p.360

Some Anecdotes of the Life of Julio Bonasoni, a Bolognese Artist, who followed the Styles of the best Schools in the Sixteenth Century.

In the scheme for improving the arts in this country, which forms the prefatory part of Mr. Cumberland’s biographical undertaking, we are shewn the importance of not only maintaining that pre-eminence to which the English arts have attained, but also the necessity of a steady perseverance in our endeavours to imitate, more closely, the exquisite models of the ancients. The subject is considered as it affects our commerce and manufacturers; and the author alleges, that,

'Whatever people content themselves with a lower ambition than to equal the Greeks at the highest period of art, will be found to be wandering from perfection, instead of approaching towards it.'

The plan suggested for the general improvement of taste, consists in the establishing of two public galleries, in which should be deposited plaistair cabis of all the valuable antique statues, bas-reliefs, &c. in different parts of Europe. To these galleries the author proposes the indiscriminate admission of all students in the arts, and that the expense be defrayed out of a fund raised for that purpose by voluntary subscriptions, and to which the author himself very liberally offers to contribute.

In the anecdotes of the life of Bonasoni, we do not trace anything that would prove interesting to the generality of readers, for which reason we forbear to enter into them. Yet the particulars related of that artist are a sufficient proof, that justice has not hitherto been done to him by those biographers who have noticed his contemporaries. The catalogue of Bonasoni's works will have its value with those for whose inspection it is more immediately calculated, and we think the whole of the publication possessed of merit.