LITERARY ANECDOTES

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY;

COMPRIZING

Biographical Memoirs

OF

WILLIAM BOWYER, PRINTER, F.S.A.

AND MANY OF HIS LEARNED FRIENDS;

AN INCIDENTAL VIEW

OF THE PROGRESS AND ADVANCEMENT OF LITERATURE

IN THIS KINGDOM DURING THE LAST CENTURY;

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL ANECDOTES

OF A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF

EMINENT WRITERS AND INGENIOUS ARTISTS;

WITH A VERY COPIOUS INDEX.

BY JOHN NICHOLS, F. S. A.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOLUME V.

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BY NICHOLS, SON, AND BENTLEY, AT CICERO'S HEAD,

RED-LION-PASSAGE, FLEET-STREET.

1812.

of whom Mary died unmarried, in 1786; Anne married the Rev. Richard Jacob; Sarah married the Rev. John Hardy Franklyn, M.A. rector of Acrise, who died in 1782; Elizabeth married Thomas Curteis, of Sevenoke, D.D. and prebendary of Canterbury, whose second wife she was; and Susan married, first Arthur Weever, esq. and secondly Mr. Ogleby, of the kingdom of Ireland.

Dr. JAMES PARSONS was born at Barnstaple, Devonshire, in March 1705. His father, who was the youngest of nine sons of Colonel Parsons, and nearly related to the baronet of that name, being appointed barrack-master at Bolton in Ireland, removed with his family into that kingdom *, soon after the birth of his then only son † James, who received at Dublin the early part of his education,

Bridget (daughter of William Turner, of the White Friers, Canterbury, son of William, by Anna-Maria Papillon above mentioned, and who died Jan. 6, 1770) he had, in 1796, issue surviving seven children. He married secondly, in 1772, Hester, daughter of the above-mentioned Dr. Thomas Curteis by his first wife; who died at Lee, in 1782, and was buried at Acrise. The Rev. Philip Papillon, rector of Eythorn, and vicar of Tunbridge, Kent, died Jan. 28, 1809.

* In the Preface to the "Memoirs of Japhet," he says, "I spent several years of my life in Ireland, and there attained to a tolerable knowledge in the very antient tongue of that country, which enabled me to consult some of their manuscripts, and become instructed in their grammatical institutes. Afterwards I became acquainted with several gentlemen from Wales, well versed in their own history and language §, men of sense and liberal learning; who, in many conversations upon such subjects, gave me such satisfaction and light, in matters of high antiquity, as to occasion my application to the study of the Welsh tongue also: in which I had equal pleasure and surprize, when, the more I enquired, the more nearly related the Irish and Welsh languages appeared. When I was sent abroad to study the medicinal art, I frequently conversed with young gentlemen from most parts of Europe; who came to Paris, and followed the same masters, in every branch of the profession, with me; and my surprise was agreeably increased in finding that, in every one of their native tongues, I could discover the roots ‖ of most of their expressions in the Irish or Welsh."

† He had afterwards another son (a surgeon) and a daughter, who were born in Ireland.

§ N.B. He does not say it was *Punic*. *T. F.* ‖ *Celtic*. *T. F.*

and,

and, by the assistance of proper masters, laid a considerable foundation of classical and other useful learning, which enabled him to become tutor to Lord Kingston. Turning his attention to the study of medicine, he went afterwards to Paris*; where (I now use his own words) "he followed the most eminent professors in the several schools, as Astruc, Dubois, Lemery, and oshers, attended the Anatomical Lectures of the most famous [Hunaud and De Cat]; and Chemicals at the King's Garden at St. Come. He followed the Physicians in both hospitals of the Hotel Dieu and La Charité, and the Chemical Lectures and Demonstrations of Lemery and Boulduc; and in Botany, Jussieu.

Having finished these studies, his Professors gave him honourable attestations of his having followed them with diligence and industry, which entitled him to take the degrees of Doctor and Professor of the Art of Medicine, in any University in the dominions of France. Intending to return to England, he

* "Several great masters then gave lectures at that place on the several branches of physic, who drew after them a great concourse of pupils of every nation. Mr. Hunaud read in Anatomy and Surgery; Astruc and Dubois in Physic; Lemery and Boulduc taught Chemistry; and the learned Jussieu shewed the plants in the botanical garden, then one of the best stocked in Europe. Dr. Parsons followed the courses of these eminent men, and contracted a friendship with most of them. Forty years have made a great change in the state of the balance between our neighbours and ourselves: England, and London in particular, formerly tributary to that kingdom for the education of a multitude of young gentlemen, might now with greater right expect a return from that country, being furnished with better opportunities, and surely not inferior professors in these different branches. It was undoubtedly during the course of these occupations that Dr. Parsons imbibed his taste for Natural History. This amiable and interesting study, so congenial with human curiosity, so proportioned to human abilities, so necessary to human wants, is besides so intimately connected with physick, that it is almost impossible to cultivate the latter with any success, without having at least some tincture of the former. In order to derive greater advantages from the several curiosities which passed under his eyes, Dr. Parsons applied himself to the art of drawing, and became so well versed in it, that ever after he was not obliged to have recourse to any other hand but his own to illustrate his descriptions." *Dr. Maty, MS.*

judged

judged it unnecessary to take degrees in Paris, unless he had resolved to reside there; and as it was more expensive, he therefore went to the University of Rheims, in Champaign, where, by virtue of his attestations, he was immediately admitted to three examinations, as if he had finished his studies in that academy; and there was honoured with his degrees, June 11, 1736. In the July following he came to London, and was soon employed by Dr. James Douglas to assist him in his anatomical works, where in some time he began to practise physic.

He was elected a member of the Royal Society in 1740; and, after due examination, was admitted a Licentiate of the College of Physicians, April 1, 1751; paying college fees and bond stamps of different denominations to the amount of 41*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* subject also to quarterage of 2*l. per annum.* In 1755 he paid a farther sum of 7*l.* which, with the quarterage-money already paid, made up the sum of 16*l.* in lieu of all future payments."

Thus far from Dr. Parsons's own MS.

On his arrival in London, by the recommendation of his Paris friends, Dr. Parsons was introduced to the acquaintance of Dr. Mead, Sir Hans Sloane, and Dr. James Douglas. This great Anatomist made use of his assistance, not only in his anatomical preparations, but also in his representations of morbid and other appearances, a list of several of which was in the hands of his friend Dr. Maty; who had prepared an Eloge on Dr. Parsons, which was never used; but which, by the favour of Mrs. Parsons, I am enabled to copy from the original manuscript *.

* "Though Dr. Parsons cultivated the several branches of the profession of physick, he was principally employed in the obstetrical branch. He not only soon became an eminent practitioner in that way, but likewise read Lectures on the Structure of the Pelvis and Uterus, Generation, the Nutrition of the Fœtus, Hermaphrodites, Monstrous Births, the Diseases of Women in general before and after Delivery, the Art of Midwifry, with all its necessary operations, explained by proper Anatomical Preparations from Dr. Douglas's Collection. The first specimen (for

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In 1738, by the interest of his friend Dr. Douglas, he was appointed physician to the public Infirmary

we don't reckon his Syllabus to these Lectures, intituled 'Elenchus Gunaico-Pathologicus') which Dr. Parsons gave of his abilities and medical erudition, was occasioned by a pretended Hermaphrodite brought over to London from the coast of Angola. The existence of human beings uniting in them the perfect characters and powers of both sexes, is an opinion conceived in ages of darkness and superstition, and supported by interest and imposture. In fact, none of them has hitherto stood the test of careful examination; and so far from being, like some insects and most plants, furnished with double organs, they have universally proved vitiated men or women. This is, and was long known to Anatomists; yet as the vulgar, and amongst them perhaps people who ought to know better, may, or feign to be caught by the same appearances and impositions that seduced their ancestors, the attempt our Author made to undeceive them was by no means ill-judged. His treatise was intituled, 'A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry into the Nature of Hermaphrodites, by James Parsons, M. D. F. R. S. London, 1741,' in 8vo; with several figures engraved from his own drawings. This subject has been since treated by other writers, who have added but little to the Historical and Anatomical part of our Author's Treatise. A short account of it, drawn up by himself, was inserted in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, of which, in May 1740, he had become a member. In one of the subsequent volumes he described another subject shewn in London as an Hermaphrodite, but which he proved to have been but an imperfect female, in 'A Letter to the President,' Phil. Trans. vol. XLVII. p. 142. We likewise refer here to two other papers from our Author: 'A Letter from Dr. James Parsons to Martin Folkes, Esq. President, containing an Account of a Præternatural Conjunction of two Female Children, with Observations on Monstrous Productions; with Copper-plates; the Figures designed from the Subject by the Doctor,' Phil. Trans. No. 489, p. 526; and 'An Account of a Sheep having a monstrous Horn hanging from his Neck,' Phil. Trans. vol. XLIX. p. 183.—Our Author seems to have collected many facts relative to Monsters, with a view of obliging the world with a new treatise; but we have found nothing sufficiently finished on that or any other subject. To his medical abilities our late friend added a scrupulous integrity and inflexible firmness when he thought he was right. This he shewed, in respect to the celebrated Mons. Le Cat of Rouen, whose Treatise upon the Senses he analysed for the Royal Society; Phil. Trans. No. 466, p. 264. But Authors, like Beauties, are seldom perfectly pleased; for, though the account of the said Treatise was upon the whole flattering, yet as some mistakes were pointed out, especially with regard to the Newtonian System of Colours, the French Anatomist wrote to the Doctor

in St. Giles's. In 1739 he married, at the parish church of St. Andrew, Holborn, Miss Elizabeth

Doctor some hasty and angry letters, which he answered in a decent but firm manner, and without giving up his judgment because he was the friend of the gentleman he had ventured to find fault with. The same love of truth engaged him, at the very time when Mrs. Stephens's medicines made the greatest noise, and met both with medical approbation and national reward, to resist the torrent, examine the evidence given in their favour, and produce several instances in which they failed. This book was published in the year 1742; and, besides the polemical part, contained a new description, and figures of the bladder and urinary passages. Speaking of Mrs. Stephens's remedy for the stone, Dr. Mead says, "Upon this subject, I refer the reader to a very useful book, published some years since by a skilful anatomist and physician; in which both the mischiefs done by this medicine, and the artifices employed to bring it into vogue, are set in a clear light." Dr. Parsons was introduced to the Royal Society as a Naturalist, in 1743, by their President, the great Martin Folkes, esq. That gentleman chose our friend to help him in repeating the curious and nice experiments of Mons. Trembley on the Fresh Water Polype; an account of which, drawn by his masterly hand, was inserted in the Philosophical Transactions. He failed not to make the most honourable mention of his assistant; and passed a just encomium upon the elegant drawings made to illustrate his account. Dr. Parsons likewise designed the figures for the plate of Mr. Freke's Ambe for setting Shoulder-bones, Phil. Trans. No. 470. Tab. 4. Two curious papers delivered the same year by Dr. Parsons had a place in that volume; the first was an account of the Phoca, Vitulus Marinus, or Sea Calf, shewed at Charing Cross, in Feb. 1742-3; Phil. Trans. No. 469, with figures; another species of which he described ten years after, in 'A Dissertation upon the Class of Phocæ Marinæ.' Phil. Trans. vol. XLVII. part ii. p. 109. His second paper was 'A Letter to Martin Folkes, Esq. President of the Royal Society, containing the Natural History of the Rhinoceros; read June 9, 1743, Phil. Trans. No. 470, p. 523, with Figures.' This being controverted in Gent. Mag. vol. XXXVIII. p. 208, the Doctor replied to it in the same volume, p. 268. His figures of this animal were particularly well received, as hitherto no good print of it had been published. Mrs. Parsons had, in 1781, the beautiful painting of this animal, by the Doctor's hand; another painted by him was in Dr. Mead's Collection. The horn of the Rhinoceros is extremely remarkable, both on account of its position upon the nose, and a variety hinted at in the following line of Martial:

'Namque gravem gemino cornu sic extulit ursum.'

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Reynolds; by whom he had two sons and a daughter, who all died young. Dr. Parsons resided for

The reading indeed of this passage has been corrected by some learned Commentators; who, instead of supposing a bear to have been tossed up by a double horn, contended that two bears or two bulls were thrown up by a single one. But from a figure in the Prænestan Pavement, a medal of Domitian, a passage in Pausanias, and the testimony of Kolbe, who saw a Rhinoceros at the Cape of Good Hope, as well as from the inspection of some double horns in Sir Hans Sloane's and other gentlemen's Museums, our Author ascertained the matter of fact, and ingeniously, at least, accounted for it. In his opinion, the Rhinoceroses known to the Romans came all from Africa, and were double-horned; whereas most of those which have been from time to time shewn in Eurape were Asiatics, and single-horned. This explanation was adopted by Sir Hans Sloane himself; but, after all, we as yet know too little of this stupendous animal, to determine positively whether this variety be due to the climate, the age, or any other particular of his life — not to mention, that double horns from the East Indies are now actually existing in England. The honour which Dr. Parsons received on being appointed, by the Royal Society, to read the Crounian Lectures for several years, induced him to venture his Conjectures upon Muscular Motion; which he published in 'A Supplement to Phil. Trans. 1745.' Having overthrown the opinions of those who had gone before him (a task in this, as well as in many other physiological researches, by much the easiest) he endeavours to establish his own. This consists in attributing to the air, or an ethereal fluid, the inflation of the smallest muscular fibres, which he attempts to prove to be small tubes, running parallel with the nervous hollow fibrillæ, replete with that air, and discharging it into the muscular cells at the command of the will. This hypothesis, like all others, labours under many difficulties, and wants the support of facts. Our Author was himself sensible of this defect, and ingenuously confessed the invention of any more such systems to be a labour as much in vain as the punishment of Sisyphus. The publick were however obliged to him, for having added to his theory a good description of the womb, illustrated with some figures from his own dissections. Besides these Muscular Lectures, the volume for the year 1745 was enriched with three shorter, though perhaps not less curious, communications. The first contained a Specimen of his Researches into the Structure of Vegetable Seeds. Phil. Trans. No. 466, p. 264. The second described some Curious Pebbles, or Crystals, from Gibraltar, cut in irregular forms, and exquisitely polished by the hands of Nature. Ibid. No. 476, p. 463. And the third presented a View and accurate Description of an East Indian Deer called the Biggel. Ibid. No. 476, p. 465. Indostan Antelope. Pennant, Synops. Quadruped. 20. p. 29.— The next year was still more fruitful in interesting productions.

Dr.

many years in Red Lion-square, where he frequently enjoyed the company and conversation of Dr. Stuke-

Dr. Parsons seems to have been the first in London who gave musk with a liberal hand at the close of a fever long neglected, and attended with the worst symptoms. And his account of the case encouraged other practitioners to follow his example. 'A singular Case of a malignant Fever cured by administering Musk in a considerable Quantity;' Phil. Trans. No. 478, p. 75. That his researches in Natural Philosophy did not prevent his taking notice of curious observations in the different branches of his art, likewise appears from the following paper: 'An Account of some very extraordinary Tumours upon the head of a young labouring Man in Bartholomew's Hospital, with Figures drawn by the Doctor from the Life.' Phil. Trans. vol. L. part i. p. 396. Mrs. Parsons shewed me the fine original drawing by the Doctor's own hand. He likewise imparted to the publick 'An Account of the Effects from burying Cows with Quick Lime, which died of the Distemper among horned Cattle, with Observations.' Phil. Trans. No. 480, p. 224. In the following Number, Dr. Parsons illustrated a paper from a friend with one of his drawings, being two figures of an extraordinary schirrous Uterus, illustrating Dr. Templeman's Account of the Patient he attended in the Infirmary of St. Andrew's Workhouse, drawn from the subject by Dr. Parsons; Phil. Trans. No. 481, p 285. He likewise obliged the late Bishop Lyttelton with two views of a beautiful Nautilus, inserted in Phil. Trans. No. 487, p. 320. It was a remark of Dr. Parsons, at a meeting of the Royal Society, 'that the cattle in the high grounds about Highgate, Hampstead, Millhill, and Hendon, remained free from the infection, which had spread all about in the lower ground.' He philosophically, as well as anatomically, accounted in a third paper for the Phænomenon of the Woman who partly preserved the power of speaking, though deprived of a great Part of her Tongue. See 'A Physiological Account of the Case of Margaret Cutting, who speaks distinctly, though she has lost the Apex and Body of her Tongue, with Explanations of the Phænomenon, addressed to the Royal Society, by James Parsons.' Phil. Trans. No. 484, p. 627. Much was said of this woman in Gent. Mag. 1781, vol LI. But his principal performance at that time was his 'Human Physiognomy explained, in the Crounian Lectures on Muscular Motion for the year 1746, printed as a Supplement to the Transactions of that year. 1747,' 4to. This Essay has the merit of originality, being an attempt to shew by what mechanism the several muscles of the face impress upon it the various sentiments of the soul, and mostly leave indelible traces of the reigning passions. It was favourably received abroad; and the celebrated Buffon, after having made an honourable mention of the author, borrowed from him his figures and his thoughts upon the subject. One of the papers which I mentioned before gave rise to a new work, "The Microscopical Theatre of Seeds, being a short View of the particular

ley, Bp. Lyttelton, Mr. Henry Baker, Dr. Knight, and many other of the most distinguished members

cular Marks, Characters, Contents, and Natural Dimensions of all the Seeds of the Shops, Flower and Kitchen Gardens, with Copper-plates of the Figures of the Seeds of an intelligible Size,' published in numbers, in the year 1744, 4to; Volume the first only. These Seeds, which, to a naked eye, appear, except in colour and size, not very different one from another, exhibit, when magnified, the richest display of variety and grandeur; no two are found exactly similar; and the elegance of the forms, multiplicity of the internal parts, variety of substance lodged separately in the inside, shew how inexhaustible the fund is from which Nature draws her patterns. As Dr. Parsons was very particular in his description and representation of these minute objects, he furnished not only a source of entertainment to those who know how to bestow their admiration, but likewise the means of distinguishing genuine and scarce seeds from those that may be either spurious or spoiled. I could have wished, that, contented with the merit which was entirely his own, he had not added to each description, under the title of *Uses*, the farrago of properties attributed to them by various authors, without sufficiently distinguishing the results of experience from the effects of imagination; which possibly hindered this valuable work from meeting with sufficient encouragement to induce the Author to complete his plan. He indeed, before his death, intended to resume it; and being then come to an age in which the little glory arising from extensive reading had lost much of its influence, he probably would have rendered his Treatise more universally pleasing, by reducing it within the bounds of his own observations. The surprizing variety of branches of science which Dr. Parsons embraced, and the several living as well as dead languages he had a knowledge of, qualified him abundantly for the place of Assistant Secretary for Foreign Correspondences, which the Council of the Royal Society bestowed upon him about the year 1750. He acquitted himself to the utmost of his power of the functions of this place, till a few years before his death, when he resigned in favour of his Friend [Dr. Maty], who now gratefully pays this last tribute to his memory. Dr. Parsons joined to his academical honours those which the Royal College of Physicians of London bestowed upon him, by admitting him, after due examination, Licentiate, on the first day of April, 1751. The diffusive spirit of our friend was only equalled by his desire of information. To both these principles he owed the intimacies which he formed with some of the greatest men of his time. The names of Folkes, Hales, Mead, Stukeley, Needham, Baker, Collinson, and Garden, may be mentioned on this occasion; and many more might be added. Weekly meetings were formed, where the earliest intelligence was received and communicated of any discovery both here and abroad; and new trials were made to bring to the test of experience

of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies, and of that of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; giving

rience the reality or usefulness of these discoveries. Here it was that the Microscopical Animals found in several infusions were first produced; the propagation of several insects by section ascertained; the constancy of Nature amidst these wonderful changes established. In order to destroy the conclusions deduced from the phænomena of the Polypes in favour of materialism, Dr. Parsons composed his 'Philosophical Observations on the Analogy between the Propagation of Animals and that of Vegetables. London. 1752.' 8vo. This volume was inscribed to Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London, who tells him, in a letter from the Temple, Dec. 16, 1751, 'I am very sensible of the honour you intend me, by inscribing your book to me: the subject of which is not only curious, but of great importance to the defence of religion; and will, I doubt not, appear with great advantage coming from your hand. I am forced to make use of another hand in writing; therefore will say no more: but I shall be very glad of an opportunity of seeing you; and, if consistent with your business, I shall be very much obliged to you if you would give me the pleasure of seeing you here. I am, Sir, your very humble servant, THOMAS LONDON.'—Our Author places the first rudiments either of plants or animals in the seeds or eggs, which he supposes by the intervention of the masculine vivifying spirit to be brought into action, and rendered capable of producing new individuals in a successive chain, according to the immutable laws impressed by the Creator upon each species. But, to own the truth, this book, though abounding in good and useful hints, seems still to want something in point of order, clearness, and philosophical precision. We view Dr. Parsons with more pleasure when he is describing natural objects, or occupied in communicating valuable observations. Thus his description of one of the smallest Monkeys (Phil. Trans. vol. XLVII. part ii. p. 146); the Syah Gush, or Persian Mountain Cat (Pennant, Synops. Quadruped. 137, p. 189; Le Caracal de Buffon, Tab. IX. p. 262, Tab. XXIV.); a new Salamander (Phil. Trans. vol. XLVII. p. 684); his Account of the Formation of Crabs' Shells, in a Letter to Peter Collinson (ibid. vol. XLVII. p. 439), and Coralline (ibid. vol. XLVII. p. 505); of an unknown Species of Echinus petrified (ibid. vol. XLIX. p. 155); of Fossil Fruits (Dr. Parsons gave a particular account of several fossil fruits and other bodies of Shepey Island, with two copper-plates designed by himself, in the fiftieth volume of the Phil. Trans. p. 396, mentioned by Mr. Jones in his "Physiological Disquisitions," p. 381); a singular Shell Fish piercing the hardest Stones, and lodging itself in them (ibid. No. 485, p. 44); and even his Observations and Thoughts on a White Negro (ibid. vol. LV. p. 45); on Amphibious Animals (ibid. vol. LVI. p. 194); the Construction of the Aspera Arteria in Cranes, &c. (ibid. p. 208); afford a still greater satisfaction than his well-meant efforts to pry into the mysteries of

weekly an elegant dinner to a large but select party. He enjoyed also the literary correspondence of

of generation, or to ascertain the migration of the first inhabitants of the world. The book I have in view was published in 1767, in one large volume in quarto, under the title of 'Remains of Japhet, being Historical Enquiries into the Affinity and Origin of the European Languages.'—It is a most laborious performance, tending to prove the antiquity of the first inhabitants of these islands, as being originally descended from Gomer and Magog, about 1000 years before Christ, their primitive and still subsisting language, and its affinity with some others. It cannot be denied but that there is much ingenuity as well as true learning, in this work, which helps conviction, and often supplies the want of it. But we cannot help thinking that our friend's warm feelings now and then misled his judgment; and that some at least of his conjectures, resting upon partial traditions, and poetical scraps of Irish Filids and Welsh Bards, are less satisfactory than his Tables of Affinity between the several Northern Languages, as deduced from one common stock. Literature, however, is much obliged to him for having in this, as well as in many of his other works, opened a new field of observations and discoveries.—In enumerating our learned friend's Dissertations, we find ourselves at a loss whether we should follow the order of subjects, or of time; neither is it easy to account for their surprizing variety and quick succession. The truth is, that his eagerness after knowledge was such, as to embrace almost with equal facility all its branches, and with equal zeal to ascertain the merit of inventions, and ascribe to their respective, and sometimes unknown authors, the glory of the discovery. Many operations which the antients have transmitted to us have been thought fabulous, merely from our ignorance of the art by which they were performed. Thus the burning of the ships of the Romans at a considerable distance, during the siege of Syracuse, by Archimedes, would, perhaps, still continue to be exploded, had not the celebrated M. Buffon in France shewn the possibility of it, by presenting and describing a model of a Speculum, or rather assemblage of Mirrors, by which he could set fire at the distance of several hundred feet. In the contriving indeed, though not in the execution of such an apparatus, he had in some measure been forestalled by a writer now very little known or read. This Dr. Parsons proved in a very satisfactory manner (Phil. Trans. vol. XLVIII. p. 628); and he had the pleasure to find the French Philosopher did not refuse to the Jesuit his share in the invention, and was not at all offended by the liberty he had taken. Another French discovery, I mean a new kind of painting fathered upon the antients, was reduced to its real value, in a paper which shewed our Author was possessed of a good taste for the fine arts (Phil. Trans. vol. XLIX. p. 655): and I am informed that his skill in musick was by no means inferior, and that his favourite amuse-

D'Argenville, Buffon, Le Cat, Beccaria, Amb. Bertrand, Valltravers, Ascanius, Turberville Needham,

ment was the flute. Richly, it appears from these performances, did our Author merit the honour of being a member of the Antiquarian Society, which long ago had associated him to its labours. To another Society (for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce) founded upon the great principles of humanity, patriotism, and natural emulation, he undoubtedly was greatly useful. He assisted at most of their general meetings and committees; and was for many years chairman to that of Agriculture; always equally ready to point out and to promote useful improvements, and to oppose the interested views of fraud and ignorance, so inseparable from very extensive associations. A Medical Society was instituted, by Dr. Fothergill and other respectable Physicians, Licentiates, in vindication of their privileges; and no sooner was the Society formed than Dr. Parsons became a member of it. Intimately convinced of the nobleness of its views, though from his station in life little concerned in its success, he grudged neither attendance nor expence. Neither ambitious of taking the lead, nor fond of opposition, he joined in any measure he thought right; and submitted cheerfully to the sentiments of the majority, though against his own private opinion. The just ideas he had of the dignity of our profession, as well as of the common links which ought to unite all its members, notwithstanding the differences of country, religion, or places of education, made him bear impatiently the shackles laid upon a great number of respectable practitioners; he wished, fondly wished, to see these broken; not with a view of empty honour and dangerous power, but as the only means of serving mankind more effectually, checking the progress of designing men and illiterate practitioners, and diffusing through the whole body a spirit of emulation. Though by frequent disappointments he foresaw, as well as we, the little chance of a speedy redress, he nobly persisted in the attempt; and, had he lived till the final event, would undoubtedly, like Cato, still have preferred the conquered cause to that supported by the Gods.

"The style of our friend's compositions were sufficiently clear in description, though in argument not so close as could have been wished. Full of his ideas, he did not always so dispose and connect them together as to produce in the minds of his readers that conviction which was in his own. He too much despised those additional graces which command attention when joined to learning, observation, and sound reasoning. Let us hope that his example and spirit will animate all his colleagues; and that those practitioners who are in the same circumstances will be induced to join their brethren, sure to find among them those great blessings of life, freedom, equality, information, and friendship. As long as these great principles shall subsist in this Society,

Dr. Garden, and others of the most distinguished rank in science *.

Society, and I trust they will out-last the longest livers, there is no doubt but the members will meet with the reward honest men are ambitious of, the approbation of their conscience, the esteem of the virtuous, the remembrance of posterity.

"Dr. Parsons was associated to the Oeconomical Society at Bern, Dec. 26, 1763. The letter he received on this occasion, dated Jan. 2, 1764, was conceived in very honourable terms: 'Le choix que l'illustre Societé dont vous etes un si digne membre a fait de vous pour vous mettre à la tête d'un departement aussi interessant et aussi etendu que l'est celui de l'Agriculture, a guidé notre Societé, qui en fait l'objet prineipal de ses recherches et de ses travaux, quand elle vous associa à elles. Recevèz ce Diplome c'y-joint, Monsieur, comme une marque des sentiments qu'elle donne à ceux qui se distinguent parmi les hommes, par leurs vertus et leurs labeurs; ce sont des patriotes qui d'un choix libre s'associent tous ceux qui comme eux sacrifient leurs vies au bonheur de la patrie et de l'humanité. La Societé a cru ne pouvoir mieux faire que de vous associer Monsieur Wyche, votre illustre frere, qu'une mort premature vient, à ce que j'apprens, enlever à sa patrie, à votre Societé, et à ses amis. J'ai l'honneur d'etre, &c. N. E. TSCHARNE, Secretaire de la Societé."

"Dr. Parsons's answer, dated Feb. 28, 1764, was this: 'A l'instant que j'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir votre agreable Lettre, avec le Diplome de votre illustre Societé, je ne me laissois pas d'etre frappé d'une gratitude, et des sentiments tres vifs, en etant distingué d'une marque de son estime aussi glorieuse qu' interessante à mon gré. C'est un fait, Monsieur, que j'estimerai toujours encore un des plus heureux accidents de ma vie: c'est un honneur qui augment beaucoup le caractère et la reputation que chacun doit souhaiter qui aime l'humanité, et qui voudroit bien rendre service au publique. Ayez donc la bonté, Monsieur, de me faire la grace de temoigner à l'illustre Societé de Berne ma reconnoissance pour ce grand honneur qu'elle vient de me faire, et dont l'impression ne me sera jamais effacé. J'ai l'honneur d'etre, &c. J. PARSONS, President dans les department de l'Agriculture de la Societé des Arts; Membre de la Societé Royale et Antiq. de London, et du College Royal de Med."

* "Mrs. Parsons had several letters subscribed by the illustrious names above mentioned; and one from Dr. Garden shall be here inserted: 'Though I have not the honour of your personal acquaintance, yet it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I can acknowledge an acquaintance with your learned and ingenious works, to which I have been indebted for many useful things, and have perused such of them as have fallen in my way with no less pleasure than profit. What I have yet had the pleasure of seeing are, some papers in the Transactions, and 'The Analogy

As a practitioner, he was judicious, careful, honest, and remarkably humane to the poor; as a friend, obliging and communicative; cheerful and decent in conversation; severe and strict in his morals, and attentive to fulfil with propriety all the various duties of life.

of Animals and Vegetables.' This was a performance I had long wished to see, and lately was so lucky as to meet with it; since which time, I could not help resolving to address the learned Author, and humbly beg the favour of his correspondence, that I might have an opportunity from time to time of laying open my difficulties in any enquiries of that kind to him, and begging his assistance and advice. At the same time, I must own, I am but poorly qualified to make proper and suitable returns for such a favour; but if accounts of any of our Vegetable, Animal, or Mineral Productions, would be acceptable, I should take the greatest and most sensible pleasure to procure or make out such as might be agreeable of such things as may fall under my notice. It is now about three years and an half since I first arrived in South Carolina, where I have practised Physic ever since, and employed every spare hour in Botany; but my progress has been much retarded for want of the proper books and assistances. There is only my learned and ingenious friend the Honourable Dr. Bull, who knows the least Iota of Botany or any part of Natural History here, which, with my small Botanical Library (which only consisted of Tournefort, Ray, and Lin. Fund. Botan. with the Flora Virgin. Gron.), was a great hindrance and loss to a beginner. I have lately had a copy of all Linnæus's Works, except the late performance of the Species Plantarum, which I have only just heard of in a Letter from a German Correspondent. This last year I was obliged to leave Carolina, and go to the Northern Colonies, in search of a cooler and freer air, on the account of health; and as soon as my health and strength would permit, I travelled over most of the adjacent countries in search of their Vegetable Productions, and met with many curious things, some of which we have not here. In the Province of New York I met with the Honourable Cadwallader Colden, a truly great Philosopher and very accurate and ingenious Botanist; as witness his Philosophical performances, and his 'Genera Plantarum,' published in the 'Acta Upsaliensa.' I could not help being greatly pleased, and at the same time chagrined, at the account which he gave me of Dr. Kalm the Swede, who is just now publishing his Collections, made in our Colonies, in the Swedish Language, by the particular desire of his King. This will not only give them the glory and honour of such public undertakings, but the sole advantage of what observations he may have made. This looks as if we must be obliged to strangers to point out our own richness, and shew us the advantages of what we ourselves possess.

Some-

In 1769, he proposed to retire from business and from London, for the sake of his health; and, having disposed of most of his books and his fossils with that view, went to Bristol: but soon found it inconsistent with his happiness to forsake all the advantages which a long residence in the capital, and the many connexions he had formed, had rendered habitual to him. He therefore returned to his old house; and died in it, after a week's illness, April 4, 1770.

By his last will, dated in October 1766, he gave his whole property to Mrs. Parsons; and, in case of her death before him, to Miss Mary Reynolds, her only sister, "in recompence for her affectionate attention to him and to his wife, for a long course of years, in sickness and in health."

Something similar to this will soon be seen in Dr. Loefling's Voyage to our Islands and the Spanish Main, especially while he is to be supported by the Royal bounty. And have not we lands that would produce most of these vegetables that the Spaniards just now reap such advantage from? Yes, surely we have; but, as we are ignorant of the proper method of curing and manufacturing them, our people are deterred from running the risk of losing money, labour, or time, in this slow way of getting knowledge of them by experiment, while they have some other commodities that answer tolerably well in the mean time.—Mr. Clayton in Virginia, and John Bartram in Pennsylvania, are the only Botanists or Naturalists that I know of, besides Mr. Colden, on the Continent. And I doubt not but you are well acquainted with the character and genius of both these men. Mr. Bartram is certainly a most surprizing man, who, without any assistance of conversation or of books (he understands a very little botanical Latin), should have arrived at so great a knowledge of Plants, especially in a systematical way. It is a great pity that he does not understand Mr. Loefling's Dissertation on Gems; for I am fully persuaded he is amongst the best qualified men to improve that part of the science. How often have I been pleased, delighted, and instructed, by many of his lively and strong natural thoughts on gems, as to their *structure, use, time*, and properties! I shall not detain you longer, but again beg leave to request the favour of your correspondence, and your forgiveness for this trouble. I am, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant, ALEXANDER GARDEN.

"*Charles Town, South Carolina, May* 5, 1755."

It

It was his particular request that he should not be buried till some change should appear in his corpse; a request which occasioned his being kept unburied 17 days, and even then scarce the slightest alteration was perceivable. He was buried at Hendon, in a vault which he had caused to be built on the ground purchased on the death of his son, where his tomb is thus inscribed:

"Here
(taken from his sorrowing family and friends,
by the common lot of frail mortality)
rests JAMES PARSONS, D. M.
member of the College of Physicians,
and F. R. S. and S. of A. M. C. R.
A man,
in whom the most dignifying virtues were united
with talents the most numerous and rare.
Firm and erect in conscious conviction,
no consideration could move him
to desert Truth, or acquiesce to her opponents.
Physic, Anatomy, Natural History, Antiquities,
Languages, and the fine Arts,
are largely indebted to his skill and industry
in each,
for many important truths discovered in their
support,
or errors detected with which they were obscured.
Yet, though happy beyond the general race of
mankind in mental endowments,
the sincere Christian, the affectionate husband,
the generous and humane friend,
were in him superior to the sage, the scholar,
and the philosopher.
He died April 4th, 1770,
in the 66th year of his age.

Here also lies the body of JAMES PARSONS,
son of the above-named Dr. PARSONS,
who died Dec. 9, 1750,
in the ninth year of his age."

A por-

A portrait of Dr. Parsons, by Mr. Wilson, is now in the British Museum; another, by Wells, was in the hands of his widow, with a third unfinished; and one of his son James; also a family piece, in which the same son is introduced, with the Doctor and his lady, accompanied by her sister.

Among other portraits, Mrs. Parsons had fine ones of the illustrious Harvey, of Bp. Burnet, and of Dr. John Freind; a beautiful miniature of Dr. Stukeley; some good paintings by her husband's own hand, particularly the Rhinoceros, which he described in the Philosophical Transactions. She possessed also his MSS. and some capital printed books; a large folio volume, intituled, "Figuræ quædam Miscellaneæ quæ ad rem Anatomicam Historiamque Naturalem spectant; quas propriâ adumbravit manu Jacobus Parsons, M. D. S. S. R. Ant. &c." another, called, "Drawings of curious Fossils, Shells, &c. in Dr. Parsons's Collection, drawn by himself. I have been indulged with a sight of these valuable drawings. Amongst other curiosities, is an exact delineation of a human fœtus, which was the subject of an extraordinary imposture; the upper part being well made, and in good proportion, the lower extremities monstrous. It was inclosed in a glass case, and shewn at the Heathcock, Charing Cross, as "a surprizing young Mermaid, taken on the coast of Acapulco." This figure the Doctor drew; and caused the show-man to be turned out of town.

She also possessed a set of the fine prints engraved at the expence of Mr. Hollis, whose character Dr. Parsons has thus briefly depicted:

"Memorabilium quorundam Monumenta, quæ curâ et sumptibus eximii viri Thomæ Hollisii Armigeri nuper prodierunt; quæque mihi grato animo dono dedit. Tanti autem viri munera mihi sanè sunt gratissima: qui dum vitam placidè inter studia politiora atque humano generi utilissima, semper trahit, non majoribus assentator servilis, nec inferioribus est

est arrogans; omnibus tamen gratus, neque unquam absentem rodit amicum. J. P.

18 *Julii*, 1764."

Dr. Parsons having sent Mr. Hollis some present in return for these valuable prints, received a reply, dated August 21, 1764, which is worth preserving, as characteristic of the writer: "I return you my thanks for a curious and obliging present, which was received this day, and is already deposited amidst my other choicest virtù. A number of the prints from the plates in my possession having been lately stricken off, and the last set having seemed not unacceptable to you; I have taken the liberty to send you another set of them, for, if you please, a friend. My time, I confess, has been greatly engaged, and even finessed on to certain purposes, honest ones it is hoped, for years past; but those purposes will have their end before it is long, and then I shall be able to partake again, happily, in the society of my friends, and of wise and good men. I am, with unfeigned and deep respect, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, T. Hollis."

I shall add to this letter a short extract from the biographer of Mr. Hollis: "Paid four guineas, the full subscription for six copies of the Remains of Japhet, by Dr. James Parsons; burnt five of the subscriptions. We give this memorandum just as we find it, being uncertain whether a friendly partiality for the author, or the subject, was the motive of this generous subscription. It is certain, that there are positions in that book from which, we apprehend, Mr. Hollis would dissent *."

Mrs. Parsons (I was, in 1782, enabled to say on her own authority, had she been properly applied to, was ready to have given, either to the Royal or Antiquarian Society, a portrait of her worthy husband, and a sum of money to found a lecture to perpetuate his memory, similar to that established by his friend Mr. Henry Baker.

* Memoirs of Mr. Hollis, p. 495.

Dr.

Dr. Parsons's library was sold by Mr. Paterson, June 7, &c. 1769, and his fossils June 22, &c. the same year; both under the title of "an eminent Physician, who, on account of his health, is retiring into the country."

His widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Parsons, died Aug. 8, 1786, aged 86; and was buried at Hendon *.

RICHARD RAWLINSON †, an eminent Antiquary, and great benefactor to the University of Oxford, was the fourth son of Sir Thomas, and younger brother of Thomas Rawlinson, esq. another eminent Antiquary ‡. Richard was educated at St. John's

* See a character of her, Gent. Mag. 1786, vol. LVI. p. 715.

† In Mr. Price's possession is a collection of loose papers labelled "Nomen Rawlinsonianum, ex MSS. Cod. erutum," chiefly in Dr. Richard Rawlinson's own hand-writing.

‡ For whom Mr. Addison is said to have intended his character of *Tom Folio*, in the Tatler, No. 158, but with infinitely too satirical a vein. He was a great collector of books; and himself a man of learning, as well as patron of those who were so. Maittaire has dedicated to him his edition of Juvenal: and Hearne's publication, intituled, "Aluredi Beverlacensis Annales, &c." was printed from the original MS. in this gentleman's possession. Very numerous indeed were the communications that Editor received from Mr. Thomas Rawlinson; for all which, to do him but justice, he takes every opportunity of expressing his gratitude. While Mr. Rawlinson lived in Gray's Inn, he had four chambers so completely filled, that his bed was removed out into the passage. He afterwards removed to London-house, the antient palace of the bishops of London, in Aldersgate-street; where he died, August 6, 1725, aged 44; and was buried in the church of St. Botolph Aldersgate. In London-house his immense library was sold after his decease; and there also lived and died his brother Richard; who left a portrait of his brother Thomas in crayons, another of himself, and another of Nicholas Salmon, LL.D. the Antiquary, to the Society of Antiquaries, all afterwards revoked. His MSS. took 16 days to sell, from March 4, 1733-4. (See some of them in Brit. Top. vol. I. p. 117, 216, 217, 239, 337, 338, 425, 451, 642. vol. II. p. 317, 407, 426, 429, 789.) The Catalogue of his library consists of nine parts. The amount of the first five parts was 2409*l*: 1st part, Dec. 17, 1721, price 1*s*. 2d part, March 1721-2, price 1*s*. 4th part, April 1723, price 1*s*. sold by Tho. Ballard; 6th part, at London-house, Aldersgate-street, March 1726, by Charles Davis, 2*s*. 6*d*.; 9th part, at Paul's Coffee-house, October 1727, and 19 following days, by Tho. Ballard, 1*s*. Other parts, by Thomas Ballard and C. Davis, 1727-8, took 22 and 23 days; 1729, 26 and 30 days; 1732,