UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE

The UNIVERSAL MAGAZINE of Knowledge and Pleasure, an old-style London monthly magazine, had published 113 volumes, 1747-1803, before updating itself in a new series, 1804-1814 (21 volumes), and, finally, as New Universal Magazine (four volumes in 1814-15). The second series and the New Universal Magazine, published by H. D. Symonds and his successors Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, contained a total of five reviews of Byron, but the last of these — a review of Hebrew Melodies (New Universal Magazine, III, July 1815, 37-38) — was not available in facsimile.

September 1807

Byron, Hours of Idleness (1807), Universal Magazine, 2nd Series, VIII (Sept. 1807), 235-237. The critic is indulgent in response to the "modesty" of Byron's Preface.
nent, and on his return to England the first news he heard was; that his friend Mr. Pitt had sent his friend Mr. Tooke to the Tower. The friends of Mr. Tooke out of power, have not been his friends when in power; who are to blame? Has Mr. Tooke changed his sentiments, or have they changed theirs? Let them, who know the history of this reign, answer this question. From the beginning to the present day, Mr. H. Tooke will be found to have uniformly supported the principles of the constitution, as settled at the revolution; to have opposed only what is in opposition to those principles; to have been an advocate for the true rights of the three branches of the constitution, but to have opposed each only, when they overstepped the limits of their respective jurisdictions.

But we cannot allow that Mr. H. Tooke has the influence supposed over Sir F. Burdett. Their acquaintance commenced somewhat, more than twelve years ago; it ripened into friendship. Such a friendship has been, without doubt, advantageous to Sir Francis. To have constant access to the stores of so capacious a mind, is a benefit which few young men of fashion and fortune know how to appreciate, still fewer how to avail themselves of such an advantage. Sir F. Burdett does both; and in consequence is better acquainted with our national history and our national literature, than any of his competitors for the public favour. He may say with Cicero, that the time which others employ in various amusements, he has devoted to the improvement of his mind; he has made the constitution of his country his study; and we wish him the utmost success in the attempt to cleanse the Augustan stable.

CRITICISM.


This work offers itself to our notice with many claims to indulgence and lenity. It is the production of a youth, who has but just attained his nineteenth year; it is the production of a nobleman; and it is preceded by a singularly modest and ingenuous preface. We call it a modest preface, because it seems to express the real sentiments of the author's mind, not affectedly diffident or crawling with servile humility. However, we may venture to assure Lord Byron, that these effusions of his muse do not discredit to his youth; many of them are elegant and interesting, and almost all possess a neat and harmonious versification. We are authorised, in some measure, to consider this as a posthumous publication, for we are told, with emphatic earnestness, that it is a "first and last attempt," Pref.; and he adds, "it is highly improbable, from my situation and pursuits hereafter, that I should ever obtrude myself a second time on the public; nor even in the very doubtful event of present indulgence, shall I be tempted to commit a future trespass of the same nature." This is decisive; yet, might experience venture to whisper into the ears of youth, it would say, that genius is restless, that praise kindles a slumbering fire into flame; and that he who feels he can write is rarely plagiary enough to remain silent. We know not, indeed, what may be the views, or what the destination of Lord Byron; perhaps he is justly ambitious of serving this country in a manner more immediately beneficial, and more exalted than in the flowery paths of poetry: if so, we shall be well content to see him rigidly adhering to his resolution. Yet, poetry may occupy the elegant retirement of a gifted mind, whose nobler energies are directed to nobler purposes. Let us hope, then, that Lord Byron may be content enough to reason away his pledge, and give, as the trifles of leisure, what he may be unwilling to have considered as the primary occupation of his time.

The prevailing cast of the poems before us is amatory, and in these his lordship seems to have taken Mr. Moore for his model. They have not
however his polish, his elegance, nor his immorality. They are all small pieces, prettily turned, and certainly very creditable to one so young as the author; but they are not free from faults; and a capital one is the exeberant use of compound epithets, some of which are frequently unintelligible, and frequently ridiculous: for example,

"His locks in grey-torn ringlets wave."

p. 58.

"Tis the night-shade's hour and voice.

p. 100.

and others of a similar nature which we could point out.

The longest poem in the book is the tale of "Oscar and Alva," written in quatrains, and very pleasingly written. But the altering the measure towards the close, by introducing the double rimes, in imitation of Gray's "Bard," is, we think, a blunder; and the following line, which is entirely owing to this, is quite ludicrous:

"The steps sink, the chieftains shrink," &c.

The first piece in the volume "On leaving Newstead Abbey," is pretty:


is really an elegant and pathetic composition; the thoughts are tender, yet they arise in an easy and natural way. The first line is a close imitation of Pope's "Eloisa."

"Oh name, for ever sad, for ever dear."

In the "Occasional Prologue," Lord Byron has been led into a gross grammatical error, for the sake of the rhyme we presume:

"Whose name shall disgrace or all the author."

We know he can plead precedent for it; but still it is an error, and an unpardonable one.

In the "Translations" he has given us some versions from Greek and Latin authors, and, among others, Adrian's Address to his Soul, when dying:

"Animula! veni, veni, blandula." &c.

To say that it is greatly inferior to the beautiful paraphrase of Pope, is not to detract Lord Byron; and we must also add, that his translations from Aeneas, though far above mediocrity, are yet below the elegant and spirited version of Mr. Moore.

As a specimen we select the following, and cannot conclude without observing, that upon the whole Lord Byron need feel no regret at having commended his name to the public in the present volume."

LACHIN Y. GAIR.

LACHIN Y. GAIR, or, as it is pronounced in the Eilean, Loch na Garr, turns proudly pre-eminent in the Northern Highlands, near Invercauld. One of our modern Tourists mentions it as the highest mountain in the British islands; but this is not quite correct, as it may be that the summit is the seat of eternal snows; near Lachin Y. Gair, I spent some of the early part of my life, the recollection of which has given birth to the following Stanza.

"Away, ye gay landscapes; ye gardens of roses!

In you let the nations of luxury rove;

Restore me the rocks, where the snow-flakes reproves,

Though still they are sacred to freedom and love;

Yet, Caldonia! be not thy mountains,

Round their white summits though elements war,

Though cæsurae foam, blend of smooth flowing fountains,

I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wandered.

My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid;"

"On chieftains, strong, right-hand'd, my memory ponders;"

As daily I strode through the pine-wooded glade,

I sought not my home, till the day's dying glory

Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star.

Farewell to the ancient, by traditional story,

Discovered by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

"Shade of the dead! have I not heard your voices?

"Tis the night-shade's hour and voice.

Sway the soul of the hero reposes,

And rides on the wind, over his own Highland vale;"

"Father, Round Loch na Garr, while the stormy mist

Winter prevails in his cold icy ear;"

Clouds, there, encircle the forms of my Fathers,

They dwelt in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr;"
1807.]

Pinkerton's Recollections of Paris: 227

"Ill-star'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding,
"Tell you that Fate had forsaken your cause?"
Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden,
Victory crown'd not your fall with applause;
Still were you happy, in death's earthy slumber,
You met with your clan, in the cave of Bearn.
The Fibrobe resounds, to the piper's loud number,
Your deeds, on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Yours have rolled on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
Years must elapse ere I tread you again;
Nature of verdure and flowers has betook you;
Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
England! thy beauties are tame and domestic,
To one who has roam'd on the mountains afar;
Oh! for the crags that are wild and majestic,
The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr.

Recollections of Paris, in the Years 1802-3-4-5. By John Pinkerton. 3 vols. 8vo. 1806.
(Collected from page 138.)

We cannot devote much more room or attention to this work. We have indeed already given it more of both than is usual in such a work, and in doing so we were influenced solely by a wish to repress a pert and forward vanity, and to expose a considerable levity of thought and language, which the author would fain exalt into philosophy and style.

The second chapter in the second volume, which Mr. Pinkerton denominates "Considerations on a commercial treaty with France," is certainly a most epicurean production. From reading it, we shrewdly suspect that in our author's opinion, the best commercial treaty that could be established between the two countries, would be that which enabled him to have good French wines at his own table, at a moderate price. Truly we entertain some serious doubts, whether Mr. Pinkerton will not have strong reason to repent his journey to France, or whether he will ever be again able to enjoy laborious study, and

"Spur fast thy soul with God's doth arm.
We have already given a specimen of Mr. Pinkerton's eloquence, and we will now give our readers a small sample of what, we suppose, he means for wit:

"In like manner, the hall of the general assembly, national convention, &c. was uncourtly, whence the feet becoming chilled, the head became hot, and the consequences are known to all Europe!"

This is really amazingly pretty; a charming stroke of a playful and sardonic fancy; and we do assure the reader that there are many other specimens of equal humour and ingenuity to be found in the course of these volumes. And here let us not forget to inform the world, upon the authority of Mr. Pinkerton's minute inquiry and close observation, that the French ladies do really and absolutely "wear shaws," though it has been scandalously and maliciously reported to the contrary by a certain German traveller. (Vol. II. p. 107.)

We cannot assent to Mr. Pinkerton's assertion, that the Edinburgh herds are of all others "the most elegant." In our opinion, and (we speak from personal observation) the herds of Edinburgh resemble more the travelling dwellings of a crew of wild beasts, than the solemn and decent receptacle of straitened mortality. They are stuck over with glittering shreds and patches, and affect the eye like the outside of a puppet-show at Bartholomew Fair.

The theory of the association of ideas has exercised the ingenuity of the most acute philosophers, and they have sometimes in vain endeavoured to trace the connecting link between two successive ideas. We think we may venture to propose as a problem to the Universities of Europe, what could possibly be the connecting series in Mr. Pinkerton's mind, when he wrote the following paragraph.

"Fromage or cheese is a term used in Paris for any substance compressed. Thus a fromage d'Italie is a Bologna sausage; a fromage glace is a kind of ice, &c. Animals killed by electricity are found to be singularly tender!"