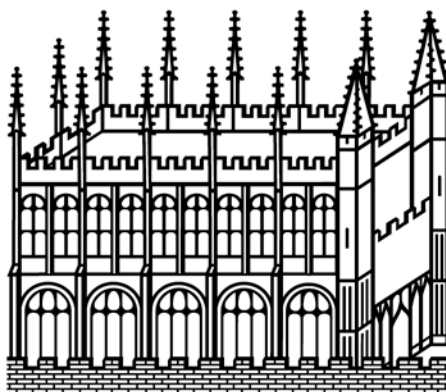




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B. T. 11. 520

LETTERS

FROM

S N O W D O N :

DESCRIPTIVE OF A

T O U R

THROUGH THE

NORTHERN COUNTIES of WALES.

CONTAINING THE

ANTIQUITIES, HISTORY,

AND

STATE OF THE COUNTRY:

WITH THE

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

OF THE

I N H A B I T A N T S.

— Toto divisos orbe Britannos.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. RIDLEY, in St. James's-Street; and
W. HARRIS, N^o 70, St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M DCC LXX.





P R E F A C E.

LETTER FROM A FRIEND
TO THE AUTHOR.

S I R,

AS you desire my opinion of your Letters from Snowdon, which you intend to publish, it is a duty I owe to friendship to give it with freedom and impartiality. Without descending to a minute criticism on particular passages, I shall observe in general upon the substance of the work, and the manner in which it is written.

In describing the manners and customs of the inhabitants, you represent them as a strange compound of virtue and vice. You

A 2

describe

P R E F A C E.

describe the country as uncultivated, and the inhabitants in an inferior degree of civilization than the English. However just your observations and description may be, yet the people of that country at least will think, that the picture is not a true representation of them. It will be well if you do not meet with a Fluellin, who will oblige you to undergo the punishment inflicted on ancient Pistol, by eating the leek, and you may be compelled as ignominiously to say,

Quiet thy cudgel, thou dost see I eat it.

The asperity with which you have, in some places, treated the country, is not the only reprehensible part of your letters. Your work contains some moral reflections, contrary to the received opinions of mankind. Add to these objections, that your letters are written with so much negligence, inequality, and inaccuracy of stile, that you must expect the abuse of malevolence, and the scourge of criticism.

If

P R E F A C E.

If you had studied to please the taste of the public, your work ought to have abounded, in imitation of the modern compositions, with antitheses, abrupt transitions, and what the fashionable writers and readers call Sentiment. However difficult it may be to explain what is meant by the word Sentiment; yet is it esteemed the criterion of merit by which every modern publication is judged. Sermons, plays, poetry, history, must all have enough of this ingredient to please the public. It is the fashionable Sal Atticum, which renders the composition palatable.

As you have desired my opinion, you must excuse the freedom with which I give it. And I sincerely wish the public judgment may prove more favorable than that of

Your friend and servant, &c.

P R E F A C E.

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING LETTER.

S I R,

WHEN an author can bear with patience to hear his writings censured, he gains a victory over his vanity. My obligations are due to you even for the severe censure your letter contains, as it will prepare me for the public opinion, unfavorable as it may prove. You will allow me however to say something in vindication of what you have treated with so much severity.

I did not sit down to draw a caricature, nor to decorate the object with beauties which it had not. However deformed a portrait may be, if it is like the person for whom it was intended, the painter is justified. In delineating the manners and customs of the country, their virtues are painted as well as vices; and in neither is there a deviation from truth.

P R E F A C E.

truth. In whatever they have merited praise, I have gladly seized the opportunity of doing them justice ; and, whenever it has fallen within my province to censure, it is done with decency and candor.

Your observations on my language and stile, may perhaps be better founded ; I freely own that they are not written with labored accuracy. I have studied neither sentiment nor wit. Classical purity consists in ease and perspicuity ; not in labored sentences, and an affected rotundity of period, which seems to be the present fashionable mode of writing. A modern reader would not hesitate to prefer the stile and manner of Seneca, to the purest writer in the Augustan age.

Some of these letters are upon subjects of importance to the principality of Wales ; and have been written with a view to engage the attention of such as are concerned. The rest of these epistolary observations were written to friends for amusement only ; and their publication may be less owing to the author's vanity, than their request.

Secure

P R E F A C E.

Secure of candor, if not indulgence, no apology shall be made for their publication. Though an entertainment cannot be provided agreeable to every taste, yet I shall continue to hope, that most readers will find some gratification for their amusement or curiosity in the perusal of these letters.

I am, Sir, &c.



C O N-



C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R I.

INTRODUCTORY observations, on
the marches of Wales, &c.

L E T T E R II.

Describes a journey from Chester to Denbigh.

L E T T E R III.

Of the manners and customs of the ancient
inhabitants of Wales.

L E T T E R IV.

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L E T T E R XXI.

Conclusion.



LETTERS



L E T T E R S

F R O M

S N O W D O N.



L E T T E R I.

D E A R S I R,

I H A V E no reason to regret the length of my journey. It has been embellished with such an infinite diversity of objects, so enchanting to one whose prospects have been confined to the unvariegated scenes of nature. Unattended and unadorned by her handmaid art, she appears without deceit in all her native charms. Sometimes in the gay

B

attire

attire of fertile vales and woods, or in the plainer dress of mountains, cataracts and craggy precipices; more beautiful by change, and more pleasing by variety.

Since I have left the busy scenes of life, I have now the first opportunity of sending you the promised account of my tour into this country. I will omit no circumstance that fell within my observation, which I shall think may prove either curious or entertaining.

In a journey of three days from the metropolis, I arrived at Chester, on the banks of the river Dee. The castle, which seems to have been curious neither for elegance or strength, is in a ruinous condition. The walls of the town are in good repair. There is a pleasant walk upon them, from whence we have an extensive circular prospect. Here we had a distant view of the Welsh mountains, those natural fortresses which so long secured the independence of the inhabitants. These made a formidable appearance to one who intended so soon to scale

scale their craggy summits. The prospect we had from hence was a perfect contrast. On one side, the beautiful vales of Cheshire, clad in all the blooming verdure of spring; on the other, the Cambrian hills still wearing the hoary garb of winter.

Chester was anciently the residence of the kings of Wales. Its situation on the frontiers of England and Wales was most convenient to repel the incursions of the Saxons. In the ancient British language it is called CAER *, which signifies a walled or fortified place; from whence, or the Latin word *Castrum*, its presumed, the present name is derived. Long after the Britons, or Welsh, were dispossessed of England, by the Saxons, they still retained great part of the level country, on the borders of Wales, which was part of Mercia, afterwards called the marches of Wales.

* All the derivations of the Welsh words, which the reader will find in the following pages, are inserted upon the authority of a gentleman conversant in the language.

The marches of Wales comprehended the greatest part of the counties of Chester, Salop, Hereford, and Worcester. They were claimed both by the Saxons and the Britons; and possessed by either, as the fortune of war prevailed. They were the scenes of continual wars and devastation. It was the wise policy of the times to give large estates to men of distinguished valour, to preserve the frontier counties from rapine and violence, who were called lords-marchers. They had great numbers of men under their command, who swore fealty to them, and were under their direction upon all occasions. Their power was so great, that they might rather be considered as petty princes than subjects.

Egbert*, who reduced the Saxton heptarchy, took Chester from the princes of Wales. Since which time it has always been accounted as part of England. In the time of king Offa, the Welsh lost the greatest part of the marches. With a view either to prevent

* It is said of Egbert, that he was rowed on the river Dee by nine kings.

their incursions, into their frontier counties, or to mark the boundaries, he made a great dyke, called Offa's dyke (in the British language *CLAUDH* Offa) which is remaining in many places at this time. This was built probably with the same intent as the great wall between England and Scotland, and that between China and Tartary. Offa's dyke extends from the river Dee at Chester to the Wye at Chepstow. Its direction gives us reason to think it was intended to confine the Welsh to the mountains, as its general course runs on the sides of the hills.

The character of the inhabitants of North Wales, the *Ordovices* of the Romans, was even by the testimony of their enemies, that of a brave and warlike people. They preserved their independence for centuries, against the continued attempts of a great and powerful people to subdue them. Whether this may with greater propriety be attributed to their natural bravery, to the situation of their country, or to their want of

such things as tempt the ambition of conquerors, I shall leave undecided. Certain however, it is, that the Saxons continually made the greatest efforts to conquer them. Instigated, perhaps, more by a principle of revenge, for the ravages they committed on the borders of England, than by any advantages they could derive from the conquest of such a country.

Be this as it may, they were in an almost uninterrupted state of war. Such an innate principle of enmity and antipathy subsisted between the two nations, that the cruelties perpetrated by either side (as the chance of war decided) equalled those of the most savage nations. This enmity is traditional, and the common people in a great degree retain it inveterate to this day. Whenever they speak of an Englishman, whom they still call Saes or Saxon, they always join some opprobrious epithet.

It is not certain at what time the Britons were first called by the name of Welsh, nor
from

from whence the word has its derivation. Some historians say that Wallia* comes from Italia, as the Britons were descendants of Eneas. Others that Welsh come from Gaulish, as they were descended from the Gauls. Nothing is more uncertain than etymological learning; especially if we have no other foundation than similarity of sound. It is the disgrace of science. I shall not risk even a conjecture upon the subject. From whatever origin the word Welsh may be derived, it is not unreasonable to suppose it to be a term of reproach, fixed on them by the Saxons, as they never call themselves by that name, but always Cymry. Some likewise are weak enough to derive the word Cymry from Cimbri, imagining that they originally

* Wales (Wallia) cometh of the Saxon WEALH, which signifies peregrinus, for the Saxons so called them, for in troth they were strangers to them, being the remains of the old and ancient Britons, a wise and warlike nation inhabiting the west of England. Vide Lambert. This derivation seems not improbable, and it may be remarked in confirmation of it, that WEALT signifies in the Welsh, barbarous or wild.

descended from that people. All these derivations I look upon as vague and groundless conjectures. I chuse to avoid adopting any such; for in my opinion the names of different nations are generally more owing to casual events, than they are descriptive of either their descent or country.

In a future letter I propose sending you some historical account of this people.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R



L E T T E R II.

YOU may with justice, my dear friend, complain of my last letter. It contained observations on subjects unimportant and unentertaining to the greatest number of readers. Have patience, Sir, a reader must sometimes, like a traveller, put up with bad as well as good accommodations ; if the landlord does his endeavor to please, his guest ought to be satisfied. If the first stage is but indifferent, he must pursue his journey patiently, in hopes of better entertainment at the next.

At Chester we provided ourselves with the necessary equipment of a Welsh poney ; and procured a guide, who likewise served us in
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the capacity of an interpreter. We set out from Chester ruminating on our intended tour, and forming in our imaginations as many dangers and difficulties, as Hannibal met with in crossing the Alps. We were however agreeably deceived in our first day's journey, for we had an extraordinary good road; and in about three hours, we came to Holy-well. As we travelled, we had a prospect of the town and castle of Flint, with the castle of Haywarden, and the seat of Sir John Glynne; neither of which, in my opinion, merit a particular description.

Holy-well, or as it's called in the British language TRE-FYNNON, i. e. the town of the well; is a neat small town, situated on the side of a hill. At the bottom of which is the famous well of St. Winifred, from whence the town derives its name. The well is surrounded with very high hills on every side, to which may be attributed the amazing spring of water. It flows, according to the relation of the inhabitants, at the rate of a ton a minute. All the miraculous powers of healing

ing attributed to these waters, are ascribed to their patroness St. Winifred. So great is the veneration in which she is held, by those of the Romish persuasion, that in honor of her, they to this day, perform pilgrimages to Holy-well. You would not excuse me, were I to relate to you all the strange stories recorded of St. Winifred, by the monkish legendary writers. These serve only to shew the superstition of those times, and create disgust in a modern reader.

From Holy-well we travelled through a very indifferent road to Rhyddlan, a miserable village, situated on the borders of a very extensive marsh. The only thing for which it is remarkable, is a castle built by Henry II. The castle is extensive, not well situated, nor constructed with taste or elegance, and seems to have been stronger by art than nature. It is more decayed, than the generality of castles built in Wales about the same period. Some authors of considerable repute have asserted, that the castle of Rhyddlan was built by Edward I. as well as those
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of Carnarvon, Conway and Beaumaris. It is reasonable to suppose otherwise, for its structure is exceedingly different from those which he built. The reason that the Statutum Walliæ, or the ordinances respecting Wales, were enacted at Rhyddlan, was most probably owing to the other castles not being then finished.

The fertile vale of Clwyd, extends from Rhyddlan-marsh to the town of Rhythin, which is about fifteen miles. It is one of the most pleasant and fertile vales in the whole kingdom. It has three considerable towns, St. Asaph, Denbigh and Rhythin. The former is not remarked for beauty or situation. It is the see of a bishop, and has a good cathedral.

Denbigh is situated upon a fine eminence, on which arise the turrets of a majestic castle. It is in ruins, but the very ruins are venerable. Great part of the hall is still standing, which the rude inhabitants mistake for the ruins of a church. The remains of the hall, give the traveller an idea of the grandeur

deur of the place. I do not find by whom this castle was built, but I conjecture William Rufus, as he sent a colony to Denbighland.

The prospect from the castle is most enchanting. Beneath, the vale of Clwyd displays her bosom, profusely gay to the admiring spectator. The banks of the river Clwyd decorated with seats, the towns of Rhythin and St. Asaph, with the mountains rising at a distance, form a most delightful view.

Rhythin is a more populous and opulent town than Denbigh, and consists of better houses; but in point of situation, is far inferior. There are here the ruins of a castle, but so much defaced by the hand of time, that nothing can be discerned, which attracts the notice of a traveller.

The counties of Denbigh and Flint are rich and populous. The low country is very fertile, and in most places well cultivated and improved. The English manners and customs are pretty much adopted, especially
by

by the inhabitants of the vale country, who seem to be in general of Saxon and Norman extraction, as appears by those names being common in that country. Great part of Flintshire was very early in the possession of the English; and Denbigh-land, in the vale of Clwyd, was likewise colonied by some of the first princes of the Norman line.

The inhabitants of the mountainous country still retain the ancient British language and customs, unadulterated with any foreign tongue. So great is the difference between the inhabitants of the mountains and the vales, that they would be taken to be natives of different countries and climates. Different not only in their manners and customs, but even in their very complexion and persons.

I have now finished the observations I made in my tour through the counties of Flint and Denbigh.

I am, &c.

LETTER



L E T T E R III.

DEAR SIR,

THE character of the ancient inhabitants of this country, is given us in very unfavorable terms, by many historians. The English in those times were almost always in a state of war with this people, and were biassed by their interest and passions to represent them in the most odious colours. Giraldus Cambrensis, whose connections and descent might have prejudiced him in favour of this country, failed not to pay court to Henry II. by traducing the Welsh. What is still more extraordinary, the accurate and ingenious lord Lyttleton, has implicitly adopted the

the character given of them by the false and infamous Giraldus. They are represented by these historians, as having no kind idea of chastity. Promiscuous concubinage, they say, was in a manner allowed, and no stigma fixed upon it. If my lord Lyttleton had consulted Howel Dha's code, he would there have seen how highly they disapproved of even the appearances of an unlawful commerce between the sexes. I shall transcribe only one passage, which fully proves what I have said. " Si fœmina convicta fuerit criminis turpis cum alieno viro patrati, nempe osculationis, vel contractationis, vel adulterii, viro suo licet illam repudiare, et illa omittet dotem integram sibi primitus a viro suo assignatam, si tantum exosculata fuerit, si a cæteris abfit." By the same laws, if a man betrothed a woman, who did not prove to be a virgin, he was at liberty to repudiate her. Thus we see how cautiously the Welsh laws guarded the morals of the women, and how unjustly they were accused by Giraldus, and those that have asserted the same on his authority.

The

The manners of every uncivilized nation are in some degree similar. Sixteen hundred years ago, the inhabitants of Wales were nearly in the same state of civilization, as the American savages are at this day. We are told of Joseph of Arimathea's coming to Britain to plant the gospel. This depends upon the authority of the monkish historians, who scarce contain a word of truth or probability. But it is allowed that some kind of Christianity was planted very early in Britain, before the coming of the Saxons. Long after the Saxons came over they continued Pagans; whilst the Britons, according to these historians, enjoyed the light of the gospel. Before these Britons were converted to Christianity, one would think it was necessary to convert them from savages to men. From the accounts that I have read, by their conversion to Christianity, no more is meant than their being baptised, without so much as the imparting of any kind of faith or knowledge. This is precisely the case with the modern missionaries, who send accounts

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of

of the conversion of thousands, who have only been ceremoniously baptised, without Christian instruction.

In the time of Henry II. the inhabitants of Wales were so deplorably dark, that they could not with the least propriety be called Christians, and many of them even professed Pagans. The Don-Quixot archbishop, with his Sancho-Pancha, Giraldus, went upon an expedition to convert these Heathens. The archbishop preached to the poor Welsh in latin, they were baptised, kissed the cross, and so the mission ended, to their no small edification.

So late as the reign of Elizabeth, if we may believe Penry, there were but two or three that could preach in the whole principality of Wales. Some of late years have greatly promoted the cause of religion, by the translation of pious books into that language, and distributing them among the poor. There is still great room for improvement, as they are not only in want, but desirous of religious knowledge.

In

In former times, the inhabitants of Wales were described to be a nation of soldiers. Every man being obliged to take up arms, in times of distress. Thus, though a small country, they could bring large armies to the field. They used very light-armour, as they carried on the war by incursions, and forced marches; and conquered their enemies rather by surprise, than strength or courage.

They had only a small target to defend their breast, and used the javelin as a weapon of offence. Thus armed, and thus defended, they were no way equal to the English in a pitched battle, who fought with heavy armour, helmets and targets, and armed at all points.

They always fought on foot. Like all undisciplined soldiers, they made one furious onset, which if resisted, they were immediately put in confusion, and could not be rallied. They fled to the mountains, where they waited for another opportunity to fall upon their enemies.

They despised trade and mechanical arts, as they in general do to this day. Though they had no money among them, yet there were no beggars in the country for they were all poor. They are described to have been impetuous in their disposition, fickle, revengeful, and bloody. But let it be remembered, that this character is given them by their enemies.

Their superstition was excessive. They paid the greatest veneration to their priests, and looked upon them and their habitations as sacred.

I have endeavored, Sir, to give you some short account of the manners of the ancient inhabitants of this country, as described by the most authentic historians. I must now conclude, &c.

L E T T E R



L E T T E R IV.

DEAR SIR,

IN a former letter, I gave you a description of my journey from Chester to Denbigh; permit me now, Sir, to proceed in the account of my tour.

From Denbigh, we travelled through a hilly country, till we arrived at Conway, which is about twenty-five miles distant. Conway castle was built by Edward I. and is the admiration of all that see it. For situation, elegance, strength and grandeur it is perhaps unrivalled. It is situated on a high rock above the sea, and moated on the land side. There are ten round towers in the

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castle,

castle, and four turrets that are considerably higher than the towers. The walls are battlemented, and are from twelve to fifteen feet in breadth. When we enter into the castle, we are struck with the view of a grand arched hall, with handsome niched windows. This hall is entire; it is a hundred feet long, thirty wide, and thirty high, and the roof supported by nine arches of stone. The external part of the castle remains entire, as in Edward I. time, except one tower, which has tumbled into the sea, by part of the rock giving way. On one side of the castle is a high hill, covered with a fine coppice of wood. On the other we have a prospect over the river of some considerable seats, which make a beautiful appearance. The whole town is surrounded by a wall; and so strongly fortified was this place, that before the invention of cannon, it must have been absolutely impregnable.

I must not omit acquainting you, that the inns at Conway, are the worst and most extravagant upon this road; which hint may
be

be of service to you, in case you should travel this way.

The town of Llanrwst is about ten miles distant from Conway, the road to it leads through a beautiful little vale, environed by mountains that scale the heavens.

Llanrwst contains nothing remarkable, except a bridge built by Inigo Jones. This town claims the honor of being the place of his nativity. The elegant structure of the bridge, leaves us no room to doubt the masterly hand of the architect.

From Conway we passed over that stupendous rock, called Penmaenmawr. The road passes along the side of the mountain. Both beneath and above the road there are horrid precipices, with fragments of rock impending over the terrified traveller. Such roads appear tremendous, to one who has been used to travel a level country; but the inhabitants make nothing of riding on the very brink of a precipice. After a thaw of snow, or a heavy fall of rain, the loose rocks sometimes give way, and roll with convulsive ruins

into the sea, carrying with them the wall built for the traveller's security. A considerable part of this wall was thrown down, when we passed. It is said that a road is soon to be built under the mountain, through the sea, for which two thousand pound, I am informed, is granted by parliament.

Such as travel from Chester to Holy-head, sometimes go by a place called Bwlch-y-ddau-fain, thereby avoiding Conway and Penmaenmawr. This is nearer by six or eight miles, but an exceeding bad mountainous road, and which I would not advise the traveller to take.

Bangor is about twenty miles distant from Conway. At low water, we have a pleasant ride over the sands. It is a small town agreeably situated in a little vale, there was anciently a friary near this town, where the monks retired from Bangor-Iffa-coed in Denbighshire upon the massacre. * The remains of the friary are converted into a free grammar school, which is pretty well endowed, and is in a very flourishing state. It is said

* Tanner says this is the ^{that} to one it
 rise to a Colony from Bangor Iffa-coed
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that the famous Owen Glendowr was buried in this cathedral, and his grave is shewn there at this time.

The town of Carnarvon, so called from its situation CAER AR-FON, i. e. a walled town opposite Anglesey, is about eight miles from Bangor, and stands pleasantly situated on the banks of the Menai. It has a noble castle, built by Edward I. where his queen was brought to bed of Edward II. They shew the queen's bed-chamber to all traveller's that visit this castle. It is built in the Roman stile of architecture; it has one tower eminent above the rest called the Eagle's tower, from ~~an eagle~~ ^{an eagle} carved upon its ^{buttress} ~~buttress~~. The town is surrounded by a wall, and seems to have been well fortified for those days. I have heard it remarked that there are few gentlemen, but a great number of widow's that live here. In this country the women in general survive the men, and the reason of it does not seem to be very problematical.

I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R



L E T T E R V.

VIR TUE, my dear friend, is not the inhabitant of * uncivilized countries. She is not confined to scenes of solitude, nor always found in the unfrequented vales of rural retirement. Virtue is a plant that flourishes not in the untoward soil of nature uncivilized; and is often more an exotic in a country village, than in the crouded streets of populous cities.

The innocence of manners described by the poets, in the primæval ages of mankind, had existence only in their own imagination.

* Whoever denies this position, let him read the account of the Hottentots, the Tartars, and the savages of Asia and America, when first discovered.

Man

Man in a natural state, has no other desire or thought but the gratification of his wants. He feels only the impulses of nature, and yields to those feelings. If we may define virtue to be a resistance, in a certain degree, to the force of our natural propensities; he knows not, nor acknowledges any such power. Nature alone is his empress, he feels her sway, and pays obedience to her commands.

The ideas of beauty and merit, the one arising from personal, the other from mental accomplishments, depend upon abstract reasonings, and comparisons formed in the mind. The farther we are removed from a state of civilization, the less capable are we of forming these ideas. Love, therefore, in its refined state, kindled by the flame of beauty, and founded on the solid basis of personal merit, must consequently be peculiarly the characteristic of civilized nations. Hence the very meaning of the term, considered as the tender sympathy of congenial souls, is never known in many countries. The Asiatics, Africans, Americans and Dutch, are altogether

ther strangers to any such idea. They can fix no other signification to the word love, than that passion which nature wisely implanted in all animals, preventive of the annihilation of their species. They have no predilection for any object. The person is no consideration with them. If the end nature had in view is answered, they are satisfied. Thus they avoid all those inquietudes arising from personal predilection, the prolific source of jealousies and animosities, which disturb the peace of society.

These observations may not be altogether inapplicable to the people, whose manners I am describing. I do not find that either of the sexes are capable of forming any violent attachment, or personal affection. All are to them indifferent, except where fortuitous external causes have destroyed their equality.

In all countries custom has established some forms, previous to connubial connections. In many places, custom acts the part of an inexorable tyrant, whose rigid commands we must implicitly obey. Here she
bears

bears a milder sway. I will not offend the ear of delicacy, with a description of what had better be concealed. I may say, that in general the women discover such prognostics, before they enter into the marriage state, as denote they will not be unfruitful members of society. Nor does custom stamp the opprobrious stigma of infamy upon such an appearance.

The ceremonies attending the marriages of these people, may afford you some entertainment, as they are different from any thing of the kind, that may have fallen within your observation.

The bridegroom on the morning of the wedding, accompanied with a troop of his friends, as well equipped as the country will allow, comes and demands the bride. Her friends, who are likewise well mounted on their MERLINS*, give a positive refusal to their demands, whereupon a mock scuffle ensues between the parties. The bride is mounted on one of the best steeds, behind

* The Welsh word for a little mountain horse,

her

her next kinsman, who rides away with her in full career. The bridegroom and his friends, pursue them with loud shouts. It is not uncommon to see, on such an occasion, two or three hundred of these merlins, mounted by sturdy Cambro Britons, riding with full speed, crossing and jostling each other, to the no small amusement of the spectators. When they have pretty well fatigued themselves and their horses, the bridegroom is permitted to overtake his bride. He leads her away in triumph, as the Romans did the Sabine nymphs. They all return in amity, and the whole is concluded with festivity and mirth.

Let us now view the women, in the very essential characters of wives and mothers. You would naturally suppose, that a young woman who had, without fear or restraint, enjoyed an almost unbounded liberty in a single state, would not be easily debarred from enjoying the same in the married. But the case is the very reverse. Infidelity to the bed of Hymen, is scarce ever known or heard
of

of in this country. Adultery is a weed that grows in the rank soil of a court, fostered by luxury and vanity.

Mankind form an untrue judgment from external appearances; those are esteemed virtuous, who have had their education in a boarding school or nunnery. Persuaded I am, the case is quite different. The greater number of shackles with which we fetter human nature, the more she strives to gain her native freedom. Forbidden pleasures are coveted, whilst those within our reach are neglected. The various methods of confinement in foreign countries, makes their taste for illicit pleasures more poignant, and incites them to run risks for their gratification. When you indulge them in the power, you in some degree take away the temptation to vice.

In the character of wives, the women of this country are laborious, industrious and chaste. In that of mothers, they nurture their robust offspring, not in sloth and inactivity,

vity, but enure them early to undergo hardships and fatigues.

Let the fair daughters of indolence and ease, contemplate the characters of these patterns of industry, who are happily unacquainted with the gay follies of life. Who enjoy health without medicine, and happiness without affluence. Equally remote from the grandeur and the miseries of life, they participate of the sweet blessings of content, under the homely dwelling of a straw-built cottage.

Adieu, my friend, &c.

L E T T E R



L E T T E R VI.

DEAR SIR,

IN giving a general description of the manners of this country, I would always, be understood to except many individuals, who happily cannot be included under the general character. During my continuance here, I have met with some possessed of every virtue that can adorn humanity. Such as do honor to human nature, in all countries, are but few, when compared to those that disgrace it. Here the number is not less proportionate.

However my respect for a few individuals, might incline me to speak partially of the
D country.

country. The sacred regard I bear to the cause of truth, stops my pen. She commands me to represent them as they are,

Nothing extenuate, nor set down ought in malice.

The country gentlemen in England, or rather let me say esquires; an appellation they esteem more honorable, and I own more suitable; have been generally represented, not unjustly, as a set of beings, who have no other employment, or diversion, except that of the chace and the glafs. They spend the whole morning in the one, and the evening in the other. Without learning and without knowledge, their minds like their estates lie fallow and unimproved. The entertainment of the animal is their only business, while the man is neglected. The fable of the centaurs is literally verified in this class of beings, for the beast runs away with the man. As the objects of their attention are confined, so are their ideas, and the topics of their conversation.

I will

I will not say the Squires in Wales, differ materially from those of the same rank in England, except that they are more devoted to the jolly god: For like the Thracians of old, when a stranger comes among them, they will do him the honors of the house*, by obliging him to drink intemperately; and will at least expect him to make a compliment of his reason, in return for their hospitality. They have, however, some good qualities, in a greater degree than the English. They keep better houses, employ a greater number of poor, are less avaritious, and far more charitable.

The clergy are in general the only people that have any knowledge of letters; to qualify them for orders, they have the advantage of a good school education; and spend a considerable time at the university. It is the general, and I believe well founded, com-

* In every house that I visited in Wales, they had a capacious horn, or other enormous utensil, which they obliged every man to drink that came, filled with ewrw, the Welsh word for strong ale.

plaint of the country, that they return from thence very little improved, in their morals or learning. A certain air of pedantry, accompanied with vain assurance, and the acquisition of some fashionable vices, are too often the only means of distinguishing such as have had an university education.

An academy, under proper regulations, in the country would, I think, be a more suitable place for instructing youth for the church. It would be attended with less expence, and greater care might be taken of their morals and religion, the principal object.

*This is
nd peculiar
to Wales.* Most of the clergy have two or three churches each to serve, and consequently it is impossible the duty should be properly discharged. Evening prayers are seldom read, and in many places they scarce ever preach. The benefices are for the most part of pretty considerable value, being a decent maintenance for a clergyman. Except in a few towns, and on the borders of England, the service of their churches is performed altogether in the Welsh or old British tongue.

The

The yeomanry and peasants are very civil and obliging in their behavior. They have not the ferocious disposition, which characterises the English, flowing from that spirit of liberty and independence, which animates the soul of an Englishman. They are shrewd and artful in their dealings. They have an inveterate rooted antipathy to all foreigners, especially English and Irish. If a stranger is so unfortunate as to go and live amongst them, they look upon him with a jealous eye, as one who comes with an intent to deprive them of their subsistence.

The manner of living of the lower class of people, is extremely poor. The chief of their subsistence, being barley and oat bread. They scarce ever eat flesh, or drink any thing but milk. They are not of that passionate and choleric temper, as the English describe them, but slow, deliberate, and wary in their speech and conduct, and submissive in their disposition. I know not whether to attribute it to their manner of life, or

*false
false*

to the great power the 'squires exercise over them. Certain it is, that the people of this country in general, have no greater idea of English liberty than the peasants of France.

I am, Sir, &c.



LETTER



L E T T E R VII.

D E A R S I R,

IN my two last letters, I endeavoured to give you some idea of the manners of this people; I shall reserve the disagreeable task of finishing the portrait, till another opportunity. Let us now vary our subject, and contemplate the face of nature; which however rugged her appearance may be, affords a more pleasing prospect, than the rude and uninformed heart of man.

From Carnarvonshire, we crossed over the Menai, into the island of Anglesea. It is called the river Menai, though in fact it is an arm of the sea, separating Anglesea from

D 4

Carnar.

Carnarvonshire. In the narrowest part, it is about the same breadth as the Thames at Westminster-bridge. The principal town in the island is Beaumaris, it received this name in the time of Edward I. who built the castle, and is derived from the French Beau-marais*, which language was then prevalent, and is descriptive of its situation. A fine green lawn before the town, from whence we have a charming prospect of the Carnarvonshire mountains, with a haven of the sea, renders this place delightful. The town is in a declining condition. Before Liverpool became so great a mart, this place carried on a considerable trade, which it has now entirely lost. It consists of two or three good streets, better built than the greatest number of Welsh towns. The castle is not to be compared to those of Carnarvon and Conway

* Beau-marais, signifies in French a fine marsh, the situation of this town exactly corresponds with this derivation. Part of Paris, which is situated very low, is called Du-marais, i. e. of the marsh.

Conway is stronger by situation. Beaumaris next to Carnarvon for beauty.

for beauty, though perhaps not inferior in point of strength.

Baron-hill, the seat of lord Bulkeley, is situated upon an eminence, about half a mile distant from the town. It commands an extensive and very beautiful prospect. The house is not to be admired, but I prefer the situation to any that I have seen in Wales.

From Beaumaris we travelled through the whole extent of the county, till we came to Holy-head; which stands on a promontory, in the remotest corner of the island. This little town is a sea-port, where the Dublin packets are stationed. It is a place of considerable resort, populous, and in a flourishing state.

This turnpike
is the road
to not
qual to
one in
any part
rough
dirty
and last
it all deep;
We had a very unpleasing journey from Beaumaris to this place. The roads were exceeding deep; our horses sunk into the clay, so that it was with the utmost difficulty we travelled. But the turnpike roads in this county, are not inferior to any in the kingdom. During our whole day's journey, we scarce saw a tree, or a gentleman's seat. *There is but one tree, & in Anglesea & this he has abund.*
5 or 6 miles
but not
very good.

x There certainly are both.

The face of the county affords a disagreeable and melancholy prospect, though the land is said to be rich and fertile. *It is not well suited to agriculture.*

Curiosity induced me to view the seat of the ancient British princes, Aberfraw: but how much were my expectations disappointed! It is a little country village, without any remains of grandeur, or monuments of antiquity, that I could discern.

I was told that part of the wall of the king's palace, was converted into a barn. It is astonishing how the princes of North-Wales, could have chosen such a situation for their residence; eligible for no reason that can now be conceived.

From Aberfraw we crossed the sands, and came to a corporation town, called Newborough. This place had a right of returning a member to serve in parliament, which they have lost for some years. It appeared to me, to be an exceeding poor place; but I was told that the inhabitants were all so industrious, that there was not a beggar in the whole place; and indeed we did not find that

that any one asked alms of us; a circumstance not very common in little country towns.

The last place we visited in the island of Anglesea, was the seat of Sir Nicholas Bayly. It is built in the gothic stile, with great elegance and state. Its situation on the banks of the Menai, with a prospect of the mountains at a distance, renders it the admiration of all who see it. After our tedious journey through the island, we were agreeably entertained with the vicissitudes we here experienced, imagination cannot form a scene more adapted for solemn meditation. The sacred monuments of druidical antiquity, surrounded with the thick imbowering shades of venerable oaks, render this place the seat of contemplation; and put me in mind of those beautiful lines in Mr. Warton's Pleasures of Melancholy:

*There is
only 8
ashons,
rombich.
3 is sur-
rounded with
y camoes.*

Hail, queen divine! whom as tradition tells,
Once in his evening walk a druid found,
Far in a hollow glade of Mona's woods;
And piteous bore with hospitable hand,

To

To the close shelter of his oaken bow'r.
Therefoonthesageadmiring, marked the dawn
Of solemn musing in your pensive thought,
For when a smiling babe you loved to lie,
Oft deep listening to the rapid roar
Of wood-hung Menai, stream of druids old,
That laved his hallow'd haunt with dashing
wave.

Adieu, Sir, &c.



L E T T E R



L E T T E R VIII.

D E A R S I R,

IT is much to be regretted, that a full account of the antiquities of Wales has never been published. There are ample materials, to employ the pen of an antiquary. Mr. Edward Llwyd of the Musæum at Oxford, made many valuable and curious collections for such a work, and likewise for a compleat natural history of the country. He lived not to finish so great an undertaking; and the public are to lament, that no one has been found, who is possessed of knowledge and assiduity, to finish his design. The materials that he left behind him are still
extant,

extant, and I am informed, may be procured without much difficulty, by any one who will execute his plan.

There were, before the reformation, large estates in Wales, dedicated to religious uses. In every county are still to be seen the venerable remains of many religious houses, monasteries, and friaries. The people of this country, were formerly proverbially remarked for their superstition; which makes it the less to be admired, that holy church had so many domains in Wales.

During the few months I have resided in this country, it cannot be supposed that I could minutely investigate into the history of all the religious houses. And were I thoroughly acquainted with every particular relating to such a subject, it would greatly exceed the bounds of an epistolary correspondence, to enter into a minute description of them.

During our literary intercourse, I shall endeavor to furnish you with an account of all the principal castles and fortifications that
are

are now standing. The most considerable, are such as were built by the English and Normans. I do not find that the Britons built their fortifications in the manner of the English. The British fortresses were of a circular form, the ramparts consisted of mounds of earth, thrown up with three circumvallations and fosses, of a similar construction with Old Sarum. A variety of these fortifications and encampments are to be seen, on almost every hill through the country. On the sea shore, in every place where the enemy could with safety land, the remains are still to be discerned.

The great museum of druidical, as well as other antiquities, is the island of Anglesea. Some account has been published by Mr. Rowland's, in his *Mona Antiqua*. An author of no small repute amongst antiquarians, and highly venerated in that country. He was doubtless a man of great application and some learning. His *Mona Antiqua* consists rather of an account of the antiquities of his own parish and neighbourhood, than

than of the whole island of Anglesea. We find in it some ingenious observations, and accurate remarks. But replete with ill-founded conjectures, and strained etymologies, the most ridiculous exertion of science. He derives the Welsh or British language from the Hebrew, without any other foundation, than the congruity of sound of a few words, with which it has manifestly no more affinity, than it has with the Chinese. Praise is however due to his labors, and I mean not to detract from his merit.

The remains of druidical antiquities, are very frequent over the whole island of Anglesea; near Plas-Newydd, the seat of Sir Nicholas Bayly, which I described in a former letter, there is a druidical altar still remaining entire. In various places are to be seen the CARNs, or more properly CARNEDDE. These are generally situated on an eminence, and consist of a large tumulus of stones. The vulgar attribute them to the work of giants. The truth seems to be, that they are the sepulchres of persons of renown. When the
general

general of an army died, or was killed in battle, it was usual for all who lamented him, to throw a stone upon his grave. The greater the tumulus, the more honorable was his interment. Though this practice has been probably disused for ages, yet it is a common expression in the country to this day, to say of a man that died unlamented, *Ni rhoi i mor carreg ar iw fedd*, i. e. I will not throw a stone upon his grave. Mr. Macpherson, in a book he has lately published, says, "That in the highlands of Scotland there are many of these tumuli, which they call Carns, and that he caused many of them to be thrown down, and always found under the heap, some stones placed in the form of a coffin, and often the bones remaining." I wanted not inclination to have the experiment tried here, but had neither time nor opportunity to make such a trial; and I much question, whether the people of the country are not so superstitious, as to prevent any such attempts.

E

Besides

Besides the CARNEDDE just described, there are many ORSEDDE, or ORSEDD-FAINCIA, and CROMLECHE. I conjecture the cromleche to have been stones, where the druids sacrificed to their deities. We have less doubt concerning the orsedde, or orsedd-faincia. For it is not questioned from the import of the word, as well as their appearance, but that they were druidical judgment seats. In those times, the druids were priests, law-givers and judges. The veneration paid to their sacred characters, gave weight and authority to their decisions. In this the Britains resembled the accounts given of the Germans, and Gauls by Tacitus and Cæsar. I shall forbear saying any thing farther at present upon this point, as I shall have occasion to mention it in a future letter, when I come to speak of the laws of the ancient Britons.

It does not appear that the Welsh, or British princes, ever coined any money. They paid their mulcts, like the Germans, in cattle, *Luitur certo armentorum aut pecorum numero*. I allow that in particular cases, a fine
was

was to be paid in gold or silver, for offences committed against the person of the king or queen. For defiling the prince's bed, the offender was to pay a rod of pure solid gold, of the thickness of a plowman's finger, that had ploughed nine years, in length from the ground to the prince's mouth when sitting. In what part of Wales such a quantity of gold was then to be found, is a mystery that I will not undertake to unfold.

I am afraid I weary your patience on this subject, and must conclude, by assuring you that I am

Yours, &c.





L E T T E R IX.

I H A V E not, my dear friend, in any former letter described to you the place of my residence in this country, the scene from whence these letters have been written.

After I had finished my tour of North Wales, I determined to fix upon the most romantic and unfrequented situation, for the scene of a few month's retirement. A place where I could not be interrupted with the impertinent intrusion of affected gentility, or disgusted with the ridiculous ceremonies of false politeness. I did not long hesitate in my choice. The situation of this place, and the great abundance of game, the country afforded,

forded, confirmed my determination. I board with the curate of the parish, who is the only person in the neighbourhood capable of conversing with me. The curate is a venerable clergyman, on the eve of threescore. He wears his own natural grey locks, and still retains a ruddy bloom in his countenance, acquired by health and exercise. He has lived among these mountains for near forty years, upon a curacy and a little paternal estate, which he cultivates with his own hands. His whole revenue amounts not to forty pounds per annum, and yet that exceeds his expences,

Whose little store, his well taught mind does
 please,
 Not pinched with want, nor cloy'd with
 wanton ease;
 Who free from storms, which on the great
 ones fall,
 Makes but few wishes, and enjoys them all.

ROSCOMMON.

E 2

This

This place is a small village among the Carnarvonshire hills, situated in a valley, surrounded on every side by rocks and mountains, through which a river winds its irri-
guous course. We are never at a loss for rural diversions. Earth, air and water vie with each other in furnishing us entertainment. Our table is spread by our industry. The same exercise contributes to our health and our amusement; and at the same time that our exercise gives us an appetite, it procures us also the means of satisfying it. Our craft and subtlety is not employed (as it is among the greatest part of mankind) against our own species; we carry on an innocent war against those animals, over which the bountiful Creator gave us a sovereignty.

Various were the conjectures of the country people concerning me, when first I came to this place. What commenced in suspicion, was likely to terminate in antipathy, but by the proper application of a few pieces of glittering ore, and the knowledge of a few Welsh words, I soon became highly respected.

And

And they all obey my commands, as readily as any monarch is obeyed by his subjects.

I had long a desire of visiting the Welsh Alps, the summit of Snowdon*. The curate was so much devoted to me, that I did not employ my rhetoric long, before I prevailed upon him to accompany me in the expedition. We set out from our hermitage, in the month of July; we arrived in the evening at a small thatched hut, at the foot of the mountain, near a lake which they call Llyn Cychwhechlyn, which I leave you to pronounce as well as you are able. At this hut we found a poor labouring man, with five or six children, the pictures of health and innocence. We had brought provisions with us for our journey, and we regaled ourselves in this situation, the family partaking of our feast, with more satisfaction and

* Snowdon, comprehended formerly the counties of Merionydd and Carnarvon, and the mountainous part of Denbighshire; it is now confined to a mountain of that name.

glee, than I have ever found at a nobleman's sumptuous entertainment.

We were determined to amuse ourselves, as well as we could in this dreary situation. For this purpose we sent for a poor blind harper, and procured a number of blooming country girls to divert us with their music and dancing. There is something very plaintive and affecting in the Welsh music, and the manner of their singing symphonious and responsive to the notes of the harp, renders it exceeding melodious. It gave me infinitely more pleasure to hear this rustic concert, than the finest airs of an Italian opera; and to see these rosy rural nymphs direct their mazy steps, without the needless sumptuous apparel of luxury and pride, than all the ladies at St. James's, in their artificial beauty and attire.

At the dawn of day, we began our journey up the mountain, which seemed to scale the heavens. I cannot give you a better description of it, than is contained in the following lines of Mr. Pope :

So

L E T T E R IX. 57

So pleased at first the tow'ring Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales and seem to tread the
sky ;

Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the
last.

But those attained, we trembled to survey,
The growing labors of the lengthened way ;
The increasing prospect tires our wandering
eyes,

Hills peep o'er hills and alps o'er alps arise.

We found a great change in the temperature of the atmosphere, as we ascended the mountain. When we had gone half way up, we found the wind rather high, attended with scudding clouds. But when we arrived at the summit, the air was calm and serene, and seemed much more subtle and rarified, less impregnated with vapors, and more agreeable for respiration.

Hid above the clouds,
Tho' winds and tempests beat their aged feet ;
Their

Their peaceful heads, nor storms, nor tem-
pests know,
But scorn the threatening rack that rolls
below.

DRYDEN.

How shall I describe to you the infinitely extensive and variegated prospects we enjoyed from the summit? lakes, mountains, seas, rivers, plains, woods and islands lay before us, in the greatest diversity. We saw distinctly the north of England, the greatest part of Wales, Cheshire, Shropshire, Ireland, the isle of Man and Scotland. I doubt whether so extensive a circular prospect is to be seen in any part of the terraqueous globe.

As our situation was exalted above the globe, so were our ideas. And the nearer we were to the ethereal regions, the more our souls seemed to partake of their purity. Our minds like the serene face of the sky, undisturbed with the storms of the passions became equal and composed. We were inspired with sentiments of commiseration and contempt,
in

in contemplating the vain magnificence of human grandeur ; and the pursuits of the world, for a few pieces of ore, which nature prudently concealed in the bowels of these mountains.

O my friend, why should we return to the busy haunt of men? why were we doomed to drag an existence in populous cities and the crowded forum ! O that it had been our lot to live among these mountains, unenvied and unknown !

Excuse, my friend, these reveries. I shall endeavor to atone for them, by hastening to a conclusion. The sun had now gained its meridian height, and shot forth its noontide rays with unusual fervor. When we began to descend the hill, we perceived a small murky cloud rise out of the sea. The cloud condensed and increased, until the whole atmosphere became enveloped in darkness, and night seemed to have regained her ebon throne. Neither house nor tree was near to afford us protection, but all was one vast continued waste.

In

66 L E T T E R IX.

In this situation we could only have recourse to the hospitable shelter of the next impending rock. Here we awaited with fear and impatience, till the storm was spent.

Either tropic now,
'Gan thunder; at both ends of heaven the
clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with
fire,
In ruin reconcil'd. Dreadful was the rack,
As earth and sky would mingle.

MILTON.

The thunder reverberated from rock to rock, and the whole artillery of heaven seemed to be at once discharged.

Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
The repercussive roar. With mighty crush
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmaenmawr heap'd hideous to the
sky,

Tumble

L E T T E R IX. 61

Tumble the smitten cliffs, and Snowdon's heap
Dissolving instant, yields his wintry load.

THOMPSON.

When the storm was appeased, and the face
of heaven had reassumed its wonted serenity,
we continued our journey. Pleased, though
fatigued, with our excursion, we regained
our homely dwelling, from whence I have
now the happiness of writing to you, and
assuring you that I am,

Dear Sir, Yours, &c.



L E T T E R



L E T T E R X.

D E A R S I R,

IN observing the manners and customs of this people, some idea may be formed of their ancestors, the ancient Britons. They have preserved themselves almost intirely distinct from all other nations. They possessed nothing that could tempt the ambition of foreigners. Having no allurements from a prospect of commercial advantage, or the charms of opulence and fertility ; they remained strangers to a country which afforded no incitement to avarice or ambition. Thus, I will not say unhappily, excluded from the conflux of strangers, the pure British blood

blood flows unadulterated in their veins. Their customs, manners, virtues, and even vices, are preserved as a sacred depositum, inherited from their ancestors, and observed with religious veneration.

My friend, the curate, of whom I gave some account in my last letter, supplies me with every necessary information, respecting the language, manners, and customs of this people, whose veracity cannot be suspected.

I have already described to you the different ceremonies, attending the marriages of this people, they are no less singular in their funerals.

The evening preceding the burial, they have what they call WYL-NOS, i. e. the night of lamentation. All the neighbors attend at the house of the deceased, the minister, or in his absence the clerk of the parish, comes and prays over the dead, and psalms are sung agreeable to the mournful occasion. This it may not unreasonably be supposed, is the remains of the Romish superstition of requiems for the souls of the deceased. How-
ever

ever there is nothing improper in the custom if conducted with decorum and devotion, which is not always the case. At the funeral, the relations and friends of the deceased make presents, to the officiating clergyman, and the clerk of the parish. These offerings are altogether voluntary, generally proportionable to their circumstances, and the respect they bear to the memory of their departed friend. In some populous parishes, the offerings are very considerable, and constitute a great part of the profits of a living. There is no doubt but that this is likewise a relict of the Popish custom, of giving money to their priests, for praying that the soul of the deceased may be relieved from purgatory.

It is a custom likewise invariably observed to make a bonfire near every house on All-saints eve. Whether this was originally owing to public rejoicing, or to some superstitious ceremony, I could never be informed.

Among the amusements of the country, the principal are the stage plays. You will smile, when I tell you that we have comedies
and

and tragedies. King David and Solomon are often brought upon the stage, and are taught to speak pure Welsh. These entertainments are called ANTERLUTES, which seems to be no more than a corruption of the English word interlude.

My curiosity prevailed upon me to go and see one of these plays acted, the stage consisted of some boards fixed at the end of a barn; beneath it was the green room; for it was a small inclosure made up of furze. The play that was acted, was king Lear; but so mutilated and murdered, that I was told it had scarce any other resemblance to the play written by Shakespeare, than the name. It was not unentertaining to see these brawny ploughmen, act in the characters of Lear's daughters.

The two principal characters which they never fail to introduce into every play, are those of the fool and miser. The former uses all kind of indecent ribaldry, obscene gestures, and expressions, which generally prove highly entertaining to the audience.

F

This

This representation put me in mind of the description, given by Horace, of the first comic actors.

Dicitur et plastris vexasse poemata Thespis.

The people of this country are not inferior in superstition to the Laplanders. The most improbable and absurd tales of haunted houses, demons, and apparitions, are related and believed. Nor can many be found so hardy, as to doubt the existence of witches, fairies, elves, and all the bugbears of a winter's eve.

Adieu, Sir, &c.



L E T T E R



LETTER XI.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE heard it often asserted that mankind are the same in all countries. This, if true, will destroy the very idea of national characters. And yet experience will justify the observation, that there is a very wide difference between the inhabitants of Asia and Europe, between those of Spain, France and England, and even between the English and Irish. If no more is meant by such an observation, than that man in a state of nature, is the same in every country, I will admit it to be true. But man is no longer what nature formed him. Education

has furnished him with vices, with prejudices, with a certain range of ideas, and mode of thinking, which stamp his character. Hence the difference of fashion, conduct and character which we observe in every country.

In a state of nature, the wants of man are merely physical, confined to the sustenance of corporeal existence. In a state of society most of his necessities are acquired, at first imaginary, and in process of time become real. How few are the wants of the peasant, who dwells in a straw-built hut, on a barren mountain, which the avarice of man has not reduced to property, compared to those of the lord nursed in the cradle of indolence and luxury!

It was in a state of society, that Hobbes ought to have sought for his state of war, and not in that of nature. It is in society that the interests of mankind perpetually clash with each other. Many pursue the same object; aspire to the same post or employment. We all pay our devoirs to the enchanting goddess gold; the supposed dispenser

penfer of all sublunary happiness. The goddess smiles on some of her votaries, frowns on others. Her discarded devotees endeavor to supplant such as share her favors. Every engine which imagination can invent, is used to effectuate the purpose. This is the box of Pandora, from whence all the evils and calamities of life proceed. Hence deceit is become a necessary art, taught in the school of the world, universally studied and universally admired. It is the ladder of preferment, and the step of ambition. Its perfection is called politeness, and its defect rusticity. In different degrees it is used by all; from the courtier who pours the delicious poison of flattery into his prince's ears, to the rustic peasant who bows to the little tyrant of a country village.

An unpolished people cannot have attained to the refinement of deceit, that we find among the more civilized nations. Hence the idea of insincerity is always, not improperly, connected with the politeness of a

courtier, and French complaisance and deceit are joined as inseparable companions.

If we would view the heart of man without disguise, it is among the rude and uncivilized inhabitants of mountains. Too artless to conceal the dictates of their hearts, the tongue reveals the sentiments of the mind. Hence those passions which are concealed or disguised in more civilized countries, appear here in their native colors.

The nationality, if I may so call it, of the Scotch, has been proverbial, and it is owing to that mutual support, that they have made so conspicuous a figure. The natives of this country are in no degree remarked for this quality; to this it may be attributed, that they scarce ever rise to any considerable station or eminence in any profession or department; unplaced and unpensioned, they are perhaps the only part of the king's subjects, who have not had some share in the profits of government, and enjoyed some of the spoils of the public. Thus without the mutual friendly assistance of each other, or
the

the sunshine of court favor, they seldom emerge from their original obscurity.

O pure and immaculate friendship; thou gem, whose lustre remains unimpaired by the desolating hand of time, and undiminished by the rough storm of adverse fortune, who receivest additional splendor from age, and shinest bright under the severest trial! Art thou to be found among these desert rocks, or in the fertile plains of cultivated nature.

Thou art not the partial inhabitant of country or clime. The sympathetic feelings of the heart, thy offspring exist only in the minds of the ingenuous few; whose souls are cast in the same mould, whose union is founded on the solid basis of merit and esteem, and cemented by delicacy of manners. That connection which the vulgar call friendship, which arises from the participation of the same brutal pleasures, is as fleeting as those pleasures, which gave it birth. The intimacy accruing from the society of an idle hour, which had better been blotted from the hoary calendar of time, or the same convi-

vial festivity, as it has its existence, so it ends with the circulating glass.

O thou guileless and unsuspecting youth, who art now launching thy bark, and unfurling thy sails, to commence the difficult and dangerous voyage of life ! Who fondly expectest the sunshine of fortune, and the gales of prosperity, to speed thy destined voyage. But be prepared to encounter storms and tempests, and know that thou mayest meet with treacherous and unskilful pilots, who will endeavor to sink thee in the quick-sands of misfortune, and wreck thee on the rocks of despair. Steer by the helm of prudence, let religion be thy anchor, and industry thy pilot, so shalt thou stem the rough torrents of adverse fortune, and bring thy vessel to the haven of peace, where all thy labors will have an end.

Adieu, my friend, &c.

L E T T E R



L E T T E R XII.

D E A R S I R,

I F I N D you are displeased with my philosophical reveries. Be assured, you shall be troubled with no more of them. I am, however, determined that you shall do penance for your disapprobation, not by walking bare-foot to the shrine of St. Winifred, but by having the drudgery imposed on you of reading the following letter.

Our journey from Carnarvon to this town, has been through a country the most rocky, and abounding with the most romantic prospects, that we have travelled since we came to Wales. We passed under Snowdon, thro' a village

a village called Berthgelet. Two considerable lakes are adjacent to the road, in which the false pen of Giraldus says, there were floating islands, and which is now affirmed by some, who have as little regard to truth as Giraldus. This side the village of Berthgelet, is the famous Pont-Aber-glasslyn. This is a bridge thrown over a considerable water-fall, from one mountain to another. Contiguous to it is a salmon leap, where the fish continually make efforts to leap up a rock, about six yards high, to lay their spawn; a net is placed under the rock, in order to catch them as they fall. So stupendous is the structure of this bridge, in the eyes of the ignorant country people, that they do not hesitate to pronounce it to be the work of supernatural agency. It may be curious to know upon what condition his satanic majesty would turn master builder. The agreement was drawn up by one of his agents, who assumed the not unusual form a lawyer, and thereby it was covenanted, stipulated, ratified, agreed, and a thousand more such redundant words, and,

and the condition of the obligation was such, that his infernal highness was to have the first that went over the bridge for his trouble and expence. But a method was contrived to defraud him, by driving a dog over, which was all the pay he had for building the famous bridge of Aber-glaslyn. Why should this account be thought more extraordinary, than the description we have in Milton of Sin and Death building a bridge over chaos to this world.

The situation of Aber-glaslyn is exceeding romantic, the rocks impend over you, so that you may with truth say,

Tres pateat cæli spatium non amplius ulnas.

The spacious round of heaven which all contains,

To thee short ells on earth our sight restrains.

DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

From hence we crossed a dangerous sand, called Traeth-maur, and came to Harlech-castle. This is a very magnificent structure situated

situated on an eminence. Beneath it there is a fine marsh of some miles extent, upon which the sea adjoins. It does not clearly appear by whom this castle was built; though we may conjecture that it is the work of some of the first kings of the Norman line.

On the opposite shore of Avionydd, we see the castle of Crycaith. This is situated on a small hill, washed on one side by the sea. The ascent to it is very steep quaquaverfally. The castle is but very small, in comparison to those I have already described. It is not improbable but that this castle was built by some of the Welsh or British princes. Tradition informs us that all that part, now covered with the sea, between Crycaith and Harlech, was formerly a fine level country, called Cantref-Gwaelod, i. e. the plain of a hundred townships. Some manuscripts in Welsh, I am informed, give an account of the sea over-flowing this plain, but at what time this happened does not appear, or whether ever it was different from what it is at present, I am greatly inclined to doubt.

From

From Harlech we pursued our journey to Tan-y-bwlch, in the vale of Festiniog. Here we rested a night, at a small inn, where we met with very good accommodations. The vale of Festiniog has been much admired by travellers. The meanders of a winding stream, the wood-capt hills, with which it is environed, form, I own, a beautiful prospect. But, perhaps, the striking contrast, between this little vale and the horrid country round it, contributes most to please the eye of the wearied traveller.

About fifteen miles from Tan-y-bwlch is the town of Bala. Its name is descriptive of its situation, being upon the banks of a fine lake, three miles long and one broad. It is famous for a peculiar species of whiting, called GWINNIAD. This lake in Welsh is called, LLYN-TEGID, i. e. the fine pool; Teg, signifying fair or fine in that language. In English it is called, Pimblemere. Giraldus Cambrensis, in his Itinerary, says, that the wind is always very high, and that it never ^{runs} ~~runs~~ on this lake. Credat qui vult.

About

About fifteen miles distant from Bala is the town of Dolgelle, the metropolis of this rugged county. It is a very irregular, and badly-built town, at the foot of a very high mountain, called Cader-ydris*. The country round Dolgelle is romantic and pleasing; but the town is one of the most disagreeable places I ever saw.

In my next expect some account of the people who inhabit this strange country.

I am, Sir, &c.

* Cader-ydris, signifies the chair or seat of Ydris. This Ydris, according to the vulgar tradition, was a giant who lived in this country.



L E T T E R



L E T T E R XIII.

DEAR SIR,

THE inhabitants of this county are more purely British, than those of any other part of Wales. Like the clans of Scotland, or Hebrew tribes, they scarce ever intermarry, except with those of their own lineage. Through the whole county, they are all cousins, all of the same Welsh blood, and most of them of the same names.

If you would ask them, how they spend their lives in this part of the world; they have it in their power to answer you in a few words; We drink, dance, and are merry. Indeed, I do not know a people so much
addicted

addicted to mirth. The complexion of their country, one would imagine, could not inspire such sentiments of festivity and joy. They sing, dance, and drink, not by hours, but by days and weeks; and measure time only by the continuance of their mirth and pleasure.

The men estimate their strength not by feats of activity, as in other places, but by the quantities of ale they can drink; and, I am told, it is no uncommon thing for a lover to boast to his mistress, what feats he has performed in this way. Such is the mark of prowess, by which the women judge of their paramour's vigor and strength of constitution.

From hence we may conclude that Bacchus does more execution in this country, than Mars does in Germany. Such, whose happy poverty preclude them from procuring those liquors, which are the destruction of the more opulent, live to an advanced age. Whilst most of the gentry and squires, are carried off in their youth; thus the heir does not
long

long wait for the possession of his estate, nor does he long enjoy it. This vice is hereditary in families, and descends from father to son.

Uno avulso non deficit alter
—— et simili frondeſcit virga metallo.

The fescennine licence, is here enjoyed in its most unbounded extent. In conversation they take the utmost freedom and liberty with each other, which is generally borne in good part. They are always endeavoring to frame rustic jokes, not always the most delicate. Happy does he esteem himself, who comes off conqueror in this certamen of rustic wit.

Unembarrassed with the pedantry of learning, and the disgusting forms of politeness, the good people of Merionydd are free, hospitable, and chearful. Let them enjoy their mirth unrivalled, undisturbed by foreigners, in security and ease. They always will remain unenvied in the participation of that
G happiness,

happiness, which none but a native of that country can feel.

The Welsh language is here spoken with the greatest classical purity. Here they boast of their Welsh bards *, who are poets by nature. These bards are idle fellows, who subsist on the bounty of the Welsh gentry. They, and their allies the harpers, who form a very numerous corps, are generally invited to entertain the company at their feasts, which is done by buffoonery and illiberal abusive extempore rhyme. Sometimes a bard comes to the door, and demands admittance in rhyme; he is answered by the bard within, in rhyme likewise; if the stranger, in the opinion of the company, gains the victory in this poetical contest; he is admitted to partake of the feast, while the vanquished bard is turned out to the former's uncomfortable situation.

Somewhat similar to this was the great feast which was made in South-Wales, where

* The Welsh word is Bardd.

bards from various parts were invited to a poetical combat, and where it is said the North-Wales poets gained the victory.

This vagabond poetical tribe, were formerly a great nuisance in this country, and we find divers acts of parliament and regulations made to suppress them. It is said that Edward I. cruelly destroyed them, it may be doubted whether it was not the greatest benefit he could do to the country. In Henry IVth's time it was enacted, that, "No westours, ry-mours, minstrels, or other vagabonds, should go about pur faire Kymortha ou coilage." The learned author of the observations on the ancient statutes, has mistaken the meaning of the word Kymortha, or rather Cymortha (the C in Welsh having the sound of the English K) it signifying a charitable aid or support. This is the signification it has in the act of 26 Henry VIII. where it is enacted, that, "No one without licence of the commissioners, shall Kymortha under color of marrying, singing first masses, &c."

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Cymortha, is a word frequently used in Wales at this time. A poor new-married couple often go about the country to get something to begin the world, as they call it. Upon these occasions, they have generally wool and corn given them, which they call Cymortha; and, if I am not misinformed, the briefs that are read in churches, for the relief of the poor, are likewise called Cymortha. You will excuse this criticism on the meaning of this word, and believe me to be,

Yours, &c.



LETTER



L E T T E R XIV.

D E A R S I R,

IN proportion as a people increafe in trade, in luxury, in all the arts of focial and commercial life, their language becomes more copious and refined. The wants of mankind in an infant ftate of fociety are few, their ideas are few, and confequently the founds expreffive of fuch ideas. At firft capable only of fimple apprehenfion, we by degrees form complex and abfttract ideas. The language of focieties is not formed in a day. It is the work of ages; words are daily borrowed, transformed, according to the prefent exigency; and coined, when neceffity requires,

which the common consent of mankind alone can render current.

As this people have made no very considerable progress in a state of civilization, we might naturally be induced to think that their language is barbarous and uncultivated; but the contrary is true. It is not clogged with those many inharmonious monosyllables, the signs of moods, tenses, and cases, as the English language. It is much more harmonious and expressive in its numbers and formation; one word in Welsh frequently expressing as much as a sentence in the English; of which a late ingenious writer has given abundant specimens.

Though this is the language of a people, who inhabit a small barren spot of earth, scarce known in the world; unimproved in the arts of life, entirely neglected and uncultivated; and not spoken, except by such who willingly forfeit every claim to politeness; yet its variety, copiousness, and even harmony, is to be equalled by few, perhaps excelled by none.

But

But our wonder ceases, when we consider that it is not solely the language of a people confined in a little corner of this island. It is the language of populous and even civilized nations, the antient Celts. Hence its variety and its harmony. It is the language of a brave people. Hence those sounds that roused the soul to action. Animated by these, they despised danger and death for their country.

Thus some account for the policy of Edward I. who in order to enslave the people, thought it a necessary previous step to destroy the bards, who cultivated their language and poetry.

This language seems to be more particularly adapted for poetry; which, however extraordinary it may seem to some, on account of the multiplicity of gutturals and consonants with which it abounds, has the softness and harmony of the Italian, with the majesty and expression of the Greek. In the formation of its poetical numbers, it differs from all modern languages. Every line con-

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sists of a certain regular number of feet, like other languages ; but herein it differs, that it has a certain kind of rhyme*, jingle, or alliteration, not that terminates the line, but runs through every part of it.

The poets, or such as pretend to be such, arrogate to themselves a most unwarrantable poetical licence of coining words, for the sake of sound ; and this they will seldom scruple to do, whenever they want a word for rhyme. Hence the greatest part of their poetry, is nothing more than melodious non-

* Giraldus Cambrensis, to shew the nature of Welsh poetry, quotes the following pentameter,

Fælus es O pulcher pæne puella puer.

The following latin hexameter of Cicero, with the translation by Dryden, may with as much propriety be adduced to the same purpose,

O fortunatam natam me consule Romam.

Fortune, fortun'd the dying note of Rome,
Till I her consul's soul consol'd her doom.

sense,

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sense, a perfect jargon of harmonious sounds. And when translated, scarce reducible to common sense. This unbounded poetical licence, though generally, yet, is not universally adopted. For there are not wanting many poets, who seldom claim this unwarrantable prerogative of coining words ad libitum.

These observations, that I have made on the Welsh language, are the result of a conversation I have had with such as are well acquainted with the subject. Much more might have been added. But for a more critical knowledge of it, I refer you to a late accurate and ingenious publication *. I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

N. B. I have sent you inclosed for your amusement some translations from the old Welsh bards, by my friend the curate.

* Vide, Historical and Critical Remarks on the Welsh language.

A FRAG-

A FRAGMENT OF A WELSH POEM,

By MIRIAN GOCH * of ERYRI.

Translated.

WAS it Hurlech†, the valiant son of Tyndaethwy, the great shield of Cymry, fiercer than a lioness robbed of her whelps? It was he the great terror of the Saxons; who consumed the descendants of Offa, as the fiery meteor consumeth the stubble, or as the northern blast destroyeth the leaves in the forest of Buelt. It was the hare-footed descendant of Cynan, who was swifter than the eagle-eyed hawk, that perches on the summit of

* Mirvan Goch, signifies the red-haired Mirvan. It is usual for all the Welsh bards to assume an epithet descriptive of their persons. This fragment I am told was accidentally found in the ruins of an old monastery.

† Some conjecture that Harlech-castle had its name from this hero.

Moel-

Moel-Hebog*. His course was like the rapid stream of Ogven, that bursts through the craggy rocks of Eryri†. It deluged the Saxon host with a torrent of blood.

As the hot thunderbolts of heaven, dissolve the flakes of snow on the mountains of Wyddfa‡, so melted the hearts of the Saxon army before the fiery wrath of Hurlech. As the horned inhabitants of the rocky cliffs, fly from the loud mouthed horn of the hunter, so fled the enemy from the thundering voice of the British chief.

Let the ten-stringed harp of Merlin sound to the praises of Hurlech ! Let Echo celebrate his praises, through the rocky caverns of Eryri, who defended his country from the wide-slaying sword of Henry, drenched in Cambrian blood.

* Moel-Hebog, the hawk's mountain, is a high mountain near Snowdon.

† Eryri, comprehends all the Carnarvonshire mountains.

‡ Wyddfa, is the Welsh name for the mountain of Snowdon.

Rest Cymry from the fell destruction of rapine and war. While Hurlech liveth, the glory of the armies of Gwynedd*, Deheubarth and Mathrafal; no more shalt thou see the bloody Saxons, cutting down with their fiery swords the sons of Brutus, as the reaper cutteth the blades of corn. The host of Lloegr† shall fly from the banks of Hafren‡ nor come within the lightning of Hurlech's wrath, as the timid dove flieth from the keen-eyed eagle — — — — —
— — — — —

* Gwynedd, signifies North-Wales; Deheubarth, South-Wales; and Mathrafal, Powis-Land

† Lloegr, England.

‡ Hafren, the Severn.

ANOTHER

A N O T H E R F R A G M E N T,

By an unknown Author.

FAIR and fragrant are the blossoms of summer, which grow on the flowery banks of Hafren; bright shineth the sun after the clouds and tempests are dispelled; fairer and brighter is the beauteous shining branch of Llewelin, the snow-coloured Gwendolen.

Her fair form animated the warriors on the marsh* of Rhyddlan, when the heroes of Lloegr breathed destruction on the valiant sons of Cymry. Then fell the brave, the valiant son of Gryffydd, by the ruffian hands of the bloody Saxon, in the sight of his beloved Gwendolen.

* Morfa Rhyddlan, where the Welsh received a terrible overthrow. They call one of their most plaintive and melancholy tunes by this name, to which this elegiac song is set to music.

The

The fair wept for the fall of her beloved
hero, she kissed his clay-cold corse, but the
purple flood of life was gone — — —

— — — — —

O ye fair maids of Cymry, bemoan in plain-
tive songs the fall of the beloved chief; and
ye blooming youths, the descendants of the
brave Cadwallader, lament the fair Gwen-
dolen, for she survived not her lover — —



L E T T E R



L E T T E R . X V .

D E A R S I R ,

TH E internal strength, riches, and populousness of a country, depend in a great degree, upon the cultivation of the land. The adventitious wealth and power, acquired by commerce, may flow in another channel, and revolt from one nation to another. Carthage and Tyre, have in ancient times, and Venice in more modern, been the emporiums of commerce. These she has deserted, and has taken her seat in more northern climes, where her abode is precarious, as in her former dominions. But the advantages resulting from agriculture are permanent ;

nent; uncontrollable by fortuitous circumstances, they depend alone upon the industry of man. So kind and just is nature, that she rewards the husbandman, in proportion to his care and toil.

In the great empire of China, the richest and most populous in the world, the land is cultivated to the very summit of the mountains. Earth is carried from the vallies to cover the barren rocks, which are converted to fruitful gardens. Were China not thus improved, could it maintain those millions of inhabitants, who are employed in procuring subsistence for themselves and others.

Agriculture has been ever esteemed honorable among all great and wise nations. The Romans took their greatest generals from the plough, to command their conquering armies. And the great emperor of China, who has perhaps more subjects, than there are inhabitants in Europe, thinks it not unbecoming him to hold the plough, thereby shewing an example worthy of his subjects imitation.

Why

Why should we send colonies to cut down the vast forests of America, when we have so much unimproved land in this kingdom? How many uncultivated heaths, parks, forests, marshes, and commons are there, profitable neither to their proprietors, or the public? If our lands were properly cultivated the produce would be greatly increased, and consequently the strength, riches, and population of the kingdom, would be proportionably augmented.

Several counties of Wales have made but a very slow progress in agriculture. In many places bordering upon England, they have in a great degree adopted the English manner of tillage. In some parts of the counties of Montgomery, Denbigh and Flint, the lands are well improved. I have made this observation, that the remoter they are from the English counties, the less is there of the spirit of industry and improvement among the inhabitants.

In the county of Merionydd, they have very little good land, and they make so bad

H

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an use of that, which nature has given them with so sparing a hand, that some might be ready to conclude that they prefer their barren rocks to the most fertile soil. In some places between the mountains, there are to be seen a few acres of good land, where the earth has been washed away from the hills. The water generally stagnates in these places, and they never take the trouble of draining them, but cut them in turbaries for fuel. Thus in a few years, they totally ruin their finest meadow land. The greatest part of the country consists of barren mountains, incapable of improvment. They serve, however, to subsist a great abundance of sheep. With the wool they make considerable quantities of flannel, which they export. This is the staple manufacture and support of the county.

A considerable part of Carnarvonshire and the island of Anglesea, is naturally a very good soil, but very much unimproved. What they principally want, are good fences and shelter for their cattle. The only inclosures that

that they have, are small banks of earth or turf-mounds thrown up. These continue but a very little time, as the cattle destroy them in the winter, and the farmer is at a considerable expence in repairing them every spring. In such places as are exposed to the sea winds, the trees will not grow to any height; and all kinds of quicksets are long in their growth. So that the gentlemen and farmers seldom judge it worth the trouble and expence to plant. But satisfied I am that in a few years it would answer; and nothing would contribute more to the improvement of the country, than if such a practice was generally adopted.

There are extensive fens undrained, and the greatest part of the country consists of nothing but furze. The best land lets in general from three to five shillings an acre; the price of labor about six-pence a day. There is great plenty of manure easily to be had, and notwithstanding these advantages, the country is unimproved. How shall we account for this? There is a certain supineness

in the greatest part of country gentlemen, which renders them inattentive even to their own good. They live upon their estates, unsollicitous of what passes in life, and provided they enjoy the dull comforts of an animal existence, they are satisfied. Undisturbed with the spirit of enterprise and ambition, they follow the dull track of their ancestors, without thought, and without reflexion, and live and die unknown.

The farmers and laborers are most of them miserably poor, they hold the lands generally from year to year at rack-rent. If one more industrious than the rest, should make any improvement, the landlord advances his rent, or turns him out. Thus it is the interest of the farmer to let them lie waste, as he has no certainty of a return, when he is liable to be turned out at the landlord's pleasure. Thus they only take care to get just sufficient by their industry to supply present want, and let the morrow provide for itself.

Nothing would contribute more to the cultivation of the country, than the granting
of

of leases for life to the farmers, even at advanced rents. Then they would have a certain prospect of profit for their labor and expence; which would ultimately turn out to the benefit of the landlord, the tenant, and the public.

I am, Sir, &c.





L E T T E R XVI.

D E A R S I R,

FROM Merionythshire, the most barren and desolate part of Wales, we came to Montgomeryshire, which in many parts far exceeds any county of North-Wales, for fertility and richness of soil. The Welsh name is Tre-Faldwyn; the English Montgomery is derived from Sir Roger de Montgomery, a Norman baron, who had a grant of a great part of this country.

* Tre-Faldwyn, is probably a corruption of Tre-Baldwyn, i. e. Baldwin's town; we are told by historians that Montgomery was called, before it was taken by Sir Roger de Montgomery, the town and castle of Baldwin. Who this Baldwin was, I do not find recorded.

Mont-

Montgomery is but a very small town, thinly inhabited. There are to be seen the remains of a castle, which was built in the time of William Rufus ; in order most probably to secure the colony of Normans, who were sent here to subdue the Welsh, under the command of Sir Roger de Montgomery. The castle is guarded by a craggy precipice on one side, and a deep fosse on the other.

The town of Welsh-pool is the most considerable in the whole country. It is regular, well built, and superior to most Welsh towns. About a mile from Pool is Powis-castle, the seat of lord Powis, it is situated on a fine hill, which commands a prospect of an extensive, variegated, and fertile country. The vale of Montgomery, which we see from the castle, is not equalled by any in point of fertility and beauty in Wales, nor perhaps in England. The Severn winds its serpentine course thro' this vale, and heightens the beauties of the prospect. On each side the vale, the hills tower in majesty and grandeur. I do not

hesitate to prefer this situation and prospect, to that of the vale of Clwyd. Some even venture to affirm that it is not equalled by any in Great-Britain.

The castle of Powis, and the fine gardens, are much neglected and decayed, as his lordship does not reside here.

The hills and mountains in this county are covered with verdure to their very summit, being a perfect contrast to those in the counties before described, where we saw nothing but craggy rocks, and dreadful precipices.

From Pool, we continued our journey through pretey fertile country, between the confines of England and Wales to Oswestry. In Welsh it is called CROES-OSWOLT, i. e. Oswald's-cross. This was formerly esteemed part of Wales, but now it is included in Shropshire. It is remarkable that the Welsh language is spoken in many parts of Shropshire, while it is almost entirely lost in Montgomeryshire.

From

From Oswestry, we visited Chirk-castle, the seat of Mr. Middleton. It has a magnificent appearance at a distance, but it is an ill-contrived house in every point of view. The country round it is pleasant, but upon the whole, it is not an agreeable situation.

A few miles from Chirk-castle, is the village of Llangollen, in a bottom, surrounded on every side with high hills. The village is remarkable for nothing but a fine bridge, esteemed one of the curiosities of Wales. The castle of Dinas-bran, is on the summit of one of the hills, above the village. This castle belonged formerly to the princes of Powisland*. Dinas-bran, is I apprehend a corruption of DINAS-BRENING, i. e. the residence of the king. The hill upon which the castle

* Powis, or Mathrafal, as it is called in Welsh, before king Offa's time, reached eastward to the rivers Severn and Dee, from Broxton-hills to Salop. By the dyke it was contracted into a narrower compass. The plain country towards Salop, being inhabited by Saxons and Normans. The length was North-east from Pulford to Llangirric-bridge, near Cardiganshire, the breadth from Cefeilion to Ellesmere.

stands,

stands, is very high and steep, and must have been an almost inaccessible place. It has the appearance of great antiquity, being probably built by some of the first British princes.

In our way to Wrexham, our curiosity induced us to view Wynnstay, the seat of Sir Watkin Williams Wynne. The house is incomplete in its structure, but the beauty of the situation exceeds description.

The last place that we visited in North-Wales was Wrexham, which is the richest and most populous town in the whole country. The only curiosity that travellers remark in it is a fine steeple, which is esteemed one of the wonders of Wales.

The inhabitants of this place are so perfectly Englished, if I may use such an expression, in their language, manners, and customs, that it bears no resemblance to the generality of Welsh towns.

I have now finished my description of the face of the country, and conclude, &c.



LETTER XVII.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE taken up my pen, with the view of making some observations on the ancient and modern legal polity of the Welsh.

Laws in every state, are multiplied in proportion to the opulence, the number, the trade, and the intercourse of the inhabitants. Twelve tables contained the laws of Rome, when in its infant state; and the decalogue, was the foundation of the Jewish jurisprudence. The laws of opulent and commercial countries, such as England and China, are incredibly voluminous; whilst those of barbarous and uncivilized nations, may be comprised in a short compass.

A le-

A legislator cannot form a code of laws, that will serve the state in all exigencies, through succeeding generations. Human foresight cannot comprehend events that may happen; nor if foreseen, could it provide against them. The ingenuity of man eludes every tie that is made to bind it. Hence new cases daily happen, which were never foreseen; and new mischiefs, against which the law has no guard; which must be remedied by new laws, *ex re nata*. Thus they become so multifarious, that it must be the employment of a life to acquire a knowledge of them.

Happy is that country of which it may be said, (as Tacitus* does in his admirable picture of the Germans) *Plus ibi boni mores quam alibi bonæ leges valent*. Were mankind virtuous and just, there would be no forensic

* I never considered Tacitus's treatise, *De moribus Germanorum*, intended as a real description of the Germans—He drew the picture of a people, in manners perfectly contrasted to the Romans, thereby aiming an oblique satire against his countrymen.

litigations; no occasion for the coif and long robe. Avarice and injustice are the offspring of riches, luxury, and vice; these introduced a necessary restraint upon human actions, which we call LAW.

In very early ages, before Christianity was planted in Europe, the priests or druids were judges and legislators among the Celtic nations. They decided in all controversies, both of a public and private nature. References being at first probably made to them, on account of their sanctity, and austerity of manners; which gave sanction and weight to their decisions. We have the concurrent testimony * of credible historians, that this

* Neque animadvertere, neque vincere, neque verberare, quidem nisi sacerdotibus permissum—Tacitus de m. Germ. Fere de omnibus controversiis publicis privatisque constituunt, et si quod est admissum facinus, si cædes facta, si de hereditate, si de finibus controversia, iidem decernunt præmia pœnasque constituunt. Si quis privatus aut publicus eorum decreto non obedierit sacrificiis, interdicunt. Hæc pœna apud eos gravissima. Quibus ita est interdictum impiorum habentur numero. Cæsar de bello Gallico.

was

was the case among the Germans and Gauls. And I think, there is little doubt, but the ancient Britons were a branch of the same people. A great similiarity may be traced in their manners, customs and language.

In so early a state of society, when they had no riches, nor scarce an idea of distinct property, there could be but few causes of altercation and animosity. Their laws consisted of a few oral and traditional precepts, not reduced to writing, but committed only to the memory.

The breast of the druid was the repository of their laws. The court of judicature was situated on the most conspicuous eminence, in the open air. Here the causes were tried, and judgment pronounced. The remains of many of these judgment seats I have seen, which are still called by that name in the Welsh language ORSEDDDE. I shall here give a short description of their ancient courts of judicature, with an account of their manner of proceeding, which may not prove unentertaining.

Goneddau Rowl. M.A. Their 69.91.

Their seats of judgment or juridical courts consisted of two circumvallations of a circular form, one comprehended within the other. The centre was raised, and seems to have been the place where the judge sat. The inner circumvallation was intended for the parties and witnesses, and the outer for the multitude.

In early times, as I have before observed, the druids were the only judges. But after the planting of Christianity, and the people being somewhat more civilized, the laws which were before merely oral became reduced into writing, and a regular code was formed by Howel Dha, or the good. We find at that time, that all matters of inheritance, were determined by the prince in person; if not able to attend, by his deputy. The court consisted of the freeholders of the place, two elders, the chief judge, and the ordinary judge of the court. The prince sat above, with an elder on each hand. The freeholders next, who then were and are still called

called by the name of UCHELWYR.* Below, the chief justice, the priest sat on the right hand, and the ordinary judge on the left.

The plaintiff, with his advocate (Rhyn-gill, wrangler, or if you will serjeant) and champion† on the left side; and the defendant, with his advocate and champion on the right. The witnesses were placed at the lower end.

For what purpose the freeholders were present in court, is not clear. It does not appear that they were called in to act as a jury. Though it is reasonable to suppose so; as the trial by jury was used among all the Gothic nations. The chief, the common judge, and priest gave judgment; but in matters of difficulty and importance, the definitive sentence was pronounced by the prince, with the advice and assistance of the elders.

* Uchelwyr signifies high-men, or men in high station.

† By this it appears that in some cases, trial by battle was in use among the ancient Britons, as it was among all the Northern nations.

In the formation of Howel Dha's code, many of the Saxon laws seem to have been adopted. The rest are perhaps only traditional customs, reduced into writing. They descend to take notice of even the minutest circumstances, and are perhaps the best proof of the uncultivated and barbarous disposition of the inhabitants. To produce instances to corroborate what I have asserted, would be needless; for the whole code is probably the strangest collection of jurisprudence that ever was composed for the government of any people.

Historians* assert, that the ancient inhabitants of Wales were of such an inflexible refractory disposition, that they would hardly submit to any law. The whole face of the country discovered more the signs of anarchy, than the police of a well regulated government. Not only the princes of the di-

* This was likewise very much the case in England at that time, for we find the barons waging war against each other without the royal assent.

vided parts of Wales, but even private persons, waged open public hostilities against each other. Encroachments on each others estates, family quarrels, and affronts, furnished ample pretexts for taking arms. So strong were their passions, and so weak was law.

The custom of gavelkind contributed in a great degree to promote these hereditary feuds. Sovereignities, as well as the estates of private persons, were divided among all the male issue, legitimate, as well as illegitimate. This was the perpetual source of civil wars and private dissensions. Upon the death of the prince, all the sons claimed a right to the sovereignty; and, as among the Asiatic nations, the longest sword established the claim. Sometimes they agreed to divide the sovereignty between the sons. Nothing could tend more to weaken the country, and render them unable to repel foreign incursions, than the custom of gavelkind, when applied to the government.

The

The equal partition of private estates amongst the male issue, tends to promote population and cultivation of the land. In a government founded on equality and liberty, it is the means of curtailing the wealth and power of individuals, and reducing mankind more to a state of natural equality. By nature all the issue female, as well as male, have certainly a right to an equal share of their ancestor's property. The preference given to the eldest is artificial, introduced by law, and not by nature. The custom of lands descending to the youngest son, which we call borough-English, in preference to the other sons, seems to have a stronger foundation in reason, than the exclusive descendibility to the eldest; or, as it is called, the right of primogeniture; the eldest being supposed more capable of providing for himself, on account of his more advanced age, than the youngest; who probably might be of such tender years, as to be altogether unable to provide for himself, on his ancestors decease.

This law of gavelkind was universal, in Great-Britain, before the Norman conquest; and remained in Wales, till the time of Henry VIII. when the union commenced.

There is the strongest reason to think, that the feudal system never was adopted in Wales. There are no traces of it remaining, that I could discover. In the three most northern counties they have no manors, nor manorial courts or rights; nor any copyhold tenures, or the least remains of any of the consequences of feudal tenures.

In the counties bordering upon England, as I have before observed, some of the kings of the Norman line made large grants of lands, in order to keep the Welsh in subjection. In these territories, which they had by grant from the crown, they held courts; which are still kept by prescription. Here, indeed, there are some appearances of the feudal system; but it must be remembered, that even these few vestiges are the remains of the Norman policy, and make no part of the ancient British constitution,

We

We may, therefore, conclude with certainty that the feudal system was never adopted among the ancient Britons, or Welsh; and was probably never known in this island, until the Norman conquest.

The princes of Wales had a legislative power. We do not find that they had any kind of parliament. They could alter, abrogate and enact laws without advice, according to their own will and pleasure. In the exercise of this power, it was their interest to act conformably to the public good; for if they displeased their subjects, their disapprobation was shewn not by vain ineffectual PETITIONS, but by the sword. Petition is a word coined among slaves, unknown to the ancient Britons. In this country, as it ought to be in every other; **WHEN THE SOVEREIGN CEASED TO BE DESERVING OF HIS CROWN, HE CEASED TO BE A KING.**



L E T T E R X V I I I .

MY last letter, Sir, contained some remarks on the laws and constitution of the principality of Wales, before its reduction by Edward I. I propose now to continue the subject, and to make a few observations on the execution of the laws, and the present mode of administering justice.

When Edward I. had brought Wales into subjection to the crown of England; his next care was to regulate the laws and judicial proceedings. With this view he directed a commission * to the bishop of St. Davids, and others, to make an enquiry into the old

* Vid. Appendix to Howel Dha's Laws.

laws and customs that prevailed in Wales. By the statute of Rhyddlan *, some of these customs are retained, and some entirely abrogated.

It appears that the sheriffs in those times exercised a far greater power than they now do. They kept a prison in their own houses, where they confined such as they thought proper. In many counties, the sheriffs were before the time of Edward VI. for life; and not from year to year, as at present.

Many and severe laws were enacted against the Welsh in the times of Henry IV. and V. on account of the rebellion of Glendower, and the depredations that they sometimes committed on the borders of England.

No one that spoke the Welsh language, could enjoy any place of profit or office, except a bishopric, in Wales. Nor could a Welshman have any castle or house of defence; and if an Englishman married a Welsh-

* 12 Edward I.

woman, he was thereby rendered incapable of enjoying any office.

In the time of Henry IV. a most excellent regulation was made to prevent idle rhymers, minstrels and vagabonds, from going about the country begging. This has been looked upon by some to be a severe law, and a grievance to the country; but the least reflection will convince them, that it was a most wholesome regulation.

In the time of Henry VIII. the act of union of England and Wales, and ordinances passed for the administration of justice in the principality. Some authors of great learning have (I speak with deference to so great authority) I think, very improperly called this act a complete Code of Regulations for the Administration of Justice. Whoever will give himself the trouble of considering, with the least degree of attention, the mode of judicial proceedings in Wales, compared to that in England, must immediately acknowledge the great superiority of the latter.

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It is true, they have in Wales what is very improperly called the court of grand sessions. Here is transacted both chancery and common law business. In one of my excursions, I happened accidentally to be present at their courts. I requested some information concerning their proceedings of a gentleman who sat next me, who satisfied my curiosity in the following terms. "The import of your question, Sir, said he, denotes you to be a stranger; and I am glad it is in my power to give you the information you require. You have heard, the judge make a very elaborate speech to the jury; but not one of them are capable of comprehending the meaning of a syllable of it. All our common people are ignorant of the English language; and we are never allowed special juries to try causes in Wales. Where the cause of action is above ten pounds, the parties may bring it to trial to the next English county. Thus are we frequently obliged, at great expence and trouble, to bring witnesses at a hundred miles distance to try a trifling

trifling cause; and the more opulent have it always in their power to harrafs one who is less able to bear the expence. By this means what was originally intended as a benefit to the country, is become a grievance. And as the reason for trying causes in the next English county has ceased, which was to procure a more impartial trial, on account of the party faction which generally prevailed in Wales, so ought the practice to cease likewise. The same judicial proceedings ought to take place here as in England; and it would be more beneficial for the country, if Wales was joined to the English circuits. Thus there would be no partial distinction between the inhabitants of England and Wales. We should have the same laws, the same justice, the same government, and in time, the same language."

Thus concluded my new acquaintance the account he gave me; and, though a stranger to the subject, I thought the information I received was not altogether unreasonable.

The

The judge, when he had finished his harangue, nodded on the bench. The jury laid their heads together, to determine a matter of which they were totally ignorant; and I departed, ruminating upon what I had seen and heard, and upon the supineness of those who suffer the country to labor under a grievance easily remedied.

Adieu, Sir, &c.



LETTER



LETTER XIX.

DEAR SIR,

DURING my continuance in this country, I have had the curiosity to enquire into their police, and the execution of the law. Great is the discontent of the most sensible part of the inhabitants, on account of the defective enforcement of the law. Crimes of the blackest dye, frequently pass unobserved; or if observed, unpunished. Some might infer a conclusion from hence, that the laws of England do not extend to this rugged spot, or that the inhabitants are too refractory to be governed by law. The former is not the case, whatever foundation there may be for the latter.

It

It may be said in general, that the law is very defectively enforced in Wales; and some laws have never been adopted, if I may use the expression, into that country. In the three most northern counties, the laws respecting the game, and those respecting the settlement and maintenance of the poor, have never been put into execution.

The game laws are restrictive of the natural rights of mankind, and made for the benefit of a few individuals, distinguished by the favors of fortune. Those for whose advantage they were enacted, have alone a right to enforce them, and they have a right likewise to dispense with the execution of their own exclusive privileges. Let them enjoy the praise they deserve for so meritorious and disinterested a conduct.

The laws relating to the poor, are far from being included under the same predicament. By not enforcing them, they do not dispense with their own privileges, but abrogate the rights of others, the most helpless part of mankind. It is an advantage enjoyed in society

ciety, that every individual, who by accident or sickness is rendered incapable of maintaining himself, has a right to a provision at the public expence. The rights of humanity demand a support for the poor, the laws of this country have provided it; and the neglect of enforcing them, is a shocking breach of every obligation, legal, moral, and religious.

Let not these strangers to the rights of humanity, as well as the laws of their country, argue that the hand of charity is munificently extended to relieve distress; but the distressed have not always the ability to undergo the fatigues of a mendicant erratic life. It is not in the power of one, depressed with the heavy burden of fourscore years, to wander a desolate country to seek existence. When he hath spent his youthful morning and noon, in labor and the service of society, some support is due to him, in the evening of life. It is said, that instances are not wanting of some, who perish through want. Are not their unfortunate ends to be imputed to those, who

who are delegated to enforce the laws. However superficially I may be acquainted with this country, I have reason to think that so heavy a charge is not destitute of foundation.

Is it then for want of charity, that such instances happen? no: the hand of charity is not cold. She is seldom solicited in vain. It is on account of the inability of the object to seek relief, and not their unwillingness in granting it.

It is by some asserted, that if the poor were maintained by parochial rates, it would encourage idleness, and that many would throw themselves upon the parish, who could maintain themselves by labor. I would deny this deduction.

Now those alone are capable of receiving the alms of charity, who are able to maintain themselves. The old, the sick and decrepit, are not able, like the healthy and strong, to seek a precarious existence, by roving about the country for subsistence. The alms given to vagrants, of whom they
have

have no knowledge, would more than support such as are really indigent.

If each parish or district was to maintain its own poor, work might be found for such as were capable of working; and it would be more profitable for the farmer to furnish them with employment, than to maintain them in idleness.

Some perhaps may argue, that in many parts of England, great abuses have crept into the execution of the poor laws, and conclude that therefore they ought not to be enforced in Wales. It cannot be denied, but that the wisest human institution may be perverted. We ought rather to consider the advantages that may be derived from their proper execution, than the abuses resulting from their improper enforcement.

In large populous manufacturing towns and countries, the poor are very numerous. This may be as much owing to their luxurious manner of life, as to the number of inhabitants. In Wales there are comparatively

tively few that stand in need of charity ; and their number would be greatly diminished, if proper means were used to excite industry.

The lands are uncultivated, the wool unmanufactured. Here would be employment as well for the youth and the aged, as those in the vigor of life ; many of whom, to the disgrace of the country, wander about begging and pilfering. The means perhaps the most effectual to provide for the poor, would be to erect a workhouse in every county for the infirm and aged. Thus would charity be properly and effectually applied, beggary eradicated, and industry encouraged.

The care of doing this is incumbent upon those that are delegated to enforce the laws of their country. Were I to address them, it would be to divert themselves of the prejudices they have imbibed. To shew by their conduct, that they enjoy their offices, neither for emolument, or gratification of vanity ; that their attention is not solely confined to the indulgence of their pleasures, and that

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130 L E T T E R X I X .

the welfare of their country is at least a secondary consideration.

I have now, Sir, finished all I have to say of this country, except some observations on its history, which shall be the subject of some future letters.

I am, Sir, &c.



L E T T E R



L E T T E R XX.

D E A R S I R,

ALL nations boast of their high descent and origin. Some have traced their genealogies from heroes and demigods, others from the gods themselves.

It would be a matter of wonder, if this nation, proverbially remarked for their pedigrees, should not put in an equal claim to antiquity and high descent. Accordingly, their historians affirm with great gravity, that they are descended from one Brutus, the son of Silvius, son of the goddess-born, pious Æneas.

Thus you see how easily they trace their pedigrees from Venus and old father Jupiter.

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To prove this genealogy, they say, that Brutus and Britains are so very similar, that the latter must necessarily be derived from the former.

Other historians assert, with no less confidence, that they are descended in a direct line from Gomer, from whom they are called Cymry; thus gratifying their vanity at the expence of their understanding.

Let their genealogists seek for their origin with as little success, as they would the fountain of the Nile. It will be sufficient for us to determine that they are a branch of the ancient Celts. This is evident to demonstration, from their manners, customs, and language.

It is probable that they emigrated in colonies from the continent to seek settlements; and were the only inhabitants of this island, till they were first conquered by the Romans, afterwards by the Saxons, when they were obliged to take refuge in the most remote and inaccessible parts of the country. It is probable, from the Celtic words now in com-
mon

mon use in those counties, that many of them continued to reside in Cornwall, and the north of England, long after the Saxon conquest. But they have for some ages been incorporated with the English, so that scarce any vestiges can be traced of their different origin. In Wales they have had but little intercourse with foreigners, by which means they still continue a distinct people.

A minute detail of all the wars and depredations of the Welsh and English, from the æra of the Saxon conquest to the time of Edward I. would be as unimportant as those of the different tribes of Indians. Their wars were equally bloody, and both nations in those times were as savage and ferocious. Each, as the scale of fortune preponderated, filled the others territories with massacres and devastation, and destroyed with fire and sword.

Such histories disgrace the annals of humanity, and had better been left unrecorded.

What I propose in this and my next letter, is only to draw the most remarkable outlines of the history of Wales.

Cadwalader was the last of the ancient British kings who reigned in England; being driven out by the Saxons, he took refuge in Armorica, or Little Britain, in France, where a colony of Britains were then settled.

From the time of the Saxon invasion, to Rhyddarch or Roderick the great, as he is called, the Britains had no settled government, but were ruled by several petty kings or lords, of whom nothing very memorable is related. Roderick was king of all Wales, which he divided between his three sons; North-Wales to his eldest, South-Wales to the second, and Powis-land to the third, with an injunction that they should owe allegiance to the eldest.

This division of Wales continued not long, for it was again united under Howel Dha, or the good, who was grandson to Roderick. He is distinguished with the eminent title of the good, as he was the great Lycurgus of Wales. The code of laws which he collected for them are still extant, of which I have taken some notice in a former letter.

After

After the death of Howel Dha, Wales was again divided into three parts, and continued so to its conquest by Edward I. without much interruption. This want of policy in dividing the principality, was the chief source of all their misfortunes. Distracted by civil commotions, they were unable to repel the attacks of the Danes by sea, and the English by land.

During the interval between the time of Howel Dha and Gruffyth ap Llewelyn, we read of nothing very memorable, except intestine commotions, and invasions by the Danes, to whom they were compelled to pay tribute.

Gruffyth ap Llewelyn reduced all Wales under subjection to him. He was very successful in his wars against the English, in the time of Edward the confessor. He is the first, if not the only one of the Welsh kings, that had a navy; and is highly celebrated for his power and valour by the Welsh historians. Harold, the English general, provoked by the continual incursions and de-

predations made by Gruffydd in the frontier English counties, fell upon him unprepared, and obliged him to fly abroad, leaving his country naked and defenceless. The enemy conquered the greatest part of Wales in the absence of Gruffydd, and left monuments of their victories, with this inscription, "Hic fuit victor Haraldus." We are told by Giraldus Cambrensis, that these monuments were extant in his time. But as I have before observed, the veracity of these monkish historians is not always to be credited.

When Gruffydd returned, after this base desertion of his country, they were so justly irritated at his conduct, that they beheaded him as a traitor, and sent his head to Harold.

William the conqueror marched with a powerful army into Wales, which so intimidated them, that they were kept in subjection during the whole of his reign. In the time of the conqueror and William Rufus, many settlements were made in Wales by the Normans. A plan, which, if it had been thoroughly

roughly executed, must have effectually kept the Welsh in subjection.

Among these was Roger de Montgomery, earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury, who took the town and castle of Baldwin, and called it by the name of Montgomery, which it has retained to the present time.

Gruffyth ap Conan, who was at this time king of North-Wales, in conjunction with the princes of South-Wales, falling upon the Normans, routed them with great havoc, and destroyed their castles and two large armies, which William Rufus raised against them. Gruffydd ap Conan was afterwards compelled by Henry I. to submit to him, and make compensation for the ravages he had committed in England. In the time of king Stephen, he took advantage of the civil wars then in England, when he and his sons committed great depredations and slaughter on the Normans who were settled in Wales. After a reign of fifty years, Gruffydd ap Conan died. He was revered and beloved by his subjects, and dignified, on account of his valor and vic-
tories,

tories, with the distinguishing title of the Defence and Shield of Wales.

Upon the death of Gruffydd, his territories were divided between his sons, according to the custom of Wales, who owed allegiance to the eldest, Owen Gwynedd. Owen was the first who had the title of prince of North-Wales, before his time they were all called kings. He was a man of a martial, but savage disposition. In these barbarous times, as in the modern Asiatic nations, castration and loss of eyes was often the hard fate of such as had the misfortune to be related to the reigning prince. A punishment which Owen inflicted on his nephew Cunethe, son to his brother Cadwallhon.

He used his relations with great injustice and cruelty. His brother Cadwallhon he deprived of his estates, and forced to fly abroad, and seek asylum with Henry II. At the instigation of Cadwallhon, Henry made two or three expeditions into Wales; in which he was generally unsuccessful, owing to the situation

tuation of the country, of which Owen always took advantage.

After Owen Gwynedd's death, his eldest son, Jorwerth Drwyndwn, i. e. Edward the noseless, was set aside as improper to govern, on account of that defect; and the government devolved to his brother, David ap Owen, who was afterwards dethroned by Llewelyn, son to Jorwerth Drwyndwn. Madoc, the youngest son of Owen Gwynedd, it is said by the Welsh historians, went abroad and discovered the continent of America, that part of it which is called Florida. Upon his making this discovery, he returned to Wales, and carried away a colony of his countrymen to make a settlement.

This improbable story is universally believed among the Welsh at this time; and in confirmation of the truth of it, they say, that the Welsh language is still spoken among some of the Indian tribes, who are the descendants of this Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd. Thus do the Welsh arrogate to themselves the honor

nor of the first discovery of America, in preference to the great Columbus.

Under the conduct of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, and his son and successor, David ap Llewelyn, the Welsh carried on war with various success against the English. Defeating them in skirmishes, and falling upon them unawares in narrow passes; and when defeated, flying for refuge to their natural impregnable fortresses.

Llewelyn ap Gryffydd succeeded his uncle, David ap Llewelyn; and was the last prince of Wales of British blood. He was slain unarmed in Buelt-wood, where he had retired to meet some lords of the country; and his head was put on the tower of London. Thus were the Welsh at last conquered by Edward I. after they had maintained their independence for so many centuries.

I have drawn the outlines of the history of this country, as concisely as the subject would permit. In my next letter, I shall
give

give some account of the means that were used to secure their subjection, and their union with England, which will conclude my observations on this country.

I remain, Yours, &c.



LETTER



L E T T E R XXI.

D E A R S I R,

AFTER the tragical end of prince Llewelyn, the politic king Edward took every prudent measure to secure his conquest. He granted lands in Wales to his followers, thereby incorporating the English with his new subjects. The woods, which served as fastnesses to secure and conceal the enemy, he ordered to be destroyed; and caused several strong castles, which I have before described, to be built; and garrisoned them to keep the country in subjection.

The Welsh having experienced the cruelty and rapaciousness of the English governors,
were

were unwilling to submit to Edward, and called upon him to give them a prince, a native of their country. We are informed by historians, that for this purpose he sent his queen to Carnarvon-castle, where she was delivered of Edward II. who had the title of prince of Wales conferred upon him ; thereby complying with the literal import of their request, at the same time that he avoided the spirit and intention of it.

Notwithstanding this politic concession, and the more prevailing argument of force, which the English used ; many of the Welsh, from the hopes of plunder or antipathy to their conquerors, were still inclined to commit outrages. There were many insurrections in Wales, after the death of prince Llewelyn, which were soon quelled. The most considerable was that of Owen Glyndowr, who was so called from the lordship of Glyndowrdy, his real name was Owen ap Gryffydd Vaughan.

The cause of this insurrection was an enmity that subsisted between Owen and Reginald

nald lord Grey of Rhythin, on account of some incroachments, which Reginald made on the lordship of Glyndowrdy.

Owen, had received his education in the inns of court, and was in great favor with Richard II. When Richard was deposed, he lost his estate at court; and Reginald lord Grey, presuming on this, encroached upon his lands. Owen made application to parliament for relief, which proved ineffectual; and when the bishop of St. Asaph acquainted the parliament of the danger of irritating the Welsh, they returned this haughty answer, *Se de illis scurris nudipedibus nil curare.*

Owen, not meeting with redress from the parliament, had recourse to arms, took Reginald prisoner, and destroyed the lordship of Rhythin.

This success induced many to follow Owen's fortunes, he afterwards gained a complete victory over lord March and the Herefordshire men. Lord March was taken prisoner, by Owen, in this battle, and upon application being made to Henry IV. he refused

to

to pay his ransom. Irritated by this, lord March joined with Owen, and they entered into a confederacy with the earls of Northumberland and Worcester against king Henry, and it is said, that they even signed deeds to divide the kingdom. Henry had the good fortune to defeat the designs of this powerful confederacy, for he attacked them at Shrewsbury, before all their forces were joined, and gained a compleat victory over them. The battle of Hufke afterwards, put an end to Owen's aspiring hopes and the lives of fifteen hundred Welshmen, who were killed on the field of battle. This was the last struggle, and unsuccessful effort, made by the Welsh, for the recovery of their liberties. The English now having entirely subjected them, treated them rather as slaves than subjects. They were prohibited from enjoying any offices, purchasing any lands, and even penal laws were enacted to prevent the English from intermarrying with them. Thus did the English parliament rather widen the breach which subsisted between the two nations,

tions, than heal the wounds occasioned by the late insurrections.

In the reign of Henry VII. who was descended from Owen Tudor of Penmynydd in Anglesea, and from the princes of North-Wales, the Welsh experienced greater favor; and by his son and successor Henry VIII. the union of England and Wales was happily and politically effected. Thus were united under the same laws and same government, a people hitherto distracted with continual wars and enmity. And it is hoped, by every person that understands the real interest of the principality, and wishes to promote it, that every distinction between England and Wales, whether arising from a difference of manners and customs, the mode of administering justice, and executing the laws, or even in the language, may be intirely removed.

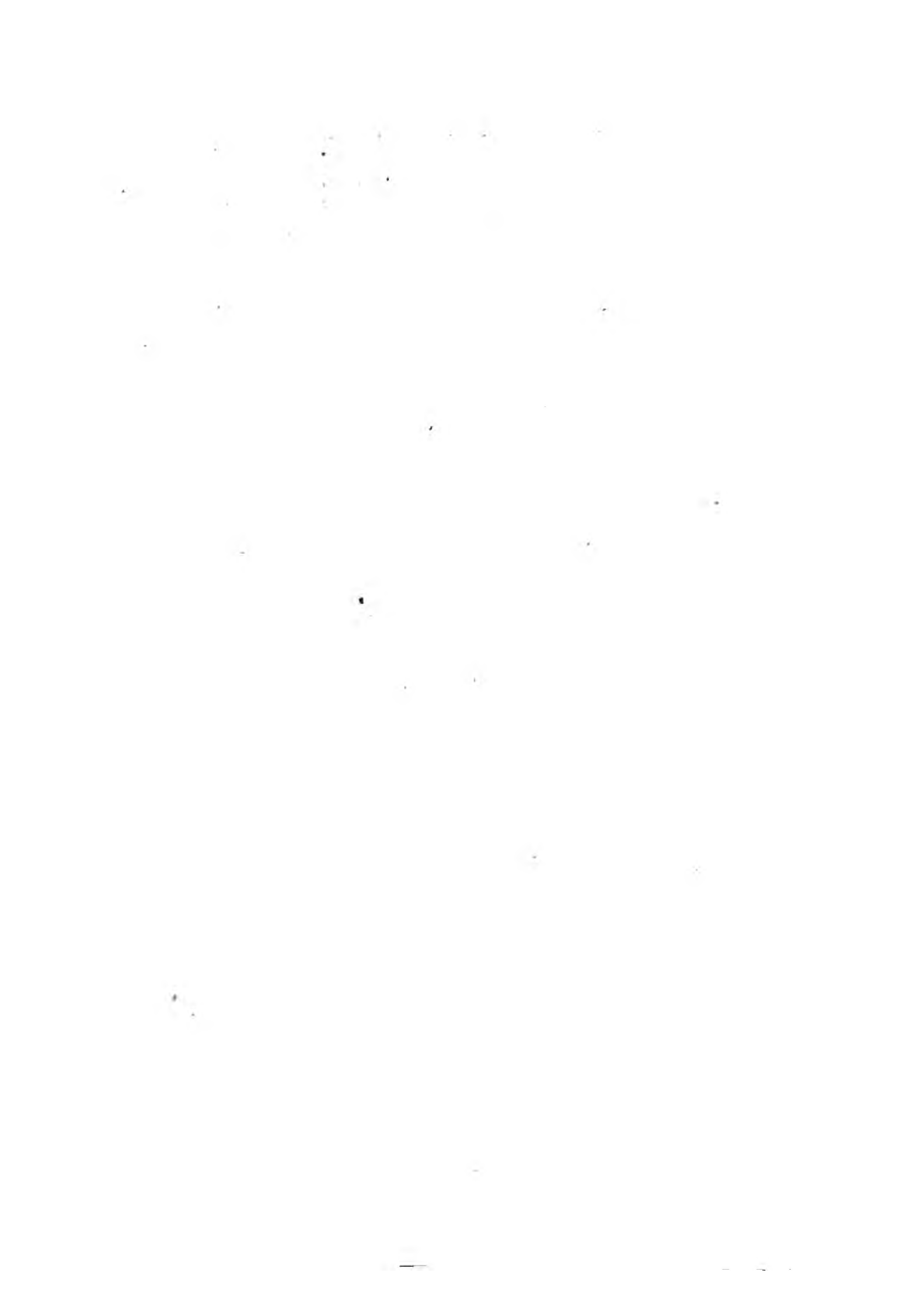
I have now brought to a conclusion what I originally intended. In my account of the manners, customs, history and state of the country, at the same time that I omitted no circumstance that I thought would render the subject

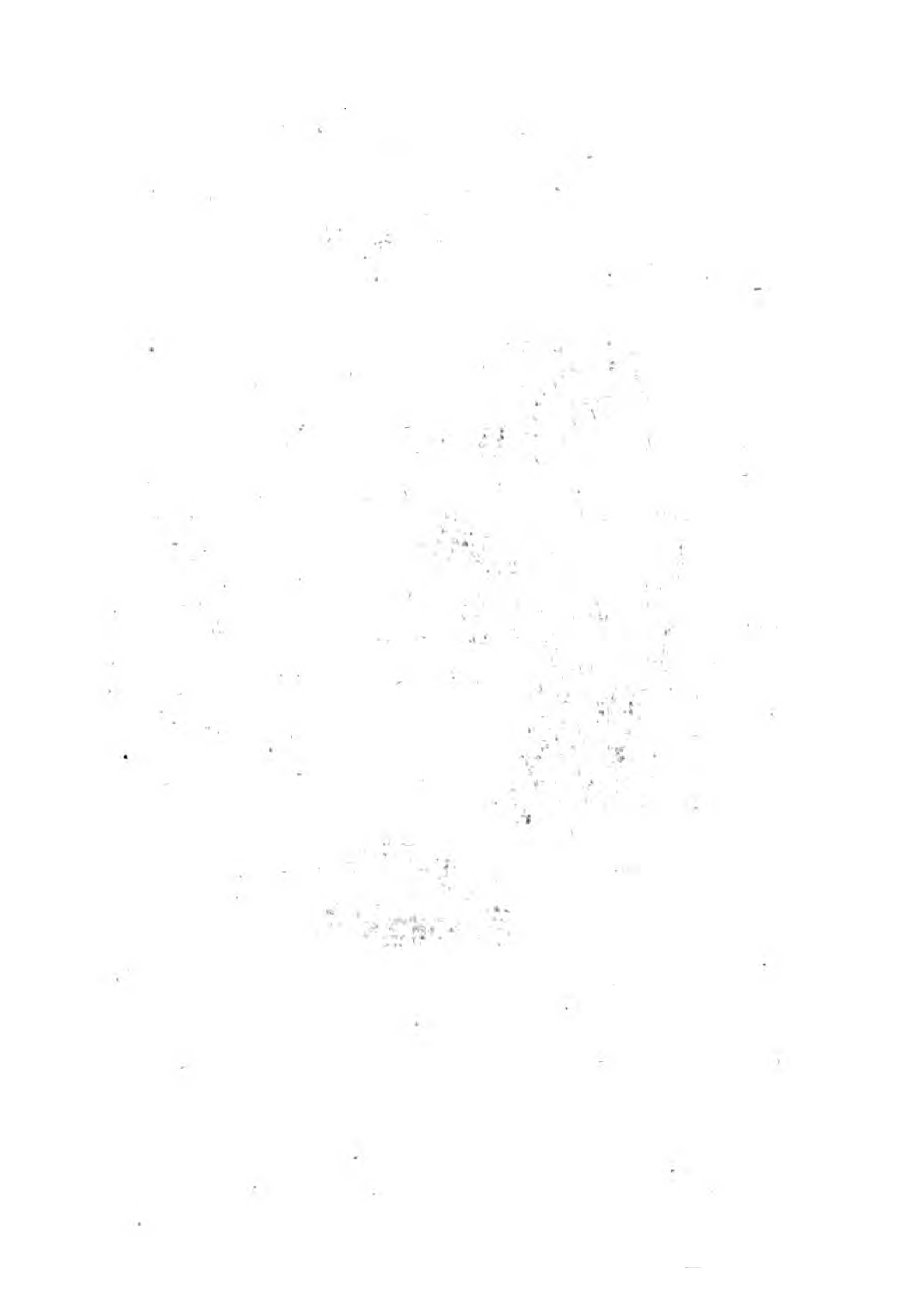
subject agreeable, yet my principal view has been to take notice of such things as materially affect its interest. However defective and improper the execution of my plan has been, it has the merit of being justified by truth, and impartiality, which alone is a sufficient atonement for its faults.

Adieu, Sir, &c.

F I N I S.









rus $s = m = n = 3$: unde in casu quem figura designat, cum $s = m = n = 3$ erit Curva ordinis 16^{te}.

In his descriptionibus Rectas solummodo atque Angulos dari postulavimus; sed facilius sæpe simpliciorum Curvarum ope complexiores describuntur; atque Propositiones his non minus Universales huc pertinentes investigavi: Eas vero cum harum demonstrationibus utpote prolixis impræsentiarum omitto; Easdem postea publici juris facturus, si luce non videantur hæc Geometris indigna.

B. T. 1. 788

Ph. Tr. 389
 VI. *Extract of a Letter of the Reverend Mr. William Rice, Rector of Caerleon upon Usk, to Charles Williams Esq; giving an account of an ancient Roman Inscription lately found there. With some Conjectures thereon, by the Reverend Dr. John Harris, S. T. P. and R. S. S.*

Sir,

A Person last Week being at Plow in a Close near the Bank of the River *Usk*, which the Ancients called *Isca*, (which glides by us about a quarter of a Mile off and in sight of this Town) came thwart a Stone, and finding Letters thereon, took it up whole; 'tis about a Yard in length, and about three Quarters broad I went to the place, and took a true Copy thereof, which I here make bold to send you. There was underneath it some seeming Oblong Square Sepulcher of Stones, rude in order. A little further in that Close, where that River wears out the Land, there was, some time before, a large Earthen Pot taken out of the Bank by the River-side, which had therein the Scull and Bones of some Person, by some thought to be a Child Murther'd; But I rather conjecture it a Roman Urn.

Caerleon, March 21.

1717.

Your humble Servant,

William Rice.

D M

G. VALERIVS. G. F
 GALERIA. VICTOR
 LVGDVNI. SIG. LEG. II AVG
 STIP. XVII. ANNOR XLV. CV
 RA. AGINT. AMNIO. PER PITVO. B

Sir,

This ancient and fair Inscription confirms what others have found hereabouts; and what *Cambden* and other Historians shew us, viz. That the second *Roman* Legion called *Augusta*, brought into *Britain* by *Claudius Cæsar* under the Conduct of *Vespasian*, was placed here at *Isca* or *Caer Legion*, by *Julius Frontinus*, in order to awe the *Silures*: And that General obtained several Victories over them and their Neighbours in several places hereabouts.

There seems to be nothing of Moment or of difficulty in this Inscription; but *Victor Lugduni*: Which as I think we have no ground from History to refer to *Lyons* in *France*, so I guess that Expression may be thus accounted for. The River *Lugg* is famous in the Neighbouring Parts; and as *Dynas* or *Dyn* hath been said to signify a Town in the Ancient *British* Language; and that *Dun* doth also serve to express a Hill or *Down* as we still call it; (which I think is derived from the *British* also) probably *Lugduni* here may express some Town or Hill near the River *Lugg*; and since there is a Place called to this Day *Luckton*, on the side of the River *Lugg* in *Hertfordshire*, perhaps that may bid fair to be the very place where *Valerius* obtained the Victory perpetuated by this Inscription.

F I N I S.

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 VALERIVS. G. F.
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