the family of the poet will derive any advantage from this publication of his remains. If so, it is the best apology for their being given to the world; if not, we have no doubt that the editor, as he is an admirer of Chaucer, has read of a certain pardoner, who

—— With his *relics*, when that he fond
A poor persone dwelling up on lond,
Upon a day he gat him more moneie
Than that the persone got in monethes tweie.

Art. III. *Anecdotes of Painters who have resided or been born in England; with Critical Remarks on their Productions; by Edward Edwards, deceased, late Teacher of Perspective, and Associate in the Royal Academy; intended as a Continuation to the Anecdotes of Painting by the late Horace Earl of Orford.* 4to. pp. 327. London, Leigh and Sotheby, 1808.

THE fine arts, in all highly civilized countries, have been held in such general estimation, that it has been deemed of consequence to record the names even of those artists, whose labours have long since perished in the humble service of stopping a broken pane, or covering the damp walls of a butler's pantry. A practice so conducive to the interest, and so flattering to the vanity of the professors, would naturally obtain their ready support; and Mr. Edwards, among the rest, has been encouraged to launch his little bark, freighted with an indiscriminate and unpromising cargo of adventurers, for the temple of fame.

This volume commences with a short, but not uninteresting life of the author, written by some well informed, but partial friend; and it is to be regretted, that the favourable impression which it was so well calculated to leave on the mind of the reader, is not, in any degree, supported by the character and temper of the work itself. We are well aware that when a painter undertakes to write the lives of painters, the greater part of whom were his contemporaries; when the surviving relatives are to be flattered or offended by the portion of respect paid to the objects of their harmless vanity; the biographer must be possessed

possessed of more courage than discretion, who deals out the exact portion of praise and censure due to the individuals of so motley a group. We observe many faults that have probably arisen out of these restraints; to which the author has injudiciously added more by his sanctimonious confusion of morals and taste. The public surely cannot be greatly interested in the foibles of men, whose lives, after all, must have passed for the chief part, in the attainment of an art, alike inaccessible to the dissolute, and the idle. The author, however, appears to be of a different opinion, and has therefore contrived to commit a new species of injustice; and, weighing sobriety against skill, not unfrequently raised the dauber to a level with the most distinguished artists. Thus the Professor Penny is dismissed without a single observation on his abilities, while a Mr. John Plot, is deeply regretted for not having lived to creep through his elaborate history of land-snails! The flippant remarks of fine ladies are occasionally quoted also by this gallant author, as decisive against works of high classical pretentions; and, among other pleasantries, we are told of the 'moppings of Gainsborough,' and of 'Dr. Burney's dabbling with a party of naked girls, in a horse pond!'* Setting aside the extreme folly of such criticism, we should have entertained a more favourable opinion of Mr. Edwards' heart, had he plucked one sprig only, from the bundles of laurel with which he has covered the sleek heads of sign and scene-painters, and placed it on the care-bent brow of the sullen, but unfortunate Barry.

In a work like the present, a short history of the art, as it stood connected with the names he had undertaken to record, seemed indispensable: Mr. Edwards therefore pays a just tribute of acknowledgement to the Society of Arts, Manufacture, and Commerce, for the benefits which they extended to his profession, and of which he was an early partaker. This society was founded in the year 1750, and from its commencement held out rewards for the encouragement of boys and girls in the art of drawing. In a few years they extended their patronage to artists of established reputation, and offered premiums in the various departments of historical painting, sculpture, and architecture. These patriotic endeavours to promote the arts were continued upwards of twenty years, during which the society,

* Alluding to the Triumph of the Thames, in the apartments of the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce.

exclusive of numerous honorary presents of gold and silv medals, pallets, &c. expended the sum of £8000. It shou be remembered, however, to the honour of the artists of tl country, that whatever progress they have made, is principal owing to their own exertions. These were directed to the fo mation of private schools so early as the year 1711, and co tinued, under various modifications, till 1767. A permane establishment, however, embracing farther advantages, bein still wanting, the leading artists held several meetings for th purpose of establishing a public academy. These commenda- ble efforts proved unsuccessful, and they remained in the former private situation, in St. Martin's Lane, above fourte years, pursuing their studies with a zeal highly creditable to themselves, and with no other support than the individual sul scriptions of their own members.

The next effort towards acquiring the attention of the publi was a voluntary offer of their talents for the purpose of orn menting the apartments of the Foundling Hospital. The l berality of this measure, together with the novelty of the spe tacle, did not fail to make a due impression; and eventual gave rise to the idea of forming a public exhibition. To this en they petitioned the Society of Arts, Manufacture, and Com- merce, to allow them the use of their rooms; and there the ex- hibition, to which the public were admitted gratis, opened April 21st, 1760: Catalogues were sold at the price of sixpence to those who required them. The success of this first public display of British art, exceeded general expectation: but a dif- ference unfortunately arising between the exhibitors and the so- ciety, the leading artists withdrew themselves, and formed an ex- hibition in Spring Garden the following year, with some change in the mode of admission. It was not, however, till May, 1762, that they ventured on the perilous measure of raising the price of admission to one shilling each person; when they had the precaution to affix a conciliatory preface (written by Dr. John- son) to their catalogue, which was now distributed gratis.

The exhibition thus established, continued at Spring Garden under the management of the first artists; who, finding them- selves, at length, possessed of property, were ambitious of ob- taining a legal establishment; and, on proper solicitation, ob- tained a charter, which received his Majesty's confirmation, January 26th, 1765. But how little can we calculate on the advantages of the best planned measures! The artists, now col- lected in a body, 'let slip the dogs of war,' and in three short

years,

years, brought every thing into jeopardy, but their lives. From this period the history of the arts is a narrative of the most bitter contention. The men of least ability and employment occupied their leisure in devising schemes of annoyance against their more successful rivals; and, as they were the loudest and most numerous, succeeded in forcing them to retreat; an event as unexpected, as it was mortifying, to men whose sole importance was derived from disputing with their superiors! It is to this apparently discomfited party, that the present generation of artists is indebted for the idea of establishing a Royal Academy, under the immediate protection of the Sovereign. A petition was signed, and presented by them to his Majesty; and Sir William Chambers had the honour of receiving his gracious assent to their request. The first meeting of the members was held the 10th of December, 1768, when Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had been elected President, delivered his inaugural Discourse.

In his laudable endeavours to raise the credit of this Royal Institution, Mr. Edwards, we think, attributes rather too much to its influence in maturing the arts of the British school. He appears to forget that such men as Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilson, West, Barry, Mortimer, and many others, had established their reputation long before this period; and it is to their particular mode of education, perhaps, that their success is to be ascribed. Italy was justly considered by most of them as the great nursery of the arts; where, after preparing their minds by due attention to the purity of the antique, they were enabled to form a just estimate of the various talents of the great Italian painters, who were at once the objects of their study, and their emulation. They became the disciples of no particular men, neither did they associate in any formal routine of education. Whenever schools have been instituted, whether by nations, or individuals, the arts have been observed gradually to decline; and perhaps, for this reason, that in such seminaries every thing is contagious, except legitimate excellence. Our annual exhibitions furnish abundant evidence of the truth of this assertion; for the students, losing sight of the great authorities in art, are content to follow the popular painter of the day. This, as defects are easily imitated, unfortunately flatters the indolent, and entraps the unwary; and is naturally productive of a uniform mode of practice, that not only tends to paralize genius, but obstructs the course of effective improvement.

But these are evils more easily discovered in their effects than

anticipated. The illustrious Founder of the Royal Academy, by bestowing on the artists 'a local habitation, and a name,' has certainly given them whatever importance can be derived from an imposing situation. That they have steadily, if not successfully laboured to improve these advantages, will easily be admitted, when it is considered, that provision is made for the whole expence and maintenance of this national school, out of the profits of the Exhibition, which is formed at the individual cost of the exhibitors. After stating this, we may be allowed to lament, that conduct so liberal should be lessened in the eye of the public, by the wanton exposure of human weakness, and private feelings. No such information was demanded; and we can neither commend the taste, nor the patriotism of the man, who could prefer commemorating the violence of party, and raking in the annals of bagnios and beer-houses, to the luxury of paying a just tribute to the talents of his contemporaries.

That it is the duty of a Biographer to confine his observations to the review of a man's public life, is far from being our opinion. In the characters of most men, there are traits of individuality, which, if acutely observed, tend greatly to illustrate their peculiar genius, and turn of thought. But this case is by no means general; for it must frequently have been remarked, that no two things resemble each other less than the private habits, and public exertions of men of the greatest talents. It is said, that Sir Joshua Reynolds, in the early part of his life, paraded a near relation through the streets, in the gaudy chariot of some City Sheriff, for the purpose of attracting notice. What could Dr. Graham have done more to obtain the same end? Yet Sir Joshua was no impostor, but delighted in the practice of his profession, and pursued it with an ardour, which nothing but genius and laudable ambition could have inspired. We confess, therefore, that we feel some indignation when Mr. Edwards laments, 'that such abilities as Mr. Mortimer possessed, were sacrificed to the mean pursuits of inelegant pleasures, and ignoble emulation. To be superior as a cricket-player, or to command on a frolic, were to him worth ambition.' (p.263.) Now, that it should be less praise-worthy for 'an active and atheletic young man' to be expert at cricket, than to maltreat a violin after the manner of Mr. Edwards, we cannot conceive; neither can we understand on what principle the act of joining in a quartetto, (page vii.) can be esteemed a more 'elegant pleasure' than sailing up the Thames with a party of agreeable friends, to

to dine at Richmond. It is to such anecdotes, when accompanied with whining reflections on their turpitude, that we object, as they illustrate nothing, and can only be gratifying to that class of readers, who are jealous of all superiority, and feel a pleasure in debasing the human character. Such persons might derive great relief from consulting the valet de chambres of distinguished men, in whose eyes, it is said, no master ever appeared a hero.

In conformity to our own reasoning however, on this subject, it becomes a duty to add a few touches to the portrait drawn of Mr. Edwards, by his friend, for the purpose of giving somewhat more identity to the resemblance, and thus enabling the reader of these anecdotes to ascertain what degree of faith is to be placed in his judgment, and the spirit of his observations. The bodily infirmities, and narrow circumstances of Mr. Edwards, secured him from the commission of many of those indiscretions which he has so severely reprehended in others. This should have led him to speak with some charity of those who, fortunately, or unfortunately, laboured not under his restraints. But the heart of Mr. Edwards did not overflow with 'the milk of human kindness,' nor was he altogether without his foibles—he flattered himself that he possessed talents for nice disquisition; he was, besides, very disputatious and irascible;—and, like the dwarf of Sterne, would have seized the tallest offending grenadier by the tail, could he have reached it. But these formidable qualities were tempered by science, and softened by the Graces; for he fiddled like a painter, and painted like a fiddler, and as he might be said to have an eye only for music, so he felt painting by the ear alone, through which organ he obtained his little knowledge in art.

Having thus cleared the path for our readers, we proceed to examine the remainder of the volume. The materials of the work, of which this forms a continuation, were collected by Mr. George Vertue, a man who possessed qualities very rarely combined—considerable talents, with an attachment to the drudgery of an antiquary. His papers (for he died before they could be prepared for the press) were purchased of his widow, by the Honourable Horace Walpole, who infused into them some of his lightness and vanity, and much of his pride. For talents, unsupported by rank, Walpole appears to have had little respect —and we know of only one instance in which he has condescended to wave this important distinction, by placing Praxiteles at the side of Mrs. Damer!

Many names might certainly have been left out of Walpole's, as well as the present catalogue, without any violent injustice to the

the bearers, or greatly abridging the stock of useful information. Grub Street lends its inspiration to designers and daubers, as well as to bell-men and lamp-lighters; who might all be decently and quietly stretched in their shells, to moulder in peace together. It is not easy to suppress a smile when we reflect how little the men whose humble labours are here recorded, dreamed of the honours that awaited them. If a dauber of this ragged tribe ever felt a sensation that resembled ambition, it seldom soared above the desire of displaying his strength on lions from Africa, or royal tigers from Bengal: such a man felt no abasement in passing through the streets with a pallet in one hand, and a bladder of oil in the other; or in mounting a ladder to exercise his imitative powers on a china punch-bowl, with the peeling of a lemon gracefully curling over the brim. To refresh himself after these mental labours, it was his habit to pass the evenings in some favoured pot-house, where, with the earnings of the day, he met his illustrious brethren of the brush, covered with dust and glory.

Long after the commencement of the present reign, disappointed ambition enjoyed ample means of avenging itself on a successful rival; when the popular productions of the leading artists might be first caricatured, and then suspended from the centre of some street or lane, to announce 'the old Devil Tavern,' or 'the New Jerusalem.' The taste of our inn-keepers and tradesmen for the polite arts, afforded opportunities for the exercise of various degrees of talents: and he who was unequal to the task of striking out an effigy of the renowned Duke of Marlborough, might undertake the more humble labour of representing 'the Hole in the Wall,' or 'the World's End.' Here was indeed a wide and extensive field for the display of art of every description! Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, and St. Christopher, furnished subjects for the painter of history. Our Christian heroes were again opposed to their ancient enemies the Saracens and Turks, The disciples of Ruysdale and Hobima refreshed the smirking citizens with a view of King Charles in a pea-green oak, or the more rural scenery of a horse-pond and a mill; and the wild geniuses of the day gratified their patrons with blue boars, and green dragons, and all the non-naturals of a distempered imagination.

The removal of these prodigies from the streets of London, filled Bedlam with artists, and the workhouses with their starving children: and threw, besides, a new generation of unhappy men, qualified for no higher pursuits, into a profession which they disgrace,

disgrace, without deriving from it any benefit to themselves. It may reasonably be inquired, how men, struggling under this mediocrity of talent, and who, of course, form the greater mass of artists, are now employed. They cannot become traders, for this requires a capital. They will not steal, and to beg they are ashamed—what then remains but to follow the arts? The poor mechanic, who hangs over the scrawlings of his moon-struck son, beholds a mighty genius: who being unqualified for any useful employment, is sent, in evil hour, to be enrolled in the army of martyrs at Somerset House. There the hours that should be devoted to study are wasted in discussing the merits of academicians, who by degrees are lowered to their own level. The next step is easy—they listen to the whisperings of vanity, and without labour, without study, ignorant even of the elements of their art, they put off the student, and affect to be the rivals of the first painters of the day. If, for lack of other employment, they are driven to the practice of what they dignify with the name of history painting, they become deranged, and inveigh against 'face-painters,' in all the majesty of want and wretchedness.

Yet these are the men who are destined to fill the pages of some future biographer, and enjoy in succession the honours of the Budds, the Blacks, the Plots, the Shaaks, and Roths of former days. Venus and the Graces, from the pencils of new Bunks, will obstruct the mechanical movements of clocks and gilded trifles, and make annual voyages to the successors of Kien Long: and the pampered flesh of 'pious families,' again burst its cerements, adorned in Mr. Vickery's 'elastic têtes,' and Madam Lanchester's 'Parisian night-gowns.' All this, and worse, a generous public will labour to admire: yet under such an accumulating load of folly and impertinence, ART must necessarily decline; and it affords little comfort to know, that its thoughtless votaries, who are attracted by the early show of patronage, like flies to a honey-pot, are doomed at the first blight of neglect to fall off, and perish in hopeless obscurity, without the consolation of regret, or the consciousness of desert.

With a trifling exception, this volume preserves the names of few artists who possess higher claims to public attention than those above mentioned. In the hands of some men however, even these might have afforded matter for amusement; but we have no reason to regret, that this circumstance escaped the lively imagination of Mr. Edwards—for if any thing can be more dull than his gravity, it is his attempts at humour. Some example

example of our author's style, and manner of treating his subject, may however be required of us; we shall therefore lay before the reader an extract from his memoirs of our great landscape painter Wilson, as being the most favourable specimen of his candour and judgment, as well as of his style, which is languid, we had almost said, slovenly; and not unfrequently incorrect.

'While Wilson was at Venice, he painted a small landscape, which being seen by Zuccarelli, that artist was so much struck with the merit of the piece, that he strongly urged Wilson to pursue that branch of the art, which advice Wilson followed, and became one of the first landscape painters in Europe. His studies in landscape must have been attended with rapid success, for he had some pupils in that line of art while at Rome, and his works were so much esteemed, that Mengs painted his portrait, for which Wilson in return painted a landscape.

'It is not known at what time he returned to England, but he was in London in 1758, and resided over the north arcade of the piazza, Covent-garden, at which time he had gained great celebrity as a landscape painter. To the first exhibition of 1760, he sent his picture of Niobe, which confirmed his reputation. It was afterwards bought by William Duke of Cumberland, and is now in the possession of his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester. In 1765, he exhibited (with other pictures) a View of Rome, from the Villa Madama, a capital performance, which was purchased by the late Marquis of Tavistock.

'Though he had acquired great fame, yet he did not find that constant employment, which his abilities deserved. This neglect might probably result from his own conduct, for it must be confessed, that Mr. Wilson was not very prudentially attentive to his interest; and, though a man of strong sense, and superior education to most of the artists of his time, he certainly did not possess that suavity of manners, which distinguished many of his contemporaries. On this account, his connections and employment insensibly diminished, and left him, in the latter part of his life, in comfortless infirmity.' P. 78, 79.

Here the excessive prudence of the author again displays itself. It is not our intention to offer an apology for the unpopularity, admitting the fact, of Wilson's character—it needs none. The man whose genius outstrips the age in which he lives, has the choice of two things—either to pander to the prevalent taste for present gain, or, by the best exertion of his faculties, secure to himself, as far as man may, the approbation of posterity. If this neglected artist, among his many privations could not reckon deafness; nor in his list of acquirements enumerate pliability, it

it was still most absurd in his more polished patrons, however they might lament the 'unsuavity of his manners,' to forego, on that account, the pleasure of possessing his works, and encumber themselves with the vulgar art of Barret. The truth is, that the connoisseurs and the artists never agreed on the merits of Wilson; and Mr. Edwards has therefore cautiously steered through these opposing interests. The growing fame of Wilson, however, justifies the admiration of his brethren, while it proves success to be no criterion of excellence. The principles on which true art is founded being immutable, it can neither be affected by the blindness of ignorance, nor the new lights of fashion.

'But leaving general praise or criticism, it will be proper to consider more particularly this master's productions. In doing this, we shall first take notice of a censure which has been passed upon one of his principal works, by an artist, whose abilities and reputatron command respect, though they cannot enforce our implicit assent to his opinion, I mean Sir Joshua Reynolds, who, in one of his discourses, which he gave in the Royal Academy, passed some strictures upon Wilson's picture of Niobe, which did not perfectly coincide with the sentiments of those who then heard, or who have since perused them.

"Our late ingenious academician, Wilson, has, I fear, been guilty, like many of his predecessors, of introducing gods and goddesses, ideal beings, into scenes which were by no means prepared to receive such personages. His landscapes were in reality too near common nature, to admit supernatural objects. In consequence of this mistake, in a very admirable picture of a Storm, which I have seen of his hand, many figures are introduced in the foreground, some in apparent distress, and some struck dead, as a spectator would naturally suppose, by the lightning, had not the painter injudiciously (as I think) rather chosen that their death should be imputed to a little Apollo, who appears in the sky with his bent bow, and that those figures should be considered as the children of Niobe.

"To manage a subject of this kind, a peculiar style of art is required, and it can only be done without impropriety, or even without ridicule, when we adapt the character of the landscape, and that too in all its parts, to the historical or poetical representation.

"This is a very difficult adventure, and it requires a mind thrown back two thousand years, and, as it were, naturalized in antiquity, like that of Nicolo Poussin, to achieve it.

"In the picture alluded to, the first idea that presents itself, is that of wonder, in seeing a figure in so uncommon a situation, as that in which the Apollo is placed, for the clouds on which he kneels have not the appearance of being able to support him, they have neither the substance nor the form fit for the receptacle of a human figure,

figure, and they do not possess, in any respect, that romantic character which is appropriated to such a subject, and which alone can harmonize with poetical stories." P. 82, 83.

'Though we may allow the foregoing observations to be perfectly just, when taken in a general sense, yet when they are applied to Wilson's picture of Niobe in *particular*, they certainly must be considered as forced, and as the effect of petulant pique, rather than the correction of just criticism.

'This assertion is justified by the following inaccuracy: It is asserted, that Wilson's pictures are "too near common nature, to admit supernatural objects:" but the question here does not concern his other pictures, but relates to that of Niobe only, and consequently whatever improprieties may be selected from his other works, they cannot warrant a charge against this picture in particular.

'But to form a just estimate of the work in question, we should first consider the species of objects of which the landscape is composed, whether they be, or be not appropriate to the subject of the picture; and, upon such examination, it may certainly be allowed, that they all are of that kind, which can only be selected from what are universally considered as the grandest and most classical features in nature. But if the fastidious critic is displeased with those which have been selected by Wilson, let him suppose his mind to be "thrown back two thousand years, and, as it were, naturalized in antiquity," what objects could then be selected from nature, by his imagination, which differ from her productions in the present day? The natural materials of landscape have been the same in all ages. The only difference which characterizes antiquity, originates in the works of art, and if these had been introduced as antique features, they would certainly have counteracted the simplicity and grandeur of the picture as it now stands.

'Sir Joshua next observes, that "the figure of Apollo is placed in an uncommon situation, the clouds on which he kneels not having the appearance of being able to support him." By this remark it seems that Sir Joshua did not recollect the picture, or examine the print, when he wrote his critique, for the figure in question is by no means so disposed, as to give the spectator any idea of pain from its want of support; and the size is perfectly suited to its place or representation upon the picture, as the appearance of the cloud is fully equal to the weight which it is supposed to sustain; and, indeed, the figure appears to be floating upon that species of cloud, which is often seen rolling along in a thunder-storm, near the surface of the earth, while the rest of the atmosphere is loaded, and uniformly obscured, by those dark and heavy vapours that occasion the storm.

'The severity of Sir Joshua, as before remarked, was in some degree attributed to private pique, and not without reason, for Sir Joshua and Mr. Wilson were often observed to treat each other, if not with rudeness, at least with acrimony. But that we may not seem

seem desirous of concealing the defects in this artist's productions, we must observe, that Wilson, in the executive part of his works, was rather too careless, a defect which increased in the decline of his life, and that his foregrounds were at all times too much neglected and unfinished.' P. 84—86.

In a difference of opinion, on a point of criticism between Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Edwards, we should not have speculated on dividing with the latter gentleman. And could we still be satisfied that this great artist had expressed his unprejudiced sentiments, we should correct our own, and bow to his superior judgment. But firmly as Sir Joshua appeared seated in the opinion of the public, his jealousy quickly took the alarm; and of two evils, he chose rather to suffer in his own good opinion, than bear a brother near the throne. Of this feeling he has left sufficient evidence in his critique on the works of Wilson and Gainsborough, and particularly of the latter, whose power of giving a just resemblance, he formally denies; and as Gainsborough could boast of possessing little other merit in this department of art, he was thus annihilated as a rival. That his portraits could bear any competition with those of Reynolds, no one possessed of the least feeling for art, would assert; but the aim, as well as the power of these distinguished painters, was different; and while the first was content to represent the body, it was the ambition of the latter to express the mind.

But the portraits of Gainsborough differed not more from the works of Reynolds, than his landscapes did from those of our great landscape painter, Wilson, whose very first attempts, in this walk of art, were distinguished by an unusual elevation of style and character. The glowing and rich scenery of Italy, with its numerous classical remains, warmed into action the latent feelings of a cultivated and elegant mind, and he viewed nature at once with the enthusiastic eye of a poet. We recollect no painter, who with so much originality of manner, united such truth and grandeur of expression; and although, in the opinion of Mr. Edwards, his pictures were incomplete, we feel assured, that while he was in possession of his full powers, negligence was in no degree the cause of this imaginary defect; but that every touch of his pencil was directed by a principle that required the subserviency of particular parts to the full establishment of the whole. In Wilson's landscapes, even the figures are rendered accessary to the general effect; while in the works of other masters, men and women are introduced apparently to keep the scene alive, though in other respects they

they seem to be, as sometimes in nature, rather ornamental than useful.

The early works of Gainsborough, on the contrary, are rendered touching by the simplicity of their execution, and choice of scenery. His uplands are the abode of ruddy health and labour; the by-paths, the deep intrenched roads, the team, and the clownish waggoner, all lead us to the pleasing contemplation of rustic scenery, and domesticate us with the objects which he so faithfully delineated. This sensibility to sylvan scenery, however, became weaker, as he grew more intimate with the works of the Flemish and Dutch masters, whose choice of nature he appears to have thought better than that which he had been accustomed to study; and he may be traced through those schools, from the mere imitations of weeds and moss, up to the full enjoyment of Reubens. The admirers of cultivated art will find him most varied and beautiful at this period, as his works strengthened and enriched by the study of Reubens, still possessed a uniformity of character, which, if not so simple as his first representations of nature, is not polluted by the extravagance of a style making pretensions to a higher character. His last manner, though greatly inferior to that immediately preceding it, was certainly the result of much practice and knowledge, with some leaning perhaps to the suggestions of indolence. Its principal defect seemed to be, that it neither presented the spectator with a faithful delineation of nature, nor possessed any just pretensions to be classed with the epic works of art; for the first, it was both in its forms and effects, too general; and for the last, not sufficiently ideal or elevated. The studies he made at this period of his life, in chalks, from the works of the more learned painters of landscape, but particularly from Gasper Poussin, were doubtless the foundations of this style; but he does not seem to have been aware, that many forms might pass, and even captivate, in drawings on a small scale, where an agreeable flow of lines, and breadth of effect, are principally sought, which would become uncouth and unsatisfactory, when dilated on canvas, and forced on the eye with all the vigour that light and shade, and richness of colour, could lend to them. But this, it should be remembered, is the language of cold criticism, and very ill expresses the high admiration which we have long cherished for the various and fascinating talents of this distinguished artist. If we have unwittingly, therefore, furnished one argument to the young gentlemen who are drawing for the silver, or painting for the gold medal, to speak

speak slightingly of what they should reverence, we request them to cultivate a little modesty, and to consider that no great expectations can be formed of that student who is a critic before he becomes a lover.

Of Gainsborough, whose eccentricity of character furnished such abundant materials, Mr. Edwards says little that can interest the reader. But he has reminded us of some amusing anecdotes respecting him, which appeared in a work entitled 'The Four Ages,' by Jackson, of Exeter; to which we refer the reader, as Mr. Edwards has contrived to lose much of the characteristic humour of his extracts, by his injudicious mode of combining them.

The author, who apparently feels with Iago, that he is nothing, if not critical, lays aside all pretence of candour towards the conclusion of his work, and amuses himself through two or three pages, with demolishing the character of the wretched Low, who, it appears, had once borne away a prize, which, in the opinion of Mr. Edwards, should have been awarded to himself. Having fleshed his valour here, he does not suffer it to abate, but rushes, in the last place, to the attack of the once formidable, but now breathless monster, Barry. His criticisms on the talents of this unhappy artist, are a tissue of ignorance and spleen; and the exposure of his infirmities, when they could no longer interrupt the harmony of the Royal Academy, as useless, as it is cruel. The great and comprehensive work executed by Barry, under circumstances from which the feeble mind of the critick would have shrunk in despair, must remain a monument of his abilities, when all of art that pertains to Mr. Edwards, will have quietly sunk in that untroubled stream where 'all things are forgotten.'

If we have abstained from expressing ourselves more at length on the subject of Sir Joshua Reynolds, it is not in consequence of Mr. Edwards' having made no remark on his talents, that called for reply or investigation. But the merits of ONE with whom the arts rose and set in this country, cannot be discussed in a few words, and an occasion will soon present itself for taking up the subject with more effect than the present affords.