

Peter Pindar's Character of an Antiquarian.

respondent sent me an account of an ancient coin, I did not know a syllable about it—neither the meaning of reverse, exergue, or legend: but now, thank God, I know every thing appertaining to numismata, if I may be indulged with a Latin expression. Indeed the legends used to perplex me much, inasmuch as I exposed myself greatly; for I am not ashamed to confess my ignorance. I thought that AUG. upon a Roman medal, meant the month in which it was struck off; and therefore I deemed it August: and G. P. R. which I know now to be Genio Populi Romani, I verily thought it to be a coin struck by one George Peter Richardson. The figures of Romulus and Remus sucking a she wolf, I took to be two children milking a cow. D. M. for Diis Manibus, I took to be David Martin, or Daniel Musgrove. The half word HELL. signifying Heliopolis, I imagined to be no other than the house of Satan. JAN. CLU. that is to say, Janum clusit; I took to be the name of a man. LUD. SÆC. F. I verily thought to be downright filthy, and blushed for the Romans: but, lo, I afterwards discovered it to be Ludos sæcularis fecit. COS. L. I thought to be Cos Lettices, which only meaneth Consul; M. F. Mr. Ford, which meaneth Marci Filius. N. C. (wouldst thou think it, reader?) I translated Nincompoop; when lo, it meaneth Nobilissimus Cæsar. P. P. which signifieth Pater Patrie; I thought might mean Peter Pounce, or Peter Pumkin. R. P. I also thought might mean Robert Penruddock, or Relp Pigwiggin, or any other name beginning with those initials; but, lo, its true meaning I find to be Respublica, signifying, in English, the Republic. Thus it will appear that I am not ashamed to confess my error.

TRIB. POT. which only meaneth Tribunitia Potestate, I actually imagined meant a Tribe of Potatoes, and that the coin was struck on account of a plentiful year of that fruit. S. P. Q. R. which meaneth only Senatus Populusque Romanus, unwisely, yet sunnily, did I make out Sam Paddon, a Queer Rogue; forasmuch as I was informed that the Romans struck coins on every trifling occasion. SCIP. AS. which signifieth no more than Scipio Africanus, I read literally Skip As; but for why, I could not say: such was my ignorance.

Many were the impositions upon me; rings for pigs noses were sent me for nose jewels worn by the Roman ladies; a piece of oxycroceum, just made in a druggist's shop, for the pitch that surrounded the body of Julius Cæsar; a large

brown jordan, for a lacrymatory; a broken old black sugar-bason, for a druid urn; a piece of a watchman's old lanthorn for a Roman lamp. The wig of the famous Boerhaave was also sent me as curiosity; the roguery of which I did not discover till an engraving of the wig was nearly finished, costing me upwards of thirty shillings;—for, lo! reader, this great man never wore a wig in his life. In my obituary too I made great mistakes, from imposition; as I gave the deaths of many that were not dead, and others that never existed. Sometimes the wickedness of correspondents was such, that I have perpetuated the deaths of bull dogs, greyhounds, mastiffs, horses, hogs, &c. in my obituary, under an idea that they were people of consequence. Indeed I have not stuck to the letter of my assertion at the head of my obituary, that declares it to be a record of considerable persons; forasmuch as I have sometimes put a scavenger over a member of parliament, a pig-driver over a bishop, a lamp lighter over an alderman, and a chimney sweeper over a duke. My present antiquarian knowledge, gratitude maketh me confess that I owe it all to Mr. ———, of Enfield, whom some years ago was also an ignorant and illiterate gentleman, like myself, but by hard study, hath attained to his present perfection; as may be seen in our Topographia Britannica, which is not, as that arch enemy Peter Pindar hath asserted it to be, the idle production of a couple of fellows that want to make a fortune by a history of cobwalls, old chamber pots, and rusty nails. My friend Mr. ———'s zeal for the promotion of antiquarian knowledge cannot be better proved than by his running the risk of being well trounced, for borrowing one of king Edward's fingers, as he lay exposed, a few years since, in Westminster Abbey; which finger my friend, after having gently put it in his pocket, was forced to refund by order of the bishop of Rochester, who, unluckily seeing the deed, did to the disgrace of the science, order him to be searched. Had it not been for this impertinent and hawk-eyed attention of the bishop, of Sir Joseph Ayloffe, and of other antiquarians present at the opening of the monarch's coffin, such was the intrepidity of my antiquarian friend, that he would have attempted the head, instead off a pitiful finger, as he had on a large watchman's coat for the purpose. Nor must I omit the zeal of my friend Sir Joseph Banks on the occasion; who on hearing what was going on, and suspecting that king Edward might have been lodged in pickle, galloped off with a gallon