

happy beyond her most sanguine hopes, that seemed, not only out of the bounds of probability, but almost impossible? beyond her fondest wishes. For what hopes, what wishes, could reach an event,

REFLECTIONS ON THE AGE OF CHIVALRY.

[From the *Universal Magazine*.]

MR. BURKE in his celebrated *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, having spoken in raptures of the sentiments and manners inculcated in the age of chivalry,* we flatter ourselves that the following account of chivalry, and of its effects on the manners of the European nations, will be acceptable to our readers.

History does not afford so singular a revolution in policy and manners, as that which followed the subversion of the Roman empire.

It is to the barbarians, who spread conflagration and ruin, who trampled on the monuments of art, and spurned the appendages of elegance and pleasure, that we owe the bewitching spirit of gallan-

try which in these ages of refinement, reigns in the courts of Europe. That system, which has made it a principle of honour among us to consider the women as sovereigns: which has partly formed our customs, our manners, and our policy; which has exalted the human character, softening the empire of force; which mingles politeness with the use of the sword; which delights in protecting the weak, and in conferring that importance which nature or fortune have denied—that system was brought hither from the frozen shores of the Baltic, and from the savage forests of the north.

The northern nations, in general, paid a great respect to women. Continually employed

* But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprize is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which enobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evils, by losing all its grossness.

The mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the antient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force, or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.