

# JUVENILE ENTERTAINER.

"Torquet ab obscenit jam nunc sermonibus aurem."

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## BIOGRAPHY.

### The Progress of Genius.

FROM OBSCURE AND LOW SITUATIONS, TO EMINENCE AND CELEBRITY.

Genius is that gift of God which learning cannot confer, which no disadvantages of birth or education can wholly obscure.

**AMUEL RICHARDSON.**—The ingenious inventor of a peculiar species of moral romance, and styled by Johnson, "an author from whom the age has received great favours, who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature and taught the passions to move at command of virtue," was bred a printer, and led for some years as a compositor and corrector to press. Besides his three great works of Pamela, Miss Harlowe, and Sir Charles Grandison, all of which have a fine moral tendency, Mr Richardson published several other things, which met with public approbation, and carried on a correspondence with many of the distinguished eminence.

**GEORGE ROZNEY,** was originally bred to his father's business of a cabinet maker; but his natural genius discovered itself, and he became such an eminent artist, that Sir Joshua Reynolds confessed him his rival, young in reputation; and Mr. Hayley made him the subject of his publication, entitled: A poetical dedication to an eminent painter.

**PROFESSOR DU VAL.**—M. du Val Professor of History and Geography in the academy of Luneville, was son of a peasant in Burgundy; and while a child, was employed as a shepherd at a village near Nancy, in France. His thirst after knowledge appeared in his childhood and having no other means of gratifying it, he collected a collection of snakes, toads, & other animals in his reach; and amused himself with examining them, asking every one he met with, questions respecting their structure, from which however he met with little satisfaction.

He once happened to see in the hands of another boy, Aesop's Fables, with cuts, which made him more desirous of acquiring learning. He could not read, and the other boy, who was capable of gratifying his curiosity, was seldom in a humour to assist him in his dilemma he saved whatever monies he could get and gave it to the elder boys, for teaching him to read. Being attained his end, he happened to meet with an snake in which the twelve signs of the zodiac were painted. These he looked for so constantly, and such attention in the heavens, that at last he imagined that he actually traced such figures there; and

though he was mistaken in this, and several other particulars, yet many of his observations were such as few persons even of far more mature age and learning, are found capable of.

Passing a print-shop at Nancy, he observed in the window, a map of the world, which opened a new field for speculation. He purchased it, and devoted many hours every day in its perusal.

His inclination for retirement induced him to visit some hermits who had their cells in a wood, undertaking to wait on them, and tend six or eight cows which they kept. These hermits were grossly ignorant, but Du Val had an opportunity of reading several books he found in their cells, and all the money he could scrape together was now laid out in books and maps.

In this course of life, Du Val continued until he attained his one and twentieth year, when in the autumn of 1717, he was discovered by Baron Peutschner watching his charge in the wood, and sitting under a tree with his maps and books about him. This nobleman was then governor to the young Prince of Lorraine, who happened to hunt that way. The Baron thought a houndsman with sun-burnt face, and bristling hair, dressed in a coarse linen frock, and with a heap of maps and books about him, so extraordinary a sight, that he informed the Prince of it; who immediately rode towards the place, and put several questions to Du Val about his way of living, and the progress he had made in learning. Du Val showed by his answers, that he was already master of the grounds of several sciences. The Prince offered to take him into his service, and told him that he should go to court, but Du Val having read that the air of the court was infectious to virtue, frankly answered, "that he choose rather to look after his herd, and continue to lead a quiet life in the wood, with which he was thoroughly satisfied, than to wait on the Prince." But, he added, "that if his Highness would give him an opportunity of reading curious books and of making himself master of more learning and knowledge, he was ready to follow him or any body else." The Prince was much pleased with his answers, and prevailed on the Duke, his father, to send him to the Jesuit's College at Pont-a-Mausson. When he had finished his studies there, the Duke permitted him to take a journey into France for his farther improvement; and soon after his return, gave him a professorship in the Academy of Luneville, with a pension of 700 livres per annum, and also made him his own librarian, with a salary of 1000 more.

## HISTORY.

### SOCIAL CONDITION OF AFRICA.

In regard to the social aspect of this continent, the unimproved condition in which it appears may be regarded as that perhaps in which violence and wrong have the widest fields, and cause the most dreadful calamities to the human race. The original simplicity, founded on the absence of all objects calculated to excite turbulent desires and passions has disappeared, while its place is not yet supplied by the restraints of law and the refinements of civilized society. War, the favourite pursuit, is therefore carried on with the most unrelenting fury; and robbery on a great and national scale, is generally prevalent. Brilliant and costly articles already exist; but these are distributed with an inequality which the needy warrior seeks by his sword to redress. African robbery is perpetrated by concealed or proscribed ruffians, who shrink from the eye of man, and are the outcasts of social life. It is not even confined to the poor tribes of the desert who see cara-

vans laden with immense wealth pass along their borders. Princes, Kings, and the most distinguished warriors, consider it a glory to place themselves at the head of an expedition undertaken solely for the purposes of plunder.

Slavery seems also to belong to the barbarian state. Man has emerged from the limited wants of savage life, and sees in the productions of art, what he eagerly covets, without having acquired those habits of steady industry by which he might earn them for himself. His remedy is to compel those whom his superior strength, or any other advantage, enables him to bring under subjection, to labour in supplying his wants. Often the blind and spontaneous veneration of those tribes for their chiefs causes them to sink into voluntary slavery; many again are made captive in war; and generally a great part of the population of every barbarous society is placed in a state of bondage. From the two evils above described arises a third still darker,—the stealing of human beings in order to make them slaves. This is perpetrated widely thro' Africa, and attended with every circumstance of crime and horror. It is an enormity also in which the greatest sovereigns do not scruple to participate. Their troops surround a town in the dead of night, watching till the first dawn, when the gates are opened;—they then rush in, set fire to it, and while the victims, with shrieks and cries are seeking to escape, bind and carry them off into slavery. It must be confessed at the same time, that the unrelenting and atrocious spirit of this warfare has been in a great measure produced by foreign connexion either with European Powers, or with Northern Africa, Turkey, and other Mahomedan states.

Notwithstanding so many evils, however, we may again repeat, that an unvaried cloud of moral darkness does not hang over Africa. The Negro character appears to be distinguished by some features unusually amiable, by a peculiar warmth of the social affections, and by a close adherence to kindred ties. If some travellers have been ill-treated and plundered, others have been relieved with the most signal and generous hospitality. The negro, unless when under the influence of some violent excitement, is, on the whole, more mild, hospitable and liberal than the moor. It is by the latter race that the atrocities against European travellers have been chiefly perpetrated.

Edinburgh Cabinet Library.

### DEATH OF PARK, THE AFRICAN TRAVELLER.

It was on the 17th November, 1805, that Park set sail on his last fatal voyage a long interval elapsed without any tidings, which considering the great distance and the many causes of delay, did not, at first, excite alarm in his friends; as the following year, however, passed on, rumours of an unpleasant nature began to prevail. Alarmed by these, and feeling a deep interest in his fate, Governor Maxwell of Sierra Leone, soon engaged Isacco the guide, who had been sent to the Gambia with dis-