

which is not practised here. The numbers of the churches contributes much to the embellishment of the city; but the largest of them will not contain above eleven or twelve hundred persons.

The ancient palace of the president, that of the congress, the banks of Pennsylvania and of the United States; the hospital, the poor-houses, the library, the theatre, and the museum, merit the attention of a traveller.

The buildings which formerly belonged to the president of the Congress have been sold cheap, and converted into an academy. The public library has, in front, a statue of Dr. Franklin, to whom it seems particularly dedicated. No one is ignorant how much physical science is indebted to him; and America will never forget the part he took for her independence. It contains from 30,000 to 32,000 volumes, selected with judgment and preserved with care; it is supported and augmented by an annual subscription, and every subscriber is permitted to have any book he wishes at his own house. The bank of Pennsylvania, the first institution of the kind in this quarter of the world, would be a superb edifice if it was less in decay, and if the columns which form the peristyle were less awkwardly constructed. That which has been lately erected at Philadelphia, may be considered the finest piece of architecture in the United States, although in my opinion it partakes of the faults of the other. It is entirely built of the stone above-mentioned; the blocks which form the columns and stairs are of an admirable size and beauty. These banks, however, are more remarkable for the credit they enjoy than for their elegance of the buildings; their notes are received in preference to money throughout the whole extent of the United States.

The arsenal, begun under the direction of Mr. Adams, has been entirely abandoned by his successor on account of the war with which this country was threatened by France. However pacific a state may be, it ought always to remain on its guard: no one is secure from the ambitious activity of a turbulent neighbour, or from the subversive spirit of those men who are born for the ruin of their country. The arsenal, situated at a little distance from the city, presents a great and well-constructed plan; the architecture is good, and in contemplating the part that is complete it is to be regretted that this superb edifice remains unfinished. The theatre is large, well-built, and beautifully decorated in the interior. The pieces which are performed are English; America has never produced any thing of the kind. Some of the performers have come from London, but they possess a phlegmatic character, from which they never depart. The Americans prefer tragedy to comedy; and seem to take no delight in any thing comic that is not seasoned with gross buffoonery and vulgar wit. Order and decency are strangers to the interior of the theatre. The