

INDEX INDICATORIUS.

THE editor borrows this phrase from a popular periodical work of long standing*. Under this head, he proposes from time to time to throw together such observations, culled from the letters of his correspondents, as seem to be deserving of notice; though they do not merit a separate publication in the form they have been sent; and to make such acknowledgments and remarks upon the communications sent, as appear to be more deserving notice, than those confined to the blue covers of this work.

As the editor has been favoured with a great many communications, apparently from *young* writers, he begs leave to preface this department of his work, with a few general observations calculated for their benefit.

Young people are generally induced to write from one of two motives, viz. a desire to display their own talents, or a wish to communicate to others information concerning some particular, that they think will prove entertaining or useful to them.—Too often, early in life, the *first* of these motives is the principal stimulus; and when that is the case, it seldom fails that their fond hopes are frustrated. Writing is an art that requires practice to bring it to perfection. This practice beginners must always want; on which account, their first productions, in most cases, are extremely disgusting to men of taste; so that unless there be some basis of useful disquisition at the bottom to atone for this disgust, instead of being admired, they are only despised: But if an ingenious youth feels his mind strongly impressed with some leading ideas, which he wishes to develop to others, he will, in this case, for the most part express himself with a becoming diffidence, that conciliates good will; and on account of the original thoughts that occur, every good natured reader will be disposed to overlook the little inaccuracies that must be expected to arise from inexperience. When a young man is therefore about to communicate his sentiments in any way to the public, let him first ask himself this simple question: "Is it merely because I wish to shine, that I take up the pen? Or do I feel certain ideas in my mind, that I do not perceive are familiar to others, which I should have a pleasure in communicating to them, as I think they will contribute either to their welfare, emolument, or satisfaction of mind?" If the first question be answered in the affirmative, let him abandon his project at the time, and I will answer for it he never will have reason to repent of it. But if his mind fairly acquires him of vanity, let him select for a subject that which impresses his mind the most forcibly and frequently; let him think of it often before he puts his thoughts to paper; and when at last he does write, let him try to express himself in the plainest language he can, without ornamental flourishes, or an attempt at the frippery of fine writing, which usually, at a tender age, makes so strong an impression on the imagination.

Let those who feel a predilection for verse, be informed, that among all the trifling acquirements a young person can aim at, that of making

* The Gentlemen's Magazine.