



Engraved by Hopwood from a painting by Sir J. Reynolds

THE RIGHT HONORABLE
RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

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SPEECHES

OF THE LATE

Right Honourable

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

(SEVERAL CORRECTED BY HIMSELF.)

EDITED BY

A CONSTITUTIONAL FRIEND.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN,

&c. &c.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN was the third son of Mr. Thomas Sheridan, a gentleman well known by his endeavors to promote and improve the art of oratory in Great Britain, and universally acknowledged the best declaimer of English of his day; he was a considerable time manager of the Dublin Theatre, which the furious animosity of party obliged him to quit; but in England he found fame and prospect enough to leave him little cause to regret his banishment from his native country.

The father of Mr. Thomas Sheridan, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Sheridan, was the intimate friend and favorite of Dean Swift,* the compa-

* In the debate on the treason and seditious bills, on the 10th of December, 1795, the character of this eminent divine having been reflected on by Mr. J. W. Browne, it was most warmly and feelingly supported, by Mr. R. B. Sheridan.—Vide vol. iv. 201, 202, 203.

nion of his leisure, the depository of his confidence, and the imitator of his wit.

Mrs. Frances Sheridan, the mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was the intimate friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson; she is the authoress of the novel "Sidney Biddulph," "Nourjahad" an oriental tale, the comedies of the "Discovery," "Dupe," and "A Trip to Bath:" she was also the translator of the *Memoirs and Letters of the celebrated "Niron de l'Enclos,"* published in 1761, in two pocket volumes. This lady died at Blois, on the 17th of September, 1766; and such was the respect paid to her memory, by the bishop of that place, that he caused it to be intimated to her friends, notwithstanding the difference of religious persuasion, that they might take advantage of the night to deposit her remains in consecrated ground, and no interruption should be given to the interment.

The subject of this sketch, was born in the month of October, 1751, in Dorset Street, Dublin, and on attaining his seventh year, he was placed with his eldest brother Charles Francis, formerly Secretary at War in Ireland, and the Historian of the Revolution in Sweden, under the tuition of a friend of their fathers, Mr. Samuel Whyte of Dublin, who having opened an academy in April, 1758, these two brothers were the first pupils ad-

mitted. Shortly after this, the affairs of Mr. Thomas Sheridan compelled him to leave Ireland: he removed to England, and settled at Windsor.

It is a circumstance deserving of note, that the early years of Mr. Sheridan afforded little promise of the uncommon talents he has since exhibited; and this is evident, from a letter written by his mother, to Mr. Whyte, in which she observes: "These boys will be your tutors in that respect (patience). I have hitherto been their only instructor, and they have sufficiently exercised mine; for two such impenetrable dunces I never met with."*

After remaining under the care of Mr. Whyte nearly eighteen months, they were sent to England, and for one year, resumed their education under their parents. In 1762, Mr. Thomas Sheridan's talents were, unsolicited by him, honored with a pension, and being at this time in easy circumstances, he determined on placing his younger son, Richard Brinsley, at Harrow School, at the head of which celebrated seminary, was the learned Dr. Sumner and Dr. Parr. In a letter written by Mrs. Sheridan on this circumstance,

* This, and some subsequent anecdotes, have appeared before the public in former sketches, &c. of Mr. Sheridan's life; but they point out so forcibly the early habits of our subject, as to render an apology for their insertion in these Memoirs unnecessary.

she makes the following singular remark—
“ Dick has been at Harrow school since Christmas; as he probably may fall into a bustling life, we have a mind to accustom him early to shift for himself.”

Although the exertions of Mrs. Sheridan and Mr. Whyte had failed in producing a semblance of those talents, that have since so highly adorned our literary annals, and shed so bright a lustre upon this age, the unremitting efforts of Dr. Parr were crowned with the most perfect success: he elicited the latent spark of splendid genius, and brought into activity the slumbering energies of his pupil; who has since enriched our dramatic literature, adorned our poetry, enlivened the highest and most cultivated circles with his powers of conversation, his elegant demeanour, and his unsurpassed wit, and who has formed so conspicuous a feature in our senatorial discussions on so many great occasions. The efforts of Dr. Parr, in this instance, therefore, are no inconsiderable addition to the many obligations the literary world is under to that eminent and worthy divine.

In 1769, Mr. Sheridan quitted Harrow school; his father was so fully satisfied of his attainments, that he considered it unnecessary to send him to the University, and he was entered a student of the Middle Temple.

The income allowed at this period to Mr. Sheridan by his father, being insufficient for his support, he was compelled to increase it by literary exertions; and he became a constant contributor to the productions of the day. He also, at this time, gave his attention to dramatic writings; but from being disgusted with some sketches of comic character which he drew, he actually destroyed them; and, in a moment of despair, renounced every hope of excellence as a dramatic writer.—Mr. Sheridan, likewise, engaged with a friend, Mr. Halhed, in a poetical* translation of the Love Epistles of Aristænetus, from the Greek. The poems are written in many different measures; for which the preface accounts, by saying, that “something beside caprice may be urged in their favor; for, by a variation of metre, the style almost necessarily undergoes an alteration; and, in general, the particular strain of each epistle suggested the particular measure in which it is written.”

These pursuits drew Mr. Sheridan's atten-

* At the close of this Memoir, a few specimens of Mr. Sheridan's delightful muse will be introduced; and, likewise, some beautiful lines to his memory, written by those who can justly estimate and acknowledge his extraordinary genius.—The specimens are necessarily very limited. With the greatest difficulty we have prevented the work swelling to a sixth volume, so many interesting circumstances relating to Mr. Sheridan, hourly occurring to our recollection;—and the same consideration occasions this Sketch to be confined almost entirely to some of his political measures.

tion from the profession of the law ; and, consequently he was never called to the bar.

Mr. Sheridan became about this time the suitor of Miss Elizabeth Linley, a most accomplished young lady, and the principal performer in the Oratorios at Drury-lane Theatre, and daughter of the ingenious composer.— Her father had crowned those gifts which Nature, with a very lavish hand, had bestowed on his daughter, with every advantage which can result from a thorough acquaintance with the science, whose attribute is

“ To soften rocks and bend the knotted oak.”

Her beauty and talents procured her the distinguished title of the Maid of Bath. Captain Matthews, a gentleman well known in the fashionable circles of the period, having caused a paragraph to be inserted in one of the public papers of Bath, prejudicial to the character of Miss Linley, a duel took place between him and Mr. Sheridan ; and the latter having succeeded in disarming his adversary, he compelled him to sign a paper, in which he made a formal retraction of the paragraph. Upon this being settled, Mr. Sheridan set out for Bath, and immediately published the apology in the paper which had contained the obnoxious paragraph. Captain Matthews, in consequence of this, demanded of Mr. Sheridan satisfaction,—and another meeting took

place ; after a discharge of pistols the parties fought with swords : both were wounded, and closing with each other, fell on the ground, where the fight was continued until they were separated. Shortly after this, Mr. Sheridan's suit was crowned with success, by Miss Linley accompanying him on a matrimonial excursion to the Continent. The ceremony was again performed, 13th April, 1773, on their return to England, with the consent of Miss Linley's* parents.

Though at this period Mr. Sheridan's circumstances were far from brilliant, he displayed that elevation of mind which is a constant characteristic of true genius : his lady had not brought him any fortune, and her talents were fully sufficient to have indemnified him in that respect ; but Mr. Sheridan, though at this time only in his twenty-third year, and far removed from brilliant prospects, would not condescend to receive the salary annexed to the exertion of her abilities ; and, notwithstanding several very advantageous and

* The following lines were addressed by Mr. Sheridan to this lady, previous to their union :—

“ Mark'd you her eyes of heav'nly blue,
 Mark'd you her cheek of roseate hue I
 That *eye* in liquid circles moving,
 That *cheek* abash'd at man's approving :
 The one, Love's arrow darting round,
 The other, *blushing* at the wound.”

lucrative offers were made,* she was never permitted by her husband to appear as a public performer.

Depending on his own talents for support, Mr. Sheridan again turned his attention to the theatre, and in 1774 wrote the admirable comedy of "The Rivals." He gave it to Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, and it was first represented on the 17th of January in the following year. It did not, however, experience the approbation it merited, owing principally to the Irish character of Sir Lucius O'Trigger being ill supported by Mr. Lee. Mr. Sheridan afterwards made some alterations, and it was again brought forward, and received with the greatest *eclat*.

The success of "The Rivals" gave a strong impulse to Mr. Sheridan's theatrical genius. He next wrote the farce "St. Patrick's Day, or the Scheming Lieutenant," and presented it to Mr. Clinch, as a testimony of his gratitude for the assistance he had experienced from that gentleman's admirable performance of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, in the Rivals, in which he had succeeded Mr. Lee. This farce was written, it has been stated, in forty-eight hours, and was performed for Mr. Clinch's

* Her situation in the Oratorios was filled by her younger sister, who died singing—"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

benefit on the 2d of May, 1775. In the ensuing season, Mr. Sheridan produced his comic opera "The Duenna," and which was so well received as to be performed seventy-five nights during the season.

On Mr. Garrick resolving to retire from, and give up his connexion with, the stage, a negotiation for the purchase of his share of the patent of Drury-lane Theatre, was entered into by Dr. Ford, Mr. Linley, and Mr. Sheridan; who, in 1776, paid for it the sum of thirty thousand pounds.

Mr. Sheridan's next production was "The Trip to Scarborough," a comedy, altered from Vanburgh's "Relapse." It was performed on the 24th February, 1777; and, although not very favourably received on that night, owing to the inaccuracy of the performers, it was afterwards played with great success to crowded houses.*

"The School for Scandal," which, as long as the English stage exists, will be a standard comedy, followed, and was first performed on the 8th of May. Forty years have now elapsed since this comedy was brought out; during that long period, not any writer has

* The copy of this play was lost after the first night's representation, and all the performers were summoned together early the next day, in order, by the assistance of their parts, to prepare another prompter's book.

produced a comedy to be put in competition with it. In the same year Mr. Sheridan made alterations in Shakespeare's *Tempest*. In 1781, he wrote "The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed," written upon the model of "The Rehearsal,"* which, as well as "The School for Scandal," is unequalled.

An intimate acquaintance with the late Right Hon. Charles James Fox,† opened a new and widely-extended field to the aspiring mind of Mr. Sheridan, and produced in him a strong

* In addition to these, the musical piece "The Camp," is attributed to his pen, but it is positively denied by Mr. Tate Williamson that Mr. Sheridan was its author.

Kotzebue's drama of Pizarro received considerable improvements from Mr. Sheridan's talents. The speech of Rolla, exhorting the Peruvians to defend their king and country, and their civil and religious institutions, against a ferocious band of lawless invaders, is exclusively from Mr. Sheridan's pen.

† Mr. Sheridan's opinion of this great man deserves notice. In the debate on the Regency Restrictions, 16th January, 1789, vol. II. p. 147, 148, Mr. Pitt having wantonly attacked the character of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan declared, "it was the characteristic distinction of his (Mr. Fox's) heart to compel the most submissive devotion of mind and affection from all those who came under the observation of it; and force them, by the most powerful and amiable of all influence, to become the inseparable associates of his fortune. With respect to his talents, he would not speak of them; they would derive no support from any man's attestation, nor the most flattering panegyric from the most enlightened of his friends. Thus much he would only observe, with regard to the abilities of his honorable friend, that it was the utmost of any other man's talents, and the best proof of their existence, that he was able to understand the extent, and comprehend the superiority of them. It was the pride and glory of his life to enjoy the happiness of his friendship."

desire to enter on the political stage. At the general election in 1780, he therefore, by the recommendation of Mr. Fox, proposed himself as a candidate to represent the borough of Stafford, and was accordingly returned.

At this period the British Senate had to boast of more able and enlightened men than perhaps it had ever enjoyed. The reputation for extraordinary talent, which Burke, Fox, Pitt, and others had established, were formidable checks to any but the strong, aspiring, and confident mind of Sheridan, who boldly entered the lists as a competitor. He did not feel

——— “How hard it is to climb

“The steep, where Fame’s proud Temple shines afar.”

Recommended solely by the vigour and versatility of his genius, he was not to be daunted by the hazard of the undertaking; he had a just estimation of his own natural and acquired powers; and shortly after taking his seat distinguished himself by successfully wielding the various weapons for which those eminent orators were respectively celebrated,

The idea Mr. Fox entertained of the talents of Mr. Sheridan cannot be stronger expressed than in quoting an observation he made in the course of a speech of uncommon eloquence,

on his motion* for putting an end to the war with France. Mr. Fox remarked, "if in point of ability, if in point of integrity and honor, if in point of every quality that could adorn the character of man, they† were compared with his honourable friend, Mr. Sheridan, they were compared with their equal, and the comparison would do them no dishonour."‡

It was natural, on obtaining a seat in parliament, that Mr. Sheridan should give his splendid talents in aid of his friend Mr. Fox, and consequently he became a firm supporter of the measures of that statesman, and joined his party, then in opposition.

The first motion Mr. Sheridan made in the house was on a subject of the greatest importance.§ It was founded on the employment of the military during the riots, which occurred on the Protestant petition in 1780. The wretched imbecility of the magistracy of the metropolis had laid the inhabitants open to the violence of a contemptible rabble, and the enormities they committed became topics which were applied with great success, to show the inefficacy, in all cases, of the civil authority in affording protection, and the ne-

* May 30th, 1794.

† A Secret Committee of the House.

‡ Vide Fox's Speeches, Vol. V. p. 308.

§ For the better regulation of the police of Westminster, 6th March, 1781. Vol. I. p. 6.

nessity of a military force for preserving order and good government. This dangerous and unconstitutional doctrine went likewise to reconcile the people to the authority, with which, under colour of the riots, the military power, throughout the kingdom, had been endued, of acting immediately from its own motion, independently of the civil magistrate. The invincible jealousy of military power, which had so long characterized this country, grew familiarised to the aspect of an armed force, and gradually gave way to impressions, which, if they had been lasting, threatened the worst consequences to liberty. Mr. Sheridan's speech, on this occasion, deserves particular attention, although the motions with which it concluded were negatived by the ministry. Mr. (afterwards General Fitzpatrick) seconded the motion; and in the course of his speech remarked, that "if the military were to be employed against their fellow-citizens, without waiting for the orders of the civil power, he should no longer wish to belong to a profession so dangerous and fatal to the liberties of the country."

During 1777 and 1778 Mr. Sheridan had been a regular and important contributor to a paper conducted with great acrimony against administration, entitled "The Englishman;" Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, General

Fitzpatrick, Lord John Townshend, and other distinguished characters, also wrote in it.

The latter nobleman was one of the earliest of Mr. Sheridan's political friends, and the sentiments entertained by his lordship are most feelingly expressed in the following extract of a letter addressed to a friend, stating the cause of his absence from Mr. Sheridan's funeral, and which arose from his lordship's own son being at the time in the most imminent danger:—"I am one of Mr. Sheridan's earliest friends. He, I, and poor Tickell (whose memory, with all his faults, will ever be dear to me) lived together in the closest habits of friendship from earliest life—long before Sheridan's introduction into public life—before "The Duenna's" appearance—before he was known to Fox, to whom I had the pleasure of first introducing him. I made the first dinner party at which they met; having told Fox that all the notions he might have conceived of Sheridan's talents and genius, from the comedy of "The Rivals," &c. would fall infinitely short of the admiration of his astonishing powers, which I was sure he would entertain at the first interview. This first interview between them (there were very few present, only Tickell and myself, and one or two more) I shall never forget. Fox told me, after our breaking up from dinner, that

he had always thought Hare (after my Uncle Charles Townshend) the wittiest man he ever met with, but that Sheridan surpassed them both infinitely. And Sheridan the next day told me, that he was quite lost in admiration of Fox—and that it was a puzzle to him to say, what he admired most—his commanding superiority of talent and universal knowledge, or his playful fancy, artless manners, and the benevolence of heart which shewed itself in every word he uttered. Ever afterwards we continued intimately and closely connected to the hour of his death, and nothing could give me a severer pang, than to have it supposed that I was remiss in my duties upon the last sad occasion.”

In 1782, when a new administration was formed under the auspices of the Marquis of Rockingham, on whose public principles, and private honor and virtue, the nation seemed to repose, after the violent struggle by which it had been agitated with the securest and most implicit confidence, Mr. Sheridan's exertions, as a political writer, were recompensed with the appointment of Under Secretary to Mr. Fox, who had received the seals of the Foreign Department.

The public measures, for which the new minister stipulated with the court before he would consent to enter into any negotiations

for office, were these :—1st. Peace with the Americans, and the acknowledgment of their independence not to be a bar to the attainment of that object; 2nd. A substantial reform in the several branches of the civil list expenditure; 3rd. The diminution of the influence of the crown, under which article the bills for excluding contractors from seats in parliament, and disqualifying the revenue officers from voting in the election of members, were included.

While measures were happily pursuing for maturing and bringing forward plans of economy and reformation, for the security of the independence of parliament, for healing the breaches of the constitution, and relieving the burdens of the people; in the execution of which the present ministry stood pledged to the country; a heavy calamity was approaching, which darkened the prospect that had opened to the nation. This was the loss of the Marquis of Rockingham, whose health had been for some time gradually declining, and at length sunk under the increasing weight of public cares and business. The first step taken by the court, after his death, which happened on the 1st of July, 1782, was the appointment of the Earl of Shelburne to be his successor in the Treasury. This unexpected event was soon followed by the

resignation of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and the rest of the ministry; and the ever-memorable coalition having been formed, the talents of Mr. Sheridan were again devoted to literary hostilities against Lord Shelburne's administration.

It has been erroneously stated, however, in the *Biographia Dramatica*, and other publications, that Mr. Sheridan was a writer in the periodical paper called "The Jesuit;" he did not write a single paper of the eighteen numbers that were printed; but he was one of the advisers of the publication. Mr. Burke recommended the late Dr. Lawrence to conduct it, and that gentleman was the writer of the whole, from facts and hints with which he was supplied. It was stopped by a threatened prosecution after the above numbers had been published.

In a short time the coalition gained a decisive victory over the Shelburne administration; a negotiation was opened with the Duke of Portland, and on the 2d of April, 1783, a new administration was announced, in which Mr. Sheridan was appointed Secretary of the Treasury.

The extraordinary powers of reasoning evinced by Mr. Sheridan in defence of Mr. Fox's celebrated India bill, equally astonished and delighted his audience and the public.

On the rejection of that bill in the House of Lords, in December of the same year, the ministry, of which Mr. Sheridan was a member, was compelled to yield to another coalition ; not, however, formed of two eminent leaders of opposite parties, but of the shreds and tatters of every party. Mr. Sheridan being again placed in the ranks of opposition, became constant and indefatigable in his support of the popular cause, and his abilities were dreaded as the never-failing scourge of the measures of his opponents.

In the violent debates which took place on the state of the country,* Mr. Sheridan exercised his satirical powers with the greatest success. In these discussions the most pointed personalities were cast and retorted from both sides of the house. The coalition was branded as a corrupt confederacy of two desperate factions, to seize upon the government of the country ; and the India bill was foolishly represented to have been an experiment made by Mr. Fox, with a view, if not to place the crown on his own head, at least to raise himself to a degree of power superior to that of the sovereign. On the other hand, the party composing the new administration was described as a coalition, not indeed of parties, but of the shreds and remnants of

* Vol. I. pages 74 to 88.

the dregs and outcasts of parties ; as a body collected for the purpose of fighting the battles of secret and unconstitutional influence,* of trampling on the power and dignity of the House of Commons ; and of establishing a government of cabal, intrigue, and favouritism, and of destroying the very principles of laudable ambition, and honourable service in the state.

Mr. Sheridan on these occasions, attacked with the greatest severity, and at the same time with considerable poignancy of wit and humour, both Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, (afterwards Lord Melville) the two leading members of administration.

In 1785 Mr. Sheridan had a principal share in the debates on the Irish Propositions.† He warmly contended, that circumstances did not justify the arrangement of ministers, whose schemes throughout the business had been delusion, trick, and fallacy. He compared the treatment of Ireland, newly escaped from harsh trammels and severe discipline, to that of a high mettled horse, hard to catch ; whom the Irish Secretary was to soothe and coax with a sieve of provender in one hand, but be prepared with a bridle in the

* In allusion to the communications received from His Majesty, by Earl Temple and others.—Vide vol. I. page 73.

† Vol. I. page 141 to 182.

other, ready to slip over his head while snuffling at the food. Mr. Sheridan proved himself in these debates, perfectly master of the subject, and fully acquainted with the real interests of Ireland: his speeches on this occasion, were particularly remarkable for their depth, solidity, and force of argument. The ministry found them unanswerable by fair reasoning, and Mr. Pitt attempted to rebut them by the most acrimonious language of reproof; but this line of conduct produced from the latter, those retorts of keen satire, which never failed in silencing the person whose inconsiderate conduct provoked them. This was particularly noticed, when Mr. Pitt, in 1783, whilst prime minister of this kingdom, illiberally made allusions to Mr. Sheridan's employments, as manager of a theatre, and his dramatic pursuits; and recommended his reserving his talents for their proper stage.* Instead of being put out of temper by this attack, Mr. Sheridan met it with the greatest good humour, and by a happy thought, reduced the Premier of England to the angry boy in the Alchymist,† to the no small amuse-

* Vol. I. page 46.

† The singular felicity of this allusion to the character of Kastril, was noticed in the probationary odes for the laureatship. Lord Thurlow is there made, much in character, to exclaim,

“Damn Sheridan's wit,
The terror of Pitt.”

ment of the opposition party, and of every admirer of gentlemanly satire.

Equally expert at a regular charge, or an unpremeditated reply, Mr. Sheridan had, at this period, rendered himself feared by the opponents of his colleagues, for that vigour of mind, extent of information, and brilliancy of eloquence and wit, which penetrated their concealed views, exposed their fallacies, and by unexpected flashes and retorts, never failed to overwhelm them with confusion, and expose them to the derision, not only of the house, but of the public.

In 1786, Mr. Sheridan vigorously opposed the motion of the minister, for erecting fortifications for the protection of the dock-yards, founded on a plan proposed by a board of officers. His speech,* on this measure, was the subject of much admiration; and indeed, independent of such arguments as are peculiar to itself, it comprehends every other which was made use of in contradiction to the proposed plan of fortifications. His objections to the system, were, first, such as went to shew, that it was, in itself, dangerous and inimical to the constitution; and secondly, that such were the nature and circumstances of the report made by the board of officers, that the

* Vol. I. page 197.

report itself did not warrant or authorize the system. The arguments with which Mr. Sheridan supported his objections, had full weight with the house, and on a division, the motion of the minister was rejected by the casting vote of the Speaker.

The proceedings against Mr. Hastings afforded Mr. Sheridan opportunities for the display of all his powers of eloquence. His speech * on the third charge against Mr. Hastings, viz. the resumption of the Jaghires, and the confiscation of the treasures of the Princesses of Oude, the mother and grandmother of the reigning Nabob will always be admired. And here it may not be improper to repeat the opinions, as stated in vol. I. of the most distinguished members of the house on this celebrated oration:

The subject of the charge was particularly fitted for displaying all the pathetic powers of eloquence, and never were they displayed with greater force, skill, and elegance. For five hours and a half Mr. Sheridan commanded the universal attention and admiration of the house (which, from the expectation of the day, was uncommonly crowded) by an oration of almost unexampled excellence; uniting the most convincing closeness and accuracy of ar-

* Feb. 7, 1787, Vol. I. p. 272.

gument, with the most luminous precision and perspicuity of language; and alternately giving force and energy to truth by solid and substantial reasoning; and enlightening the most extensive and involved subjects with the purest clearness of logic, and the brightest splendour of rhetoric.

Every prejudice, every prepossession, were gradually overcome by the force of this extraordinary combination of keen, but liberal discrimination—of brilliant, yet argumentative wit. So fascinated were the auditors by his eloquence, that when Mr. Sheridan sat down, the whole house, the members, peers, and strangers, involuntarily joined in a tumult of applause, and adopted a mode of expressing their approbation, new and irregular in the house, by loudly and repeatedly clapping with their hands.

Mr. Burke declared it to be the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit, united, of which there was any record or tradition.

Mr. Fox said, all that he had ever heard—all that he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapour before the sun.

Mr. Pitt acknowledged, that it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient or modern times, and possessed every thing that genius or art

could furnish to agitate and controul the human mind.

The effects it produced were proportioned to its merits. After a considerable suspension of the debate, one of the friends of Mr. Hastings (Mr. Burgess) with some difficulty obtained, for a short time, a hearing; but finding the house too strongly affected by what they had heard to listen to him with favour, sat down again. Several members confessed they had come down strongly prepossessed in behalf of the person accused, and imagined nothing less than a miracle could have wrought so entire a revolution in their sentiments. Others declared, that though they could not resist the conviction that flashed upon their minds, yet they wished to have time to cool before they were called upon to vote; and though they were persuaded it would require another miracle to produce another change in their opinions, yet, for the sake of decorum, they thought it proper, that the debate should be adjourned. Mr. Fox and Mr. M. A. Taylor strongly opposed this proposition; contending, that it was not less absurd than unparliamentary to defer coming to a vote, for no other reason that had been alleged, than because the members were too firmly convinced; but Mr. Pitt concurring with the opinions of the former, the debate was adjourned a little after one o'clock.

In June, 1788, Mr. Sheridan summed up the evidence on the second, or Begum charge,* respecting the confinement and imprisonment of the Princesses of Oude, and the seizure of their treasures. This oration, which was delivered on the 3d,† 6th, 10th, and 13th of June,

* Vol. II. page 55 to 127.

† The opinion of Mr. Burke on these orations deserves notice:— On the 6th, Mr. Burgess having moved in the house of commons, that the Solicitors employed by the managers of the prosecution should, from time to time, present at the bar of the house, an account of the expenses incurred, Mr. Burke said, that he rose neither to second nor to resist the motion. Before he seconded, he must approve a motion; before he opposed it, he must feel a strong reason for meeting it with his negative. In the present case, he felt no powerful propensity either way. He would not, however, avoid offering his warmest congratulations to the honourable gentleman, on his having chosen that glorious day, after the triumph of the morning, to bring forward a business of such an important nature! It was the honourable gentleman's choice of filling up the happy interval between their adjournment from Westminster Hall and the rising of the house, with calling them to the examination of the items of a Solicitor's bill, which alone was fit to follow his first onset within these walls, when he had stood up, and boldly ventured for a long time, singly and unseconded, to call for the attention of the house, after every other member had been struck dumb with astonishment and admiration at the wonderful eloquence of his honorable friend, Mr. Sheridan, who had that day again surprised the thousands who hung with rapture on his accents, by such a display of talents as were unparalleled in the annals of oratory, and as did the highest honour to himself, to that house, and to his country. For his part, Mr. Burke added, his mind was not sufficiently let down from the height of exultation to which it had been raised; it required a degree of bending, of wetting, and of relaxation, to sink his thoughts to the level of such an inquiry as that to which the honourable gentleman had called their attention. After such a sublime and glorious feast as the morning had afforded, the honourable gentleman's curious speculation on minute particulars, convinced him that Provi-

is beyond all praise. It enchanted every individual present, and established Mr. Sheridan the first orator of the age.

The conduct of the impeachment of Mr. Hastings was a task singularly arduous. Public opinion was in favor of Mr. Hastings,* and

dence had intended that man should not be proud, but that extasy of the mind should be checked and cooled by some sudden concomitant of mortification and disgrace, so that, under any circumstances, it should be impossible for a human being to escape long from having some proof of natural infirmity thrust before his sight. He again congratulated the honourable gentleman, therefore, on his choice of a day, declaring, that if ever there was a day made to dignify the nation, made to dignify human nature itself, it was that very day. Of all the various species of oratory, of every kind of eloquence that had been heard, either in ancient or in modern times; whatever the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, or the morality of the pulpit, could furnish, had not been equal to what that house had that day heard in Westminster Hall. No holy religionist, no man of any description as a literary character, could have come up, in the one instance, to the pure sentiments of morality, or in the other, to the variety of knowledge, force of imagination, propriety and vivacity of allusion, and strength of expression, to which they all that day had listened. From poetry up to eloquence, there was not a species of composition of which a complete and perfect specimen might not have been culled, from one part or the other of the speech to which he alluded, and which he was persuaded, had made too strong an impression on the minds of that house to be so soon obliterated, as to render such a course dish of slops as the honourable gentleman had set before them, at all palatable. There was, Mr. Burke added, no conquest of man over man, like that of genius over injustice; instead, therefore, of resolving themselves into a committee of petty accounts, they ought, like the Romans, after Scipio's victories, to go and thank the gods for that day's triumph, &c.

* Mr. Sheridan's opinion of the character of Mr. Hastings will be found particularly expressed in Vol. I. p. 287, 288, 326.

throughout, the greatest difficulties were opposed to the managers. The decided sanction given to the party arraigned, and the discountenance constantly shewn to the managers of the impeachment during its progress, by several of the judges; though, perhaps, in some degree consistent with the merciful spirit of the law of this country, were obstacles the managers could hardly be expected to surmount. The impeachment, however, opened a splendid theatre for literary fame, before an audience of the first dignity and splendour, between Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Burke: two individuals of the same country, (Ireland), the same nearly in point of genius, as well as birth, though each was marked by some peculiarities of character. They both possessed great variety of style as well as vigour of imagination. By the magic of their eloquence and poetical fancy, they could give animation to every object they might have occasion to describe; and where real objects failed, could call into existence a thousand airy nothings. As was said of the Italian poet Dante—

*“ Il poeta dell' evidenza.”**

They were taught by philosophy, that a degree of belief attends vivid conception; and that to arrest the attention of men, is a

* They were poets of evidence.

great step towards their conviction. Mr. Burke was, perhaps, richer in his various metaphors and allusions, as well as more lively in his transitions; but he mixed the serious too often with the low and the burlesque. Mr. Sheridan's muse was less desultory, and more equal in her flight; to him belonged every intellectual excellence—

“ Omne genus tetigit—nullum tetigit quod non ornavit.”

But both* of them soared with epic freedom into the boundless regions of fancy, and made the most energetic appeals to the passions.

Here again Mr. Pitt† bowed to the superior eloquence of Mr. Sheridan, by moving an adjournment at the close of his (Mr. Sheridan's) speech; and stated, as his principal

* It has been remarked, that Mr. Sheridan, in flow of diction, yielded not to Mr. Pitt; in force and acuteness he might be compared to Mr. Fox; while, in splendour of imagination, he equalled Mr. Burke, and in its use and management, far excelled him. His sarcasms were finer, but less severe, than those by which Mr. Pitt indulged his anger, and the wit displayed by Mr. Sheridan in parliament was, perhaps, from the suavity of his temper, much less sharp than brilliant. But the quality which predominated over all its companions in the mind of Mr. Sheridan, was his exquisite and highly finished taste. In this rare talent he had no competitor; and that it was that gave such inimitable grace to his expressions; and which, in arguing or declaiming, in eulogy or invective, disposed his thoughts with an effect so full and admirable.

† Mr. Pitt, in speaking on the Declaratory East India Bill, 7th of March, 1788, vol. ii. p. 10, observed, “ That in most of Mr. Sheridan's speeches there was much fancy; in many, shining wit; in others, very ingenious argument; in all, great eloquence,” &c.

reason, that the house could not come then to an impartial decision, for they were still “under the wand of the enchanter.”

In the debates* on the Regency, in the same year, 1788, the powers of Mr. Sheridan's eloquence were again called forth. He was the principal leader in the attempts to constitute, without restriction, the Prince of Wales, Regent; whose rights he supported with a dignity, not lessened by his accustomed ardour. In imposing restrictions, Mr. Sheridan conceived some delicacy was requisite, for every restriction that was not necessary, was not a limitation, but an insult. He attributed Mr. Pitt's haste to impose restrictions to the fear, or unworthy suspicion, that he could not carry the limitations he meant to propose, unless he were minister; or to the apprehension that parliament, or the Prince, would forget to do their duty; and he put these pointed questions to that minister.—“What provision was made, if the Prince should refuse to be Regent on the minister's terms?—Supposing him not to refuse, what reason had the house to believe he would withhold his consent from those restrictions when Regent, under which he would consent to accept the trust? Would any one advise him to say, I accept the Regency under the

* Vol. II. page 133 to 133.

limitations you propose, which I think are improper, and which I hope parliament will annul?"

The father of Mr. Sheridan died in the year 1788; and, in 1792, death also deprived him of his lady, of whom Mr. Wilkes said, she was "the most modest, pleasing, and delicate flower he had seen."

At its commencement, the French revolution was enthusiastically admired by Mr. Sheridan. He conceived it to be as just a revolution as our's, proceeding upon as sound a principle and a greater provocation, and vehemently defended the general views and conduct of the national assembly. At the same time he abhorred the cruelties that had been committed; from which, however, an awful lesson was to be gathered, which could not fail in creating an abhorrence of that accursed system of despotic government, which sets an example of depravity to the slaves it rules over.

Our own revolution, in 1688, Mr. Sheridan regarded as the glorious æra that gave real and efficient freedom to this country, and established, on a permanent basis, those sacred principles of government, and reverence for the rights of man, which he, for one, could not value here, without wishing to see them diffused throughout the world.

The alarm of danger, which had at this time been spread throughout the kingdom, not only to the public peace, but the constitution itself, began to yield to the means which were now employed to unfold and controul those practices by which it had been produced. It was said to have arisen from the principles of the rights of man, first propagated by the French, and since disseminated throughout this country; that under various pretences, but particularly that of parliamentary reform, clubs and societies were established, which met in various parts of the kingdom, and circulated the doctrines of the French constitution among the middle and lower classes of the people, to make them discontented with their government; that thus they hoped to prepare their minds for any attempt that might be hereafter made to overturn the government of the country. These circumstances had the effect of producing a change in the opposition party. Some of its supporters, and amongst them, Mr. Burke, imagining that this was a time of alarm and danger, when all party spirit should subside; when all party contentions should cease, and when men of all parties should unite to support the government, considered the external as well as internal enemies, to be of a species which had never been encountered; and that no weapon could so effec-

tually oppose their designs, as an unanimous and determined spirit of resistance.

Such was the general state of affairs, at the meeting of parliament, on the 13th of December, 1792. In His Majesty's speech* on that occasion, it was stated, that a design existed to attempt the destruction of our constitution, and the subversion of all order and government; and that this design had evidently been pursued in connection and concert with persons in foreign countries. Mr. Sheridan in opposing the address, which was an echo of His Majesty's speech, contended, that if there were, in reality, any seditious persons in this country, who wished to overturn the constitution, their numbers were as small as their designs were detestable. He accused ministers with having created the alarm, and strongly enforced the necessity of the house proceeding into an inquiry, respecting the circumstances which were alleged as the grounds of that alarm, before they proceeded any farther. Mr. Sheridan gave it as his firm opinion, that were one French soldier to land upon our coast, with the idea of effecting any change in our government, every hand and heart in the country would be fired by the indignity, and unite to oppose so insulting an attempt.

* For the substance of the speech—Vide page 37. vol. III.

In his speech* on Mr. Fox's motion for sending a minister to Paris, to treat with the provisional government of France, Mr. Sheridan successfully exercised that vein of prompted ridicule and sarcasm he had always at command. The opinions of Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham were criticised in the most masterly manner, and the declaration of a noble lord,† “that he was ashamed of the enthusiasm that he had once felt for Mr. Fox.” Mr. Sheridan treated with the indignant zeal which friendship demanded; he observed, that the according chorus of the noble band,‡ who in spite of the efforts of clamour and power, surrounded the standard of Mr. Fox, “the champion of the constitution,” testified how little they valued the desertion of this noble lord.

That magnanimous and humane spirit, which was such a distinguished feature in the character of Mr. Sheridan, induced him to be the first to call the attention of the House of Commons to a contemplation of the horrid and merciless catastrophe, with which the king and royal family of France were threatened,

* Page 42, vol. III.

† Lord Sheffield.

‡ To the eternal credit of Mr. Sheridan, he continued firm to his first opinions and friendships, while inferior talents, with the recommendation of perfidy and political desertion alone, have met with the most ample rewards, and been fattened on the distresses of the public.

in order if possible to avert it. Mr. Sheridan suggested* an interposition on the part of the British government: and Mr Fox supported his friend's idea. The conversation, which the union of such eloquence rendered truly affecting, terminated in a motion, by Mr. Pitt, on the subject.

Mr. Sheridan's feelings, in regard to the unfortunate Lewis, were further witnessed by the house, after the death of the king, in the speech he made when he moved † for an address, praying that such communications as might have been received, as to the existence of seditious practices in this country, should be laid before a committee of the house. He therein animadverted on a declaration made in the house, ‡ that the only consolation that could arise from the death or murder of the king was, that it would rouse the indignation and animosity of mankind against France. This, Mr. Sheridan remarked, “ was a consolation arising from inhumanity that he did not envy; he knew there were those who did not mourn that unhappy event; there were those who did not interest themselves to avert that misfortune. But those who loved freedom or cherished liberty, must ever deplore the transaction, because, by one act, they had armed

* Page 52, 53, 55, vol. III.

† Vol. III. p. 78 to 101.

‡ Vol. III. p. 86.

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despotism, and given a fatal blow to the interests of mankind."

In the debates on the continuation of the war with France, in January, 1794, Mr. Sheridan was a prominent speaker.* He shewed, that undue advantage was taken of the passions attached to human nature, in order to excite the indignation of the British public against the French, on account of the enormities they had committed in the course of the revolution. The guilt and infamy of their conduct, Mr. Sheridan admitted, no person could deny; but it only affected them, and no people had any other right than to lament the misfortunes of that country, without assuming, however, the least interference in its domestic affairs, unless by amicable mediation between the parties.— After reprobating at great length the coalition against France, Mr. Sheridan observed, that the junction of this country with the other powers of Europe, was the heaviest blow, in the opinion of the French, that they could have received. The English were the only people, since the revolution, for whom the French had avowed any esteem. It was of notoriety that they held all others in contempt, and therefore, much against their will, that they found themselves involved in a quarrel with this country. Referring next to the parade of disinte-

* Vide Vol. III. p. 182 to 222.

rested patriotism and vaunted sacrifices made by the ministry and their friends, he entered into a review of their conduct, and concluded with the following keen and pointed observations:—"Oh, shame! shame! is this a time for selfish intrigues, and the little dirty traffic for lucre and emolument? Does it suit the honor of a gentleman to ask at such a moment? Does it become the honesty of a minister to grant? Is it intended to confirm the pernicious doctrine so industriously propagated by many, that all public men are impostors, and that every politician has his price? Or even where there is no principle in the bosom, why does not prudence hint to the mercenary and the vain to abstain, for a while at least, and wait the fitting of the times? Improvident impatience! nay, even from those who seem to have no direct object of office or profit, what is the language which their actions speak? The throne is in danger! we will support the throne; but let us share the smiles of royalty: the order of nobility is in danger! I will fight for nobility, says the Viscount, but my zeal would be much greater, if I were made an Earl. Rouse all the Marquess within me, exclaims the Earl, and the peerage never turned forth a more undaunted champion in its cause than I shall prove. Stain my green riband blue, cries out the Illustrious Knight, and the

fountain of honor will have a fast and faithful servant. What are the people to think of our sincerity? What credit are they to give to our professions? Is this system to be persevered in?" *

On the 17th March, 1794, a warm debate took place in the House of Commons, respecting a requisition issued by the ministry, under the name of a recommendation for the raising of volunteer companies of horse and foot, in order to preserve internal peace, and suppress domestic insurrections; and to aid the military, if necessary, to repel an invading enemy. The measure was condemned by the opposition as unconstitutional; and the voluntary subscriptions proposed to support it, were in particular declared unlawful, without the specific consent of the legislature. In the subsequent discussion, on the 21st March, Mr. Sheridan demanded, whether the recommendation proceeded from the Secretary of State? and in case it did, that it should be communicated to the house, which ought of course to be apprised of it, as it related to the levying of troops and money. The reply was, that the recommendation was no more than a method adopted by ministry to direct it in the formation of a plan to be presented to the house, as soon as proper estimates of the expense had

* Vol. III. p. 215.

been regularly made out. Letters having been written by government to the lieutenants of the several counties on the subject, Mr. Sheridan requested they should be produced; but this being refused, he gave notice he would move the house to declare its disapprobation of the measure. The minister, in answer to this, asserted, that it was founded on precedent; and that money thus raised, had, in various instances, been expended in the support of troops, as it was proposed in the present case. Pursuant to his notice, Mr. Sheridan resumed this business on the 24th of March, and moved for the papers; but the question being put, it was carried in favor of ministry.

On the 28th of the same month, Mr. Sheridan moved, in an animated address * to the house, that it was dangerous and unconstitutional for the people of this country to make any loan of money to parliament. In reply, the letters written by the Marquess of Lansdowne, then Lord Shelburne, while in office, to the lieutenants of counties, in 1782, were cited, as a case precisely similar to the present; Mr. Windham vehemently supported his opinion, and observed, that the opposition of the present day resembled that of the year 1745; which, to favour the cause of the Pretender,

* Vol. III. p. 285.

declared the country was in no danger. These assertions produced a most satirical and pointed censure from Mr. Sheridan. He recalled to Mr. Windham's remembrance the vehemence with which he used to inveigh against the present minister; and spoke with the greatest severity of his direliction of the minority. There were, Mr. Sheridan observed, some fundamental principles which no man could be justified in forsaking:—to grant no supplies to the crown, but through parliament, was the essential part of the constitution:—to relinquish this privilege, was to empower the crown at once to corrupt parliament, and subvert liberty. The debate was concluded with a majority of 170 for the previous question.

To minutely follow Mr. Sheridan through his political career from this period, would swell this work to another volume; we must now therefore, content ourselves with a few observations on two or three particular points, and refer the reader to the speeches themselves: they are the strongest evidence of Mr. Sheridan's unremitting exertions in support of the constitution of his country; as well as of the splendour of his genius, which will shed a lustre upon the age in which he lived, to the remotest posterity.

Mr. Sheridan has the credit of having, on

the mutiny at the Nore,* especially contributed to save the state. Although in opposition he was complimented by the ministry for the "fair, candid, and liberal conduct he adopted in this business."

His speech,† in the debate on the army estimates for 1803, obtained much commendation. He endeavoured to persuade all sides, that there never was a crisis in which it was more necessary, than at that moment, to prove to the people of England, that they were above all party feelings—all party distinctions, and superior to any petty scramble for places or power. Mr. Canning, on this occasion, observed, that the sentiments of Mr. Sheridan "were worthy the man who had so often come forward in times of public embarrassment, as the champion of the country's rights and interests, and had rallied the hearts and spirits of the nation; he only regretted, that such a speech had not come from the mouth of a minister. Such language from those in administration, would, in his opinion, do more than fleets and armies to ward off the attack of a foreign enemy, and to animate and maintain the spirit and energy of the people."

A portion of this eloquent speech, produced an effect very different from the conclusions

* Vide Vol. IV. p. 307 to 409. † Vol. V. p. 209.

of Mr. Sheridan. It was, as has been observed, designed to quell all party feelings; but in the playfulness of that wit and fancy, which he always commanded, he fastened a degree of personal ridicule on the Premier, Lord Sidmouth, then Mr. Addington, the effects of which long remained. Some supposed resemblance in the deportment of his Lordship, to that which common consent has usually attached exclusively to the professors of medicine, coinciding with the circumstance of his being the son of the eminent physician of the same name, had procured him, partially, the familiar appellation of "The Doctor." Mr. Sheridan, in the course of his speech, not content with holding up ministers to view as the "lees of a bottle of tokay, on which some had been forward to make it pass for genuine;"—one as a "mere goose-quill,"—another as "a stick of sealing-wax, which, as soon as the drudgery of signing the peace was over, were to be considered as *functi officii*, and thrown aside"—allusions which were quickly caught, and kept the house in continual laughter—took occasion, in stating the personal dislike of some gentlemen to Mr. Addington, to quote Martial's epigram,

*"Non amo te, Sabide, nec possum dicere quare;
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te."*

Of which he said, the English parody would be more applicable to the parties,

"I do not like thee, Doctor Fell," &c.

The particular emphasis which he laid on the word *doctor*, and his subsequent repetition of it, occasioned it to be constantly applied; and thenceforward the minister was generally distinguished by the appellation of "*the Doctor*." The public prints, in the interest of his opponents, re-echoed the title, and twisted and tortured it into every species of allusion that wit and humour could bring to bear upon the man and his measures, and held them up to that ridicule which is always fatal and destructive to public character and confidence.

In 1808, when the early burst of Spanish patriotism had raised a strong sympathy throughout Great Britain, Mr. Sheridan was the first to give form and expression to the feelings which swelled every English breast. He was convinced, that since the first burst of the French Revolution, there never existed so happy an opportunity for this country to strike a bold stroke for the rescue of the world; he therefore recommended, that the patriotic and enthusiastic ardour of the Spaniards should be met with corresponding energy and enthusiasm; and, observed Mr. Sheridan, if that

vigorous interference took place, "the administration should have from him as cordial and as sincere a support, as if the man* whom he most loved were restored to life and power."

On the death of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Sheridan came into administration with his friend Mr. Fox. He was appointed a Privy Councillor and Treasurer of the Navy; and in the latter situation he continued till after the death of that great statesman. Shortly after a difference arose in the cabinet on the subject of the Catholic claims, which occasioned a dissolution of parliament, and placed Mr. Sheridan once more in the ranks of opposition, where he continued for the remainder of the period he held a seat in parliament.

After the death of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan contested the representation in parliament of the second city in the empire, and was returned. On the dissolution of parliament in 1807, he again became a candidate for Westminster, but was unsuccessful.

Mr. Sheridan's talents, as an orator, may always be estimated by his speeches now recorded, many of which are master-pieces of eloquence, and replete with the most beautiful effusions of fancy, wit, humour, and sympathy. It has been justly summed up by

* Mr. Fox.

several political characters, and with the opinion of some we fully accord.

Mr. Sheridan was calculated to shine in every sphere; wherever he appeared—in the senate, in the theatre, or in the seat of conviviality, he monopolized a large portion of admiration; he, to adopt the words of one friend, possessed strength without coarseness; liveliness without frivolity; he was bold but dexterous in his attacks—not easily repelled, but when repelled effecting his retreat in good order; often severe, much oftener witty and gay, and graceful; disentangling what was confused; enlivening what was dull; very clear in his arrangements; very comprehensive in his views; flashing upon his hearers with such a burst of brilliancy!—When no other speaker was listened to, he could arrest and chain down the members to their seats—all hanging upon him with the most eager attention—all fixed in wonder and delight; he never tired; he could adapt himself more than any other man to all minds and to all capacities—

“From grave to gay, from lively to severe.”

Every quality of an orator was united in him; the mind, the eye, quick, sparkling, penetrating, matchless almost for brilliancy and expression—the attitude, the gesture, the voice.

Mr. Sheridan was invariably the friend of public liberty and the freedom of the press;—when they were attacked he stood forth their ardent, uniform, and sincere champion; and his exertions, in their cause, together with the firmness of his political connection, procured him a great share of popular favor. His just constitutional principles are so evident in almost all his speeches, that it would be difficult to select one in particular. We cannot, however, but notice, at a moment like the present, his conclusion of an able speech on the supply of 1793, and which we wish was impressed on the mind of every individual in parliament. Mr. Sheridan recommended to the house, “before they laid a new burden of a single shilling on the people, to enable themselves, by a rigorous scrutiny into all useless places, and reversionary sinecures, to look their constituents in the face, and assure them, that before they applied to their pockets they had abolished all unnecessary expenses, and unmerited stipends. By doing this they would not only bring to the public service large sums, wrung from the industry and labour of the community, but they would destroy the baits of corruption, and teach the government to look to its merits for its support.”*

* Vol. III. p. 104.

Mr. Sheidan's second wife, and widow, was the youngest daughter of the Rev. Newton Ogle, Dean of Winchester ; and with her fortune he purchased the estate of Polden, in Surrey ; and soon after this event he was appointed by the Prince of Wales Receiver-General of the Duchy of Cornwall, which situation he held during the remainder of his life.

In private life Mr. Sheridan was as much esteemed as genuine and unbounded wit, exhaustless good humour, and the singular and happy faculty of accommodating himself to every taste and every disposition, could make a man :—his company was universally courted ; it enlivened the dull, gave confidence to the bashful, exhilarated melancholy, and gave the highest zest to gaiety and pleasure.

His death, which took place at twelve o'clock at noon of the 7th of July, 1816, was occasioned by a disease in the stomach, that had been gradually aggravating for some time previous to that event, until at length this organ became incapable of performing its functions ; and within the last two or three days of his life the power of deglutition was so completely destroyed, that it was deemed dangerous to put any food into his mouth lest it should produce suffocation. He was confined to his bed for some months, during which he was frequently delirious, from the

sensorium being affected, when he was unable to take any food. The last four years of his life had been passed in seclusion from the political world; and during that time he had, it is deeply to be regretted, to struggle hard against the severest pecuniary embarrassments.

We shall close this sketch of a man whose talents must always be a theme for admiration, with a list of the friends who attended his funeral; from which it will be observed, that men of all parties concurred in paying this testimony of respect to the last remains of him with whom most of them had lived in habits of intimacy, and by whose delightful powers they had been so often charm'd, both in public and in private.

Mr. Sheridan was interred in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, near to the bodies of Addison, Garrick, and Cumberland. It was decided that the corpse should be followed to the grave by his friends on foot; and it was consequently removed from the residence of the family in Saville-row to the house of Mr. Peter Moore, in Great George-street, who was the warm and constant friend of the deceased, that the procession on foot to the Abbey might thereby be rendered more practicable.

THE PALL-BEARERS WERE,

The Duke of Bedford,	The Earl of Lauderdale,
Earl Mulgrave,	Bishop of London,
Lord Holland,	Lord Robert Spencer.

Chief Mourner—Charles B. Sheridan, Esq.

Henry Ogle, Esq.	Henry Streatfield, Esq.
Hon. E. Bouverie,	Sir Charles Asgill, Bt.
William Linley, Esq.	C. W. Ward, Esq.

in Mourning Cloaks.

THEN FOLLOWED—

H. R. H. The Duke of York,	H. R. H. The Duke of Sussex,
Duke of Argyle,	Marquess of Anglesey,
Earl of Thanet,	Earl Clare,
Earl of Harrington,	Earl of Bessborough,
Earl of Mexborough,	Earl of Rosslyn,
Earl of Yarmouth,	Lord George H. Cavendish,
Viscount Sidmouth,	Viscount Granville,
Lord Rivers,	Lord Erskine,
Lord Lynedoch,	Rt. Hon. George Canning,
Rt. Hon. W. Wellesley Pole,	Hon. L. Stanhope,
Hon. W. Lambe,	Hon. T. Brande,
Hon. W. Ponsonby,	Hon. D. Kinnaird,
Hon. Lieut.-Gen. Phipps,	The Lord Mayor,
Sir Thos. Mostyn,	Sir Ronald Ferguson,
Sir E. Home,	Sir A. Pigott,
Sir Samuel Romilly,	Sir B. Bloomfield,
Colonel Hughes,	Owen Williams, Esq.
M. A. Taylor, Esq.	Peter Moore, Esq.
Hon. Captain Bennett,	Dr. Baine,
Robert Adair, Esq.	Samuel Rogers, Esq.
John Taylor Vaughan, Esq.	Samuel Smith, Esq.
W. J. Dennison, Esq.	Samuel Talbot, Esq.
John Hobhouse, Esq.	A. Graham, Esq.
Scrope Davies, Esq.	Richard Wilson, Esq.
—— Metcalfe, Esq.	James Perry, Esq.
—— Grey, Esq.	George Lane, Esq.
B. Williams, Esq.	Rev. C. Williams
M. Wyatt, Esq.	B. Wyatt, Esq.
— Bradley, Esq.	—— Rae, Esq.
— Burgess, Esq.	—— Peat, Esq.
	—— Dunn, Esq.

&c. &c. &c.

The Duke of Wellington, the Marquesses of Wellesley,* Headfort, Tavistock, and Douglas; Lord Guilford, Lord A. Hamilton, Lord Duncannon, Lord Petersham, Sir Thos. Stepney, were prevented from attending, by absence from London, or indisposition.

* Among the various attributes of affectionate respect paid to the memory of Mr. Sheridan, the following letter from the Marquess of Wellesley was addressed to the Earl of Lauderdale, in answer to the request that the noble Lord would attend the funeral:—

“ East Cliff Lodge, Thursday, July 10th, 1816.

“ MY DEAR LORD,

“ I return you my sincere thanks for the trouble which you have had the goodness to take in communicating to me Mrs. Sheridan's very flattering wish, that I should attend the funeral of the late Mr. Sheridan. The same kind disposition will, I trust, induce your Lordship not to decline the office of expressing to Mrs. Sheridan my grateful sense of this most acceptable mark of distinction: however unworthy of such an honor, I am at least capable of appreciating it. No person could entertain more admiration of Mr. Sheridan's talents, more respect for his eminent public merits, or more regard for his amiable character in private society: although I had the misfortune often to differ with him in political life, I received many testimonies of his favourable opinion, which are now most valuably confirmed by Mrs. Sheridan's distinguished notice.

“ With these sentiments, I must feel a particular anxiety to avail myself of the opportunity, which your Lordship's obliging letter presents, of manifesting my respect for Mr. Sheridan's memory, but I am unfortunately compelled to remain at this place to-morrow and Saturday on indispensable business. If the funeral should be delayed until Monday, I could attend it; and I would, with the greatest readiness, go to London on Sunday for that purpose.

“ If, however, the arrangements already made should be unalterable, I request your Lordship to assure Mrs. Sheridan of my unfeigned solicitude to concur zealously and actively in every public and private tribute of affectionate respect to the memory of a person, whose genius was an ornament to his country, and whose conversation was the delight of private society.

“ So deeply do I feel the distinction of being considered among the

M.—D

1

MEMOIRS.

The following is an inscription, on a large blue flag stone, placed over the grave of Mr. Sheridan, by his friend, Mr. Moore:—

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN,

BORN 1751;

DIED 7th JULY, 1816;

THIS MARBLE IS THE TRIBUTE OF HIS ATTACHED
FRIEND,
PETER MOORE.

number of Mr. Sheridan's friends, that if I should be deprived of the honor of attending his remains to Westminster Abbey, your Lordship cannot confer a greater obligation on me, than by communicating to the public my sentiments on this occasion.

(Signed)

"WELLESLEY."

"Earl of Lauderdale, &c. &c."

"P. S. If the funeral should happen to be delayed, may I request a note from your Lordship by return of post?"

W.

EPILOGUE

To the Tragedy of Semiramis ;

BY R. B. SMERIDAN.

DISHEVELL'D still, like Asia's bleeding Queen,
 Shall I with jests decide the tragic scene ?
 No, beauteous mourners !—from whose downcast eyes—
 The Muse has drawn her noblest sacrifice !
 Whose gentle bosoms, Pity's altars—bear
 The crystal incense of each falling tear !—
 There lives the Poet's praise ! no critic art
 Can match the comment of a feeling heart !

When gen'ral plaudits speak the fable o'er—
 Which mute attention had approv'd before ;
 Tho' ruder spirits love accustom'd jest,
 Which chases sorrow from the vulgar breast,
 Still hearts refin'd their sadden'd tint retain—
 The sigh is pleasure ! and the jest is pain !—
 Scarce have they smiles, to honor grace, or wit,
 Tho' Roscius spoke the verse himself had writ.
 Thus tho' the time, when vernal fruits receive
 The grateful show'rs that hang on April's eve ;
 Tho' every coarser stem of forest birth
 Throws with the morning beam its dew to earth,
 Ne'er does the gentle Rose revive so soon,
 But, bath'd in Nature's tears, it droops till noon.

O could the Muse one simple moral teach !
 From scenes like these, which all who heard might reach,
 Thou child of sympathy—whoe'er thou art,
 Who with Assyria's Queen has wept thy part ;—
 Go search, where keener woes demand relief,
 Go—while thy heart yet beats with fancy'd grief ;
 Thy lip still conscious of the recent sigh,
 The graceful tear still lingering in thy eye.—
 Go—and on real misery bestow
 The bless'd effusion of fictitious woe !

So shall our Muse, supreme of all the nine,
 Deserve, indeed, the title of—divine.
 Virtue shall own her favor'd from above,
 And Pity—greet her—with a sister's love.

PROLOGUE

To the Comedy of the Miniature Picture;

BY R. B. SHERIDAN.

CHILL'd by rough gales, while yet reluctant May
 Withholds the beauties of the vernal day;
 As some fond Maid, whom Matron frowns reprove,
 Suspends the smile her heart devotes to love:
 The Seasons' pleasures too delay their hour,
 And Winter revels with protracted power:
 Then blame not, Critics, if thus late, we bring
 A Winter's drama—but reproach—the Spring.
 What prudent Cit dares yet the season trust,
 Bask in his whiskey, and enjoy the dust?
 Hors'd in Cheapside, scarce yet the gayer spark
 Achieves the Sunday triumph of the Park;
 Scarce yet you see him, dreading to be late,
 Scour the New-Road, and dash through Grosvenor-gate.
 Anxious—and fearful to—his steed to shew,
 The hack'd Bucephalus of Rotten-row!
 Careless he seems, yet, vigilantly sly,
 Woos the stray glance of ladies passing by,
 While his off heel, insidiously aside,
 Provokes the caper which he seems to chide:
 Scarce rural Kensington due honor gains,
 The vulgar verdure of her walk remains,
 Where white-rob'd Misses amble two by two,
 Nodding to booted beaux—"How do, how do?"
 With generous questions that no answer wait,
 "How vastly full!—a'n't you come vastly late?
 Isn't it quite charming? when do you leave town?
 A'n't you quite tir'd? pray can we set you down?"

These superb pleasures of a London May,
 Imperfect yet, we hail the cold delay ;
 But if this plea's denied, in our excuse
 Another still remains you can't refuse ;
 It is a Lady writes—and hark !—a noble Muse,
 But see a Critic starting from his bench—
 “ A noble Author”—Yes, Sir ; but the Play's not French :
 Yet if it were, no blame on us could fall,
 For we, you know, must follow Fashion's call,
 And true it is things lately were *en train*
 To woo the Gallic Muse at Drury-lane ;
 Not to import a troop of foreign elves,
 But treat you with French actors—in ourselves :
 A friend we had, who vow'd he'd make us speak
 Pure flippant French,—by contract—in a week ;
 Told us 'twas time to study what was good,
 Polish, and leave off being understood ;
 That crowded audiences we thus might bring
 To Monsieur Parsons, and Chevalier King :
 Or should the vulgars grumble now and then,
 The Prompter might translate—for country gentlemen.
 Straight all subscrib'd—Kings, Gods, Mutes, Singer, Actor,—
 A Flanders figure-dancer our contractor.
 But here, I grieve to own, tho't be to you,
 He acted—e'en as most contractors do ;
 Sold what he never dealt in, and th' amount
 Being first discharg'd, submitted his account :
 And what th' event ? their industry was such,
 Dodd spoke good Flemish, Bannister bad Dutch.
 Then the rogue told us, with insulting ease,
 So it was foreign, it was sure to please :
 Beaux, wits, applaud, as fashion should command,
 And Misses laugh—to seem to understand—
 So from each clime our soil may something gain ;
 Manhood from Rome, and sprightliness from Spain ;
 Some Russian Roscius next delight the age,
 And a Dutch Heinel skait along the stage.

Exotic fopperies, hail! whose flattering smile
 Supplants the sterner virtues of our isle!
 Thus, while with Chinese firs and Indian pines
 Our nurseries swarm, the British oak declines:
 Yet, vain our Muses fear—no foreign laws
 We dread, while native beauty pleads our cause:
 While you're to judge, whose smiles are honor's higher
 Than verse should gain, but where those eyes inspire.
 But if the men presume your pow'r to awe,
 Retort their churlish senatorial law;
 This is your house—and move—the gentlemen withdraw:
 Then you may vote, with envy never ceasing,
 Your influence has increas'd, and is increasing;
 But there, I trust, the resolutions finish'd;
 Sure none will say—it ought to be diminish'd.

 STANZAS;

BY R. B. SHERIDAN.

ASK'ST thou, "how long my love shall stay,
 "When all that's new is past?"
 How long? Ah, Delia! can I say
 How long my life will last?
 Dry be that tear—be hush'd that sigh;
 At least, I'll love thee till I die.

And does that thought affect thee too
 The thought of Damon's death;
 That he who only lives for you,
 Must yield his faithful breath?
 Hush'd be that sigh; be dry that tear,
 Nor let us lose our heaven here!

EXTRACT

From a Monody to the Memory of Mr. Garrick;

By R. B. SHERIDAN.

AMID the arts which seek ingenuous fame,
 Our toil attempts the most precarious claim!
 To him, whose mimic pencil wins the prize,
 Obedient Fame immortal wreaths supplies;
 Whate'er of wonder Reynolds now may raise,
 Raphael still boasts cotemporary praise;
 Each dazzling light, and gaudier bloom subdued,
 With undiminished awe his works are viewed;
 E'en beauty's portrait wears a softer prime,
 Touched by the tender hand of mellowing time.

The patient sculptor owns an humbler part,
 A ruder toil, and more mechanic art,
 Content with slow and timorous stroke to trace
 The lingering line, and mould the tardy grace;
 But once achieved—tho' barbarous wreck o'erthrow
 The sacred fane, and lay its glories low,
 Yet shall the sculptur'd ruin rise to day,
 Grac'd by defect, and worship'd in decay;
 Th' enduring record bears the artist's name,
 Demands his honors, and asserts his fame.
 Superior hopes the Poet's bosom fire—
 O proud distinction of the sacred lyre!—
 Wide as th' inspiring Phœbus darts his ray,
 Diffusive splendor gilds his votary's lay.
 Whether the song heroic woes rehearse,
 With epic grandeur, and the pomp of verse;
 Or, fondly gay, with unambitious guile
 Attempt no prize but favoring beauties smile;
 Or bear dejected to the lonely grove
 The soft despair of unprevailing love,—
 Whate'er the theme—thro' ev'ry age and clime
 Congenial passions meet th' according rhyme;

The pride of glory—pity's sigh sincere—
 Youth's earliest blush—and beauty's virgin tear,
 Such is *their* meed—their honors thus secure,
 Whose arts yield objects, and whose works endure.
 The actor only, shrinks from times award ;
 Feeble tradition is *his* memory's guard ;
 By whose faint breath his merits must abide,
 Unvouch'd by proof—to substance unallied !
 Ev'n matchless Garrick's art, to heaven resign'd,
 No fixed effect, no model leaves behind !

The *grace of action*—the adapted *mien*
 Faithful as nature to the varied scene ;
 Th' *expressive glance*—whose subtle comment draws
 Entranc'd attention, and a mute applause ;
Gesture that marks, with force and feeling fraught,
 A sense in silence, and a will in thought ;
Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone
 Gives verse a music scarce confess'd its own ;
 As light from gems assumes a brighter ray,
 And cloath'd with orient hues, transcends the day !
Passion's wild break—and frown that awes the sense,
 And every *charm of gentler Eloquence*—
 All perishable !—like the electric fire
 But strike the frame—and as they strike expire ;
 Incense too pure a bodied flame to bear,
 Its fragrance charms the sense, and blends with air.

 LINES

On the Death of Mr. Sheridan ;

BY CHANDOS LEIGH, Esq.

WELL might the Comic Muse with drooping head
 Heave the deep sigh—her Sheridan is dead.—
 The sisters mourn for him, whose master-mind
 Each separate talent in itself combin'd,

Wit, Eloquence, and Poetry, the fame
 Of either had immortaliz'd his name!
 O could the Muse's skill but match her zeal,
 Then might the mournful lay like his appeal
 To British hearts, like his when Garrick died;
 Then glow'd the verse to sympathy allied!
 Each word with plaintive sweetness charm'd the ear,
 As flowers exhale a fragrance o'er the bier.
 Where is the mourner now—whose bosom bled
 For kindred genius gone?—he too is dead.

Turn to the scenes of mimic life, there view
 The characters our young Menander drew;
 Caprice in all her wayward fits display'd,
 Folly in all her nicer shades pourtray'd;
 The testiness of age, the soldier's sense,
 The maiden's sweet discourse, love's eloquence;
 The lively wife, not quite by fashion spoil'd,
 The smooth artificer of mischief foil'd;
 The generous rake, for, lingering near his heart,
 His better genius would not yet depart;
 These, true to nature, still adorn our stage,
 Or in his calm retreat amuse the sage;
 These, like the gems of rarer worth, are priz'd,
 When those of transient value are despis'd.
 In senates, there his talents shone confest,
 As wit delighted, passion storm'd the breast—

The mind with taste, sense, judgment, feeling, fraught,
 Seem'd to be bless'd by more than human thought—
 Hence burning words, for freedom gaye the choice;
 The lightning of his eye—the magic of his voice.

When social mirth beam'd forth in every eye
 His was the lively jest—the keen reply,
 The flow of soul, wit seasoned high the song,
 As playful fancy drove old time along.

As glides a solemn stream by some dark grove
 Of cypress trees, that mournful sign above ;
 Following his lov'd remains, the good and great,
 Marched sadly onwards in funereal state
 To that proud scene, were patriots, poets lie ;
 (Sacred their dust—their fame shall never die)
 There last not least, our Sheridan was laid,
 There, weeping friendship her sad tribute paid.

Ye noble few, whose memories ponder o'er
 His cheerful smile—his wit's unfailling store ;
 Bright to the last, how graceful are your tears,
 They tell of what he was in happier years.—
 The friend, whose genius shed its vivid ray,
 Far from your hearts to drive life's cares away—
 The gay companion, sharers in whose mirth,
 You had forgot that sorrow dwelt on earth.

Ye fair, who knew his elegance of mind,
 His soul, still breathing in the verse refin'd ;
 His purity of heart t'wards her he loved,
 Her fondness, by the bitterest trial proved,
 While in your heart, the kind affections live,
 His faults, whate'er they were, you must forgive.

And you, you all, whom many a sprightly scene,
 Waking applause shall teach what he has been.—
 Who shall revere the patriot—love the bard—
 From Envy's blight, his sacred memory guard !
 While glory aiding round his cold, pale urn,
 By fancy watch'd, shall undefiled burn.

LINES

On the Death of Mr. Sheridan,

ATTRIBUTED TO

THOMAS MOORE, Esq.

YEs, grief will have way—but the fast-falling tear
 Shall be mingled with deep execrations on those,
 Who could bask in that Spirit's meridian career,
 And yet leave it thus lonely and dark at its close:—

Whose vanity flew round him, only while fed
 By the odour his fame in its summer-time gave—
 Whose vanity now with quick scent for the dead,
 Re-appears—like a vampire, to feed at his grave!

Oh! it sickens the heart, to see bosoms so hollow,
 And spirits so mean in the great and high born;
 To think what a long line of titles may follow,
 The relics of him who died—friendless and lorn;

How proud they can press to the fun'ral array,
 Of him, whom they shunn'd in his sickness and sorrow;—
 How Bailiffs may seize, his last blanket to-day.
 Whose pall shall be held up by nobles, to-morrow!

“ Was *this* then the fate,”—future ages will say,
 When *some* names shall live but in history's curse;
 When truth will be heard, and these Lords of a day,
 Be forgotten as fools, or remembered as worse;—

“ Was this then the fate of that high-gifted man,
 “ The pride of the palace, the bower, and the hall,
 “ The orator—dramatist—minstrel—who ran
 “ Through each mode of the lyre, and was master of all!

" Whose mind was an essence compounded with art
 " From the finest and best of all other men's powers ;
 " Who ruled like a wizard, the world of the heart,
 " And could call up its sunshine, or bring down its
 showers !

" Whose humour, as gay as the fire-fly's light,
 " Play'd round every subject, and shone as it play'd ;—
 " Whose wit in the combat as gentle as bright
 " Ne'er carried a heart-stain away on its blade ;—

" Whose eloquence—bright'ning whatever it tried,
 " Whether reason or fancy, the gay or the grave,—
 " Was as rapid, as deep, and as brilliant a tide,
 " As ever bore Freedom aloft on its wave !"

Yes, such was the man, and so wretched his fate ;—
 And thus, sooner or later, shall all have to grieve,
 Who waste their morn's dew in the beams of the Great,
 And expect 'twill return to refresh them at eve !

In the woods of the North, there are insects that prey,
 On the brain of the Elk till his very last sigh ; *
 Oh Genius ! thy patrons, more cruel than they,
 First feed on thy brains, and then leave thee to die !

* " Naturalists have observed that, upon dissecting an elk, there was found in its head some large flies, with its brain almost eaten away by them."—History of Poland.

MONODY ON MR. SHERIDAN;

Attributed to the Honorable W. Lamb.

SPOKEN AT DRURY-LANE THEATRE.

WHEN the last sunshine of expiring day
 In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
 Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
 Sink on the heart—as dew along the flower?
 Who hath not shared that calm so still and deep,
 The voiceless thought that would not speak but weep,
 A holy concord—and a bright regret,
 A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
 So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
 When all of genius which can perish—dies.

The flash of Wit—the bright Intelligence,
 The beam of Song—the blaze of Eloquence,
 Set with the Sun—but still have left behind
 The enduring produce of immortal mind,
 Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
 A deathless part of him who died too soon.
 From the charmed council—to the festive board
 Of human feelings the unbounded lord,
 In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
 The praised—the proud—who made his praise their
 pride:

• When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
 Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,

* See Fox, Burke, and Pitt's eulogy on Mr. Sheridan's Speech on the charges exhibited against Mr. Hastings in the House of Commons. Mr. Pitt entreated the house to adjourn, to give time for a calmer consideration of the question than could then occur after the immediate effect of that oration.

His was the thunder—his the avenging rod,
 The wrath—the delegated voice of God !
 Which shook the nations through his lips—and blaze
 Till vanquished senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh ! here, where yet all young and warm
 The gay creations of his spirit charm,
 The matchless dialogue—the deathless wit
 Which knew not what it was to intermit,
 The glowing portraits fresh from life that bring
 Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring,
 Here in their first abode to-night you meet
 Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat,
 A halo of the light of other days
 Which still the splendor of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight
 Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,
 Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone
 Jar in the music which was born their own,
 Still let them pause—Ah ! little do they know
 That what to them seemed vice might be but woe.
 Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
 Is fixed for ever to detract or praise,
 Repose denies her requiem to his name,
 And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
 Such things should be—if such have ever been ;
 Ours be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
 To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
 To mourn the vanished beam—and add our mite
 Of praise in payment of a long delight.

Ye Orators ! whom yet our councils yield,
 Mourn for the veteran hero of your field !

The worthy rival of the wondrous *Three!**
Whose words were sparks of immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's Muse is dear,
He was your master—emulate him *here!*
Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your brother—bear his ashes hence!
While powers of mind almost of boundless range
Complete in kind—as various in their change,
While Eloquence—Wit—Poesy—and Mirth
That humbler harmonist of care on earth,
Survive within our souls—while lives our sense
Of pride in Merit's proud pre-eminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness—long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that Nature formed but one such man,
And broke the die—in moulding Sheridan!

* Fox—Pitt—Burke.