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THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS
OF
EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.
WITH
MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

COMPOSED BY HIMSELF:

ILLUSTRATED FROM HIS LETTERS,
WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES AND NARRATIVE,

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, LORD SHEFFIELD.

A NEW EDITION, WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS,
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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CONTENTS

VOL. V.

MISCELLANEOUS.

	Page
MÉMOIRE Justificatif pour servir de Réponse, &c. Written 1778	1
A Dissertation on the Allegorical Beings found on the reverses of Medals. Lausanne, 1764	35
An Account of a MS. by the Abbé G. V. Gravina, del Governo Civile di Roma. Rome, 1764	39
A Dissertation on the subject of l'Homme au Masque de Fer. Written 1774	41
Observations sur les Mémoires Posthumes de M. de Chézeaux. Lausanne, 1756	48
Remarques sur quelques Prodiges. Lausanne, 1757	53
Remarques Critiques sur les Dignités Sacerdotales de Jules César. Written 1757	61
Principes des Poids, des Monnoies, et des Mesures des Anciens, avec des Tables construites sur ces Principes. Written 1759	66
Dissertation sur les Anciennes Mesures, &c. du Bas Empire jusqu'à la Prise de Constantinople par les Turcs; la France et les Pays Bas; l'Allemagne, la Suisse, et les Pays du Nord; l'Italie et l'Espagne; l'Orient, les Indes, et l'Afrique; also Remarques sur "An Inquiry into the State of the Ancient Measures, the Attic, the Roman, and particularly Jewish, by Dr. Hooper, Bishop of Bath and Wells." Written 1759	120
a 2	On

	Page
On the Position of the Meridional Line and the supposed Circumnavigation of Africa by the Ancients. Written in the year 1790 or 1791	170
Selections from Mr. Gibbon's <i>Extraits Raisonnés de mes Lectures</i> , from the <i>Journal</i> , from the <i>Recueil de mes Observations, et Pièces Détachées</i> , <i>Common-Place Books</i> , and <i>Memoranda</i> . From 1754 to 1764	209
Remarks on Blackstone's Commentaries. Written 1770	545
Index Expurgatorius. About 1768 or 1769	548
Observations on Augerii Gislenii Busbequii <i>Omnia quæ extant</i>	580
Notes and Additions to Harewood's View of the various Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics. 1793	581
Appendix to the Treatise on the Position of the Meridional Line and the supposed Circumnavigation of Africa by the Ancients—a Letter and Annotations by Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster	590

APPENDIX

TO THE TREATISE ON THE

POSITION OF THE MERIDIONAL LINE,

AND

INQUIRY INTO THE SUPPOSED CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF AFRICA BY THE ANCIENTS.

Dr. VINCENT, Dean of Westminster, to Lord SHEFFIELD.

MY LORD, Deanry, Westminster, Nov. 6th, 1814.

HAD proof been wanting of Mr. Gibbon's indefatigable spirit of research, his Dissertation, which you have put into my hands, would have shewn that he was as highly qualified for the great work which he accomplished, by patient industry, as by his learning, penetration, and discernment.

I have sometimes, by way of amusement, traced Mr. Gibbon through his authorities in several detached portions of his History, and on every subject but one I have found the extent of his acquisitions, the adjustment of his evidences, the accuracy of his deductions, and the comprehensive view of his subject, such as to place him in the very first rank of historians.

It is evident that in the earlier part of his life, before

before his pursuits were concentrated in one great object of his ambition, he had exercised his talents in various speculations of curious inquiry, as his inclination, or perhaps accident directed. Of these your lordship has given an ample specimen already in the two volumes of his miscellaneous research; but his dissertation on Geography, Navigation and Commerce, which you now propose to communicate to the public, as it is in itself of a superior cast, so it is to me, individually, of greater interest, as it embraces a subject upon which the labour of my life has been employed, and fortunately ratifies my decision of the question by deducing the same conclusions from the same premises.

Our mutual correspondence on this subject is so similar, that, unless plagiarism were demonstrably impracticable, it might be imputed to either party with every appearance of probability to support the charge. The proof, however, to the contrary, is unequivocal, for Mr. Gibbon died in January, 1794, and my first edition of the *Periplus of the Erythræan Sea* was not published till 1800. Neither was it possible for me to have seen Mr. Gibbon's memoir, as it was in your lordship's custody till October, 1814. If, then, we have both used the same materials, and applied them to the same purpose, without communication, it is but reasonable to allow that the sole object of both must have been the investigation of truth.

That I am proud of this coincidence of opinion, may naturally be supposed, for it will appear from
the

the Dissertation itself that Mr. Gibbon, had examined this subject with the utmost attention, and formed his judgment upon mature deliberation. My own arguments, and the conclusions deduced from them, are stated at large in the *Periplûs*, at p. 186, Part the first; and at p. 661, Part the second, there is an express dissertation on the Venetian planisphere of Fra Mauro, which exhibits a southern termination of Africa, thirty-nine years previous to the voyage of Gama. My work has probably not come under your lordship's contemplation, but I recommend you to consult the second edition as far more correct than the former one. It was published in 1807, comprising the Voyage of Nearchus and the *Periplûs*, under the general title of the Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean, and completed in 1809, with a translation of the two original voyages, and the Greek text.

I am sensible that I had given offence to many eminent persons in the republic of letters, by questioning the authority of Herodotus in regard to the Phenician voyage round Africa in the reign of Neko; and it must be confessed, that it stands on very different grounds from similar voyages imputed to Hanno, Eudoxus, and Antipater; but by comparing it with the voyage of Nearchus it was easy to shew what ancient navigators could, or could not do; and by contemplating the reiterated attempts of the Portuguese for almost a century before they succeeded, it was natural to conclude that the Phenician voyage performed in three years,

years, must be a fiction of the Egyptian priests, without impeaching the veracity of Herodotus.

The Phenicians directed their course by the stars without instruments, and the navigators in the Indian ocean, as late as the time of Ptolemy, sailed by the Canóbus, as the southern polar star. But that star is in latitude 37° from the pole, by which we may judge of the danger of adopting it for the direction of a course in the southern hemisphere. The currents, it is true, round the Cape, favour an attempt from the east, but again the currents for twenty degrees in the neighbourhood of Cape Verd, are as directly adverse. Could they double such a Cape by *rowing* near the coast? or durst they stand out to sea to double it as modern navigators do? These are my grand objections to the Phenician voyage, and with all the respect I bear to the Father of History, the authority of his Egyptian priests is directly contradicted by Polybius, Strabo, Ptolemy, and Scylax; and equally rejected by Purchas, D'Anville, Gossellin, and Robertson, among the moderns; to this list let me add the name of Horsley, who personally expressed to me his conviction, and the testimony of Gibbon, whose evidence I value as highly as any that has been given by the ancients or the moderns. Very happy should I have been, if I could have included the illustrious names of Larcher and Rennell in the number; but I respect them both too much, to give offence by entering into a consideration of their arguments.

I conclude, my lord, that there are several other

Tracts to be inserted in the volume which you are now publishing, that will be equally acceptable to the learned world; but this immediate disquisition is more interesting to me, as it corroborates all the arguments which I have advanced, and all the opinions I had formed; and give me leave to add, that if my judgment is of weight, a more masterly treatise than this never came from the pen of Gibbon.

I have the honour to subscribe myself,
Your lordship's most obedient
and faithful servant,

W. VINCENT.



NOTES
ON MR. GIBBON'S TREATISE

ON
THE POSITION OF THE MERIDIONAL LINE, AND INQUIRY
INTO THE SUPPOSED CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF
AFRICA BY THE ANCIENTS,

BY THE REV. DR. VINCENT,

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

P. 170. NOTE. "The ignorance of Ptolemy."

The inaccuracy of Ptolemy in placing all islands, except those of the Mediterranean, is universally conspicuous. V.

P. 172. "A multitude of dogs and goats,"

Ptolemy and Pliny give the name of Canaria to one of these islands, from the multitude of dogs, and Ptolemy places them on the coast of Mauritania.

The number and position of the isles when again visited by navigators, whether Spanish, French, or Genoese, made them readily cognizable as the Canaries of the ancients.

As the pike of Teneriffe is visible from the continent, these islands, when re-discovered, were found to be inhabited. Madeira, which is not visible, was found without inhabitants. V.

P. 178. "Arrian, or the nameless author who under the reign of Adrian has composed a description of the Red Sea."

Ptolemy wrote in the reign of Adrian, but it is clear from internal evidence that the Periplús is prior to Ptolemy, and

to Marinus, cited by Ptolemy. The latter part of the reign of Claudius, or beginning of Nero's, suits best with the date of the *Periplûs*. V.

- P. 181. "The ships of war which he (Nechus, or Neko)
"built commanded the Mediterranean and the Red
"Sea."

Psammitichus, the predecessor of Neko, was the first sovereign of Egypt who permitted the Greeks to trade in his ports, and why Neko should on a sudden wish to become a maritime power, it is not very evident; for, according to Jablonski, the Egyptians held the sea and seafaring men in abomination, neither do Egyptian fleets nor ships appear in history till Egypt became subject to Persia. It is true that Herodotus assigns a fleet on the Mediterranean to Neko, but I do not recollect any expedition of the Egyptians in the Mediterranean, even in a later period, except the conquest of Cyprus by Amasis. And if Neko employed Phenicians on the Red Sea, it is a proof that the Egyptians were not navigators in his reign. V.

- P. 182. "The Phenicians reported that, in sailing
"round Africa, they had seen the sun on their right
"hand."

If the great triangle of Africa were cut off, as it appears in the map of Bertius, and this continent bounded by a vast line running north and south, this phenomenon would be verified for a great part of the voyage; but Africa ending in a point, as it does strictly speaking, it would be visible only at the apex of the triangle. It seems probable that in the contemplation of Herodotus, Africa was similar in form to the Africa of Bertius, and this is correspondent to the opinion of Juba, Manilius, Pomponius Mela, Macrobius, and Virgil.

See the map of Bertius in Vincent's *Ancient Commerce*, vol. ii. p. 562. Second Edition. V.

P. 183. "But a southern communication between the
"Indian and Atlantic ocean might be affirmed or de-
"nied."

The two circumstances mentioned by Herodotus afford ground for argument; but the voyages of Scylax, Eudoxus, Antipater, &c. contain no particulars; they announce the fact, but never consider *how* it was accomplished. In the voyage of Nearchus and the Periplus we have the full detail; and by considering the difficulties which occurred, it is easy to determine what ancient navigators could or could not do. V.

Ib. "My surprise and suspicion are excited by the suc-
"cessful agriculture of the strangers in unknown cli-
"mates and new soils; by the seeds of the temperate
"zone which yield their increase between the tro-
"pics."

Gossellin contends that the seasons of the southern hemisphere do not answer to the harvests of the northern, or the seed time; and Larcher, forced to concede this, supposes that on this point Herodotus gives only his own misconceived opinion, without reference to the Egyptian records. V.

P. 184. "In twelve days from the Straits of Gibraltar
"he (Hanno) reached the small island of Cerné or
"Arguin."

The voyage of Hanno, brief as it is, contains circumstances and particulars sufficient to establish its veracity; and the assumption of Arguin for Cerné is the more probable from its offering convenience for a Portuguese settlement, as it had done to a Carthaginian colony. It answers likewise to the local circumstances given by Hanno. Campomanes has wildly carried Cerné to St. Thomas's, under the equator, while Arguin lies in latitude 21° north.

See Major Rennell's Dissertation, Geography of Herodotus, p. 719. V.

P. 186. "The geographer Scylax denies the possibility of navigating beyond Cerné in a shallow and muddy ocean."

Scylax agrees with Aristotle in supposing that the Atlantic communicates with the Indian Ocean, but says the navigation to the south was impracticable on account of the weedy sea, through which a ship could not make her way. This is an illustrious truth, for the weed called salgasso does occur about Cape Blanco for many degrees, though moveable in bulk; and this proves that the ancients did navigate the Atlantic as low or lower than 20° north latitude. V.

P. 186. "The single and hasty assertion of the elder Pliny."

It is strange that Mickle should have been misled by the authority of Pliny. But he asserts, in contradiction to his own genius of the Cape, "It is *certain* that Hanno doubled the Cape of Good Hope." *Lusiad*, p. 2. V.

P. 191. "The English translator of Camoens justifies this impropriety by an old Syriac version of Homer." Asserted by Abulpharage. V.

P. 192. "According to the most liberal computation, Vasco de Gama discovered no more than twenty degrees of southern latitude from the Cape of Good Hope to Mozambique."

Gama went as high as Melinda. V.

Ib. "The African trade of the Portuguese, as it is described by Mosto."

The voyage of Cadamosto in Ramusio gives the particulars of Prince Henry's contracts with the navigators he employed, and is equally honourable to his integrity and his wisdom. He drew much of his information from Venice, and

and was rejoiced to tempt a Venetian mariner into his service

Cadamosto is a Venetian abbreviation of *Casa di Mosto*: this man was of the house, or family, of Mosto. V.

P. 194. " But the exchange, with an invisible people, of salt for gold is described by Cadamosto on the faith of the itinerant Arabs."

Gold was first met with by Henry's navigators at Rio d'Ouro, under the tropic of Cáncer; and the sight of a few ounces brought home by them was the immediate cause of establishing an African Company at Lagos. The spirit of adventure was roused, and the prosecution of discovery ensued, which never ceased till the circumnavigation of Africa and the voyage to India were accomplished. V.

P. 195. " But the views of a soldier are not those of his general."

That the views of Prince Henry were directed to India, is evident from his exertions to procure maps and information from Venice, at that time the great mart of oriental commerce. V.

P. 197. " A planisphere, or map of the world, was delineated in the Convent of Murano at Venice."

A fac simile copy of this map is now placed in the British Museum, procured from Venice at the suggestion of W. V. and obtained by a subscription of £ 200 and upwards. The subscribers were the

India Company,
Earl of Buckinghamshire,
Earl Spencer,
Earl Macartney,
The Bishop of Durham,
Mr. Strahan,
W. Vincent.

It is a splendid performance, and contains a termination of Africa in 1459, thirty-nine years previous to the voyage of Gama. V.

P. 199. "Castaneda (1553), a laborious historian, who
"might converse with Gama himself."

It may be justly supposed that Castaneda wrote from the Journal of Gama, for the narrative often adopts the first person. It has nothing of the marvellous of Osorio. V.

END OF VOL. V.

GENERAL

GENERAL INDEX.

A.

- ABASSIDES**, extent of the empire of, in the ninth century, iii. 1—In the tenth, 7.
- Abbey**, of our Lady of the Hermits, magnificence of, I. 99.
- Abdoubrahman the Third**, revenue of, in the tenth century, iii. 6.
- Abradates**, account of, iii. 146.
- Academy of Inscriptions**, Memoirs of, joy of our author on purchasing the first twenty volumes of it, i. 119—His opinion of the work, *ibid.*
- Accaioli**, countess, v. 485.
- Aeland**, colonel, killed, ii. 217.
- Acton**, family of, related to Mr. Gibbon, i. 23, 195, note.
- Adalbert the First**, account of, iii. 377—The Second, 381—The Third, 385.
- Adison**, style of his writings, i. 122—His explanation of the 35th Ode of the 1st book of Horace, v. 38—Mistaken in estimating the ordinary day's journey of a Roman nobleman at fourteen miles, 442—His Dialogues on the usefulness of Ancient Medals, 455—His credulity in composing his Treatise of the Christian Religion, 558.
- Address on the revival of learning**, iii. 559.
- Adelais**, adventures of, iii. 395.
- Aderfield**, his History of Charles the Twelfth, v. 354.
- Adrian**, his bust in the Florence Gallery described, i. 189, note.
- Africa**, inquiry into the supposed circumnavigation of it by the ancients, v. 170.—Its four supposed circumnavigations unfounded, 177—The Portuguese the first who explored their way round its southern promontory, 180—The circumnavigation by the Phenicians examined, 182.
- Agnes**, daughter of Albert the First, instance of her cruelty and sanctity, iii. 270—Made umpire between her brother and the Swiss, 321.
- Agrippa**, his bust in the Florence Gallery described, i. 187, note.
- Alamintus**, account of his conversation with Hannibal, v. 375.
- Alba Fucentina**, iv. 292. v. 404.
- Alba Longa**, iv. 229.
- Albert the First**, puts his brother Robert to death, iii. 246—His conduct towards the Swiss, 253—Assassinated by his nephew, 268—Cruel executions in revenge of his death, 270.
- Albert**, son of the preceding, declares against Zurich, iii. 313—Defeated, 316—Loses Zug by his haughtiness, 320—Breaks his treaty with the Swiss, 322—Excites the emperor, Charles the Fourth, against them, *ibid.*—Yields the reins of government to his sons, 327.
- Albert Azo the First**, mentioned, iii. 405—Fixes his residence at Ateste or Este, 408.
- Albert Azo the Second**, his character and conduct considered, iii. 409—The common father of the Italian and German princes of the kindred line of Este and Brunswick, *ibid.*—Distinguished by the title of Rich, 411—Advanced age to which he lived, 416, 418.
- Albert Azo the Seventh**, his character, and success, iii. 437.
- Albinus Clodius**, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 190, note.
- Alembert**. See D'Alembert.
- Alevoerde**, his life of Servetus, v. 400.
- Alexander**, beautiful supposed bust of, when dying, i. 190, note—His wealth, v. 92.
- Alfred**, character of, iii. 3.
- Algidum**, iv. 295.
- Allamand**, Mr. his character, i. 101—Letter by, 436.
- Alphonso the First**, account of, iii. 445.
- Alphonso the Second**, iii. 458—Splendour of his nuptials, 454.
- Alphonso the Third**, his character, iii. 472—Relinquishment of his power, 474.
- Alps** described, iv. 171.
- Alsium**, place of residence of Virginus Rufus, iv. 194.
- Ambrones**, question of their country, v. 500.
- Ameria**, iv. 308.
- America**, war with, popular at first, why unpopular afterwards, i. 243—Committee

- mittee appointed to inquire into the state of, ii. 118—Necessity of decided measures in the dispute with, 131—Ten thousand men sent out against, under Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton, 132—Conciliatory motion respecting, 133—Further decided measures respecting, resolved on, 137—A body of Russian mercenaries intended to be employed against, 140—Petitions for conciliatory measures with, 130, 141—Beginning dependency relative to the war with, 142—Large draught of Guards, to act against, 143—Dependency changed to assurance of success, 166—News from the Lakes of a naval combat, in which the English are the victors, 182—Favourable aspect of affairs, 192—Further change to dependency, 209—Burgoyne's army defeated, and ten thousand men made prisoners, 219—Declaratory act, that Britain never intended to tax America, 221—Another act, empowering the crown to name commissioners, authorised to suspend hostilities, *ibid.*—Treaty of commerce with America signed by France, *ibid.*—Peace with, 319.
- American mother, affecting story of, ii. 237.
- Amnon, inquiry as to the age in which he lived, iii. 161.
- Ammonius, edited by Valcknaer, v. 354.
- Amphitheatre of the Romans, utility of the spectacles exhibited there, iv. 53.
- Anphora, Roman measure, v. 127.
- Amsanti Laous, exhalations of dangerous, iv. 279.
- Amusements of Reason, described as a work without either reason or amusement, v. 356.
- Anabaptists, horrors committed by, in Germany, iii. 283, note.
- Anatomy, course of, studied by Mr. Gibbon, i. 228.
- Ancestors, desire of knowing and recording them, the effect of a common principle in the human mind, i. 2.
- Ancona, account of, iv. 304.
- Anderson, Mr., his description of Iceland, v. 448.
- Anglicarum Rerum Scriptores, new edition of, recommended, iii. 570—Proper editor for the purpose mentioned, 571—Nature and extent of the design, 574.
- Anjou and Arragon, quarrels between the houses of, iii. 207.
- Annales Quintilianæ, by Dodwell, v. 55.
- Anne of Austria, licentiousness of her character, v. 43—Her attachment to
- Cardinal Mazarin, 46—Memoirs of, by Madame de Motteville, 239.
- Anquetil du Perron, his Voyage to the East Indies, v. 287.
- Anson's Voyage, v. 459.
- Anticipation, pamphlet, characterised as an excellent piece of humour, ii. 225.
- Anti-Machiavel, v. 365.
- Antinous, his bust in the Florence Gallery described, i. 189, note.
- Antiquities, British, several pointed out as omissions in Mr. Gibbon's historical work, ii. 150.
- Antinous, his bust at Geneva, process of, v. 448.
- Antium, iv. 237.
- Auvilla. See D'Anville.
- Apennine Mountain described, iv. 167.
- Apherasiab, account of, iii. 120.
- Apollodorus, edition of his Bibliotheca by Heyne, v. 588.
- Aponus, famous for its mineral waters and as the birth place of Livy, iv. 316.
- Apostles, learning of, by Mr. Lami, v. 333.
- Appian Road, iv. 249.
- Apthorpe, Mr., his censure of Mr. Gibbon's description of the promised land, iv. 539—Account of his work, 596—Raised by it to an archiepiscopal living, i. 231.
- Apulia, account of, iv. 280.
- Aquileia, iv. 238, v. 361.
- Arabian Nights' Entertainments commended, i. 35.
- Arabic, Mr. Gibbon discouraged from the study of, by his tutor, i. 56—Curious map in that language, ii. 427—Arabian Code, a genuine work, 480—Arabic MS. *ibid.*
- Arabs, their situation in the ninth century, iii. 4—Subjugate Persia, 75, 89.
- Arands, count and countess of, ii. 480—Privilege in the house of the countess's father, of creating a grandee of Spain, 481.
- Araspes, account of, iii. 147.
- Arbuthnot, his conduct on the invasion of Jersey commended, ii. 230.
- Arbuthnot, Mr., his table of the weights, money and measures of the ancients, v. 68.
- Ardea, iv. 233.
- Argenis of Barclay, commended, v. 215.
- Argot, count, his fortune lost and brother murdered at St. Domingo, i. 342.
- Arguin, island of, settled and fortified by prince Henry of Portugal, v. 193.
- Arian controversy, Mr. Gibbon supposes himself to have dived too deep in the mud of, i. 229.
- Aricia, iv. 230—Its land said to be so hot, that

- that a coal thrown on it would instantly take fire, 248.
- Arimuzum, iv. 306.
- Aristomenes, account of, iii. 115.
- Aristotle, character of, as a critic, iv. 37—His History of Animals in French and Greek, by Camus, 587.
- Arles, archbishop of, his cruel death, i. 374, note.
- Army of France, picture of one, i. 366.
- Arpi, account of, iv. 281.
- Arpinum, iv. 238.
- Arretin's Letters, v. 382.
- Arrian, ancient geographer, v. 178—Tactics of, 222.
- As, Roman weight and coin, fluctuations in the value of, v. 101, 104, 105.
- Ashmole, Mr. i. 12.
- Assassination of tyrants, different opinions respecting, iv. 98.
- Assyria, extent of its empire, iii. 62—Effeminacy of its kings, 64—Period of its overthrow, 70—Question, if known to Homer, investigated, 86.
- Astrolabe, who invented by, v. 197.
- Astruc's History of Languedoc, v. 364.
- Astura, iv. 237.
- Astyages, iii. 122, 140.
- Atkins, captain, assists the king of Sardinia in his marine establishment, i. 180.
- Atheism less pernicious than superstition, paradox of Plutarch, i. 69.
- Atlantic, or Fortunate Islands, historical account of, v. 171.
- Attitude, that of Mr. Gibbon when conversing, ii. 58.
- Aventicum, inquiry respecting, v. 516.
- Avernus Lacus, iv. 262.
- Augustus, meaning of the title, iii. 178.
- Augustus, should never have been born or never have died, ii. 471—His elevation considered and the causes of it pointed out, iv. 89—His mode of travelling, 335.
- Aukland, lord, letter to, ii. 495—His lady, why compared to Eve, *ibid.*
- Aurelius, Marcus, three busts of, in the Florence Gallery, i. 190, note.
- Aureus, ancient coin, weight of, v. 71—Fluctuations of, 143.
- Ausaldus de Traditione, v. 411.
- Ausones, iv. 239.
- Austin, St. i. 6.
- Austria, present emperor of, designated as the enemy of peace, without daring to make war, ii. 386.
- Austria, house of, iii. 242.
- Authors, complaints of, as to happiness, reprehended, i. 272—Hopes by which they should be animated, 273—Authors, actors and managers, good company to know, but not to live with, ii. 115.
- Azenaghis, African people, account of, v. 193—Their terror at the ships and guns of the Portuguese, 201.
- Azo, fanciful etymology of the name, iii. 479—Pedigree of, as connected with the house of Guelph, 499, 511.

B.

- Babylon, becomes an independent kingdom, iii. 101—Flourishing state of the arts and sciences there, 102.
- Baden, excellence of the regiment of, ii. 27.
- Bacon, lord, considered Perkin Warbeck as an impostor, iii. 340.
- Bagniouski, famous adventurer, some account of, ii. 203, 205.
- Baize, iv. 247, 262.
- Balliffs, power of, in the constitution of Berne, ii. 27.
- Barbeyrac, his History of ancient Treaties, v. 333.
- Barclay's Argenis, v. 215.
- Bargeus, his Dissertation de Eversoribus, &c. examined, v. 352—His Dissertation on the Obelisks of Rome, 353.
- Baronius, contrasted with Dr. Middleton, iv. 588.
- Barré, colonel, ii. 73.
- Barré, Mr. de la, character of his work on the ancient measures, v. 67—His dissertations compared with Gedoyne's, 238.
- Barrow, Dr. as much a philosopher as a divine could well be, v. 234.
- Basil, emperor, immense revenue of, v. 146.
- Bastards, disadvantages attending them, iii. 208—In the middle ages, crowns often inherited by them, 211.
- Barthelemy, characterised as amiable in manners and a learned antiquary, i. 163—Ambassador to the Helvetic body, 384, 394—His Memoir on the Monuments of Rome, v. 444.
- Bartoli, Mr. his civilities to Mr. Gibbon at Turin, ii. 58.
- Bath, intended by Mr. Gibbon as his last retreat, 308.
- Bath Guide, i. 207.
- Batt, Mr., mention of, ii. 97, 116, 218, 220, 385, 421.
- Bayle, progress of his sentiments on the subject of religion, i. 68—His *Commentaire Philosophique* the best book he ever wrote, v. 234—Compared with L. Clerc, 235—His Dictionary, 69, 238, 242—Remark on, 462—His criticisms on

- on Maimbourg's History of Calvinism, 480—Mistake by, respecting the number of children of Charles the Second of Naples, v. 507.
- Beau, his Memoir on the Roman Legion, v. 215.
- Beauchamp, ii. 285.
- Beaufort, Mr. de, a learned critic, visited by Mr. Gibbon, at Maestricht, l. 110—His opinions respecting the five first ages of Rome, iv. 40.
- Beausodre, his *Histoire Critique du Manichéisme*, i. 146.
- Beauvais, bishop of, massacred, i. 375, note.
- Beauveau, princess of, ii. 202, 212.
- Bees, Natural History of, from Reaumur, v. 432.
- Béhmen, Jacob, i. 20.
- Belesus, concerned in the revolt of Arbaces, iii. 65—Rewarded with the place of satrap of Babylon, 72.
- Belley, his explanation of a camayeu, and an agate, v. 215.
- Belleisle, *Vie du Maréchal Duc de*, most contemptible performance, v. 234.
- Belus, temple of, its immense golden treasures, v. 90.
- Beneventum, account of, iv. 300.
- Bercham, Van, family of, banished, i. 394.
- Berengarius, account of his conduct, iii. 393.
- Berenice, bust of, in the Florence Gallery, i. 189, note.
- Bergier, his *History of the Great Roads of the Roman Empire*, i. 177.
- Beriton, family estate of Mr. Gibbon, account of, i. 116—Sale of, 287, ii. 361—Difficulties as to the title, i. 291, 294, 300.
- Bernouilli's correspondence with Leibnitz, v. 448.
- Berne, aristocracy and revenue of, i. 270—Commission of, to prevent the introduction of the French revolutionary principles, 336, note—Strictures on the government of, ii. 1—Defective in its liberty, 3—In its legislative power, 7—In its executive, 8, 22—In the public administration, 15—In its taxation, 29—The office of British minister at, solicited by Mr. Gibbon, 330—State of, in the fourteenth century, iii. 291—Its contest with the emperor of Germany and the house of Austria, 492—Its alliance with the Swiss confederation, 496—Etymology of the word, v. 501.
- Berta, her vices, iii. 388.
- Beyer, his *Dissertation on the Atlantic Island of Plato*, v. 287.
- Bibliothèque Raisonnée, volume the first, 386—The eleventh, 400—Thirteenth, 291—Fourteenth, 293, 300—Fifteenth, 295—Sixteenth, 369—Seventeenth, 303—Eighteenth, 304, 405—Nineteenth, 305—Twentieth, 314—Twenty-first, 325—Twenty-second, 333—Twenty-third, 343—Twenty-fourth, 354—Twenty-fifth, 364—Twenty-seventh, 381—Twenty-ninth, 411—Thirtieth, 412—Thirty-first, 420—Thirty-second, 424—Thirty-third, 427—Thirty-fourth, 431—Thirty-fifth, 432—Thirty-sixth, 447—Thirty-seventh, *ibid.*—Thirty-eighth, 448—Thirty-ninth, 450—Fortieth, 457—Forty-first, 459—Forty-second, 461—Forty-third, 463—Forty-fourth, 464—Forty-fifth, 465—Forty-sixth, 467—Forty-seventh, 468—Forty-eighth, 470—Forty-ninth, 472—Fiftieth, 473—Character of the work, 474.
- Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts, commended, v. 215—Review in, of Mr. Gibbon's *Essay on Literature*, 218.
- Bibliothèque Universelle, v. 224.
- Bielfield's Letters, v. 305, 321.
- Billing, race of, iii. 493.
- Biography, projected work of, which Mr. Gibbon intended to execute, i. 391.
- Birch, Dr., his collection of lord Bacon's papers, i. 151.
- Biron, Madame de, i. 368, ii. 441.
- Birth, distinction of, what ought to be its effect, i. 3.
- Blacksmith, Persian, heads an insurrection, and frees his country from the yoke of the Arabs, iii. 85.
- Blackstone's Commentaries, read by Mr. Gibbon three times, i. 214—Extract from, relating to the registry of land purchases in Yorkshire, 301—Remarks on, v. 543.
- Blair, sentiments of, respecting Ossian's Poems, ii. 102.
- Blandford, designated as a pleasant and hospitable town, i. 135.
- Blanc, abbé de, his Letters on the English, v. 449.
- Bleterie, abbé de, Mr. Gibbon's acquaintance with, i. 162—His Memoirs on the Succession of the Roman Emperors, and the Prenom of Augustus, iii. 169—His Memoir on the Tribunition Powers of the Emperors, v. 213—His Life of Julian, 296—His History of Jovian, 465.
- Blood, discovery of the circulation of, ii. 266.

- Board of Trade, characterised by Mr. Burke, i. 235—Abolished and revived, 238—Abolished again, 245.
- Boat-race at Florence, v. 495.
- Bocage, Madame du, i. 162. ii. 54.
- Bochart, his Treatise on the Egyptian Divinities at Rome, v. 292—His Remarks on Foreign Service, 333—His Critical Memoirs on the Swiss, 468—His mistake on the subject of Conrad the Second, 499—On the nations who had made the Romans pass under the yoke, *ibid.*
- Boileau, compared with Juvenal, v. 302.
- Bolingbroke, favourable mention by, of Mr. Gibbon's grandfather, i. 15—His reputation as a writer in the French language, i. 132—His Patriot King, v. 463.
- Bolton, duke of, his tyranny, as lord lieutenant, mentioned, i. 135.
- Bolton, Theophilus, his illness and death, ii. 64, note.
- Bonani's Reflections on Geographical Errors, commended, v. 213.
- Bonfoy, Mrs., ii. 125.
- Boniface the Bavarian, account of, iii. 367—Considerations respecting his name, 369—His country, 370—His title, 372—Province entrusted to his care, 374.
- Boniface the Second, account of, iii. 375.
- Boniface, marquis of Tuscany, splendour of his nuptials, iii. 415.
- Bononia, iv. 313.
- Books, state of, previously to printing, iii. 562.
- Boromean Islands, their happy situation described, i. 184. ii. 59.
- Borrichius, his work *De Antiqua Facie Urbis Romæ*, commended, v. 355.
- Borso, created duke of Modena, iii. 441.
- Boston Port bill, ii. 118.
- Bossuet, Mr. Gibbon converted to Popery by reading his Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine, and his History of the Protestant Variations, i. 62.
- Botta, *maréchal*, character of, *id.* 194, note.
- Boucher's Narrative of a Voyage to Peru, v. 462.
- Boufflers, chevalier de, honourable mention of, i. 336.
- Bougainville, his *Traité du Calcul Intégral*, ii. 46—His recherches into Assyrian history, iii. 57.
- Bouillon, Godefroi de, his refusing a golden crown where his God wore a crown of thorns, confirmed, i. 194, note.
- Bouillon, Madame de, i. 368. ii. 475.
- Boumgarten, Swiss peasant, beheads a young nobleman with an axe, for attempting to seduce his wife, iii. 259.
- Bower's Lives of the Popes, v. 464.
- Boyd, governor of Gibraltar, account of, at the age of ninety-two, ii. 477.
- Boydell, Mr., i. 391.
- Boyish years, vaunted happiness of, disputed, i. 43.
- Boyle, afterwards earl of Ossory, principal actor in Ignoramus at Westminster school, ii. 490.
- Boze, M. de, his Dissertation on the Medal of Smyrna, v. 428.
- Brandenburgh, Memoirs of, v. 465.
- Brazen Nose College, discipline of, under Dr. Cleaver, commended, i. 71, note.
- Brazil, its gold and diamond mines, v. 531.
- Breitunger, Mr. Gibbon, in his youth, corresponds with him in Latin, i. 101—Letters by, 456, 477.
- Bretorne, Retif de la, printed a work as he composed it in his mind, without committing it to paper, i. 256.
- Bribe, Persian, immense value of one, iii. 96, note.
- Bridgewater, duke of, ii. 52.
- Bristol, returns lord Sheffield to Parliament free of expense, i. 312—Disturbances at, 409.
- Britain, inundation of, by the sea, mentioned by Tacitus, iv. 56—Inference to be drawn from it, *ibid.*
- Brixia, iv. 319.
- Brun, Rodolphus, his heroic conduct in the revolution of Zurich, iii. 300—Made burgomaster of that town, 302—His self-possession on discovering the conspiracy of the exiles, 309—His contrary conduct when surprised by the Austrians, 315.
- Brundisium, iv. 286—Horace's journey to, examined, 339.
- Brunswicensium Rerum Scriptores, edited by Leibnitz, iii. 567.
- Brunswick, antiquities of the house of, considered, iii. 359—Division of the subject, 360—Genealogical tree of, 478—Supposed descent of, from one of the companions of Romulus, 400—From the race of the Trojan kings, 485—Five Saxon kings belonging to the old house of, 494—Name of, whence derived, 495—Connections between the old and new house of, *ibid.*—Prospect of obtaining the throne of Germany, how lost to the house of, 521—Lineal descent of the dukes of, 552—Account of the descent of, from Henry the Black to the British monarch, 554.
- Brutus, digression on the character of, iv. 95—Veneration of his memory by posterity considered, *ibid.*—His assassination of Caesar productive of no benefit to the com.

- commonwealth, 95—Accused of avarice, 101—Of revealing the designs of Pompey, 106—Of obsequiousness to Cæsar, 107—Of engaging his fidelity to Cæsar by a voluntary oath, 109—Farther statement of his character and conduct, v. 541.
- Buffon, Mr. Gibbon's acquaintance with, i. 227—Calculation by, respecting our disregard of death, 274—His opinion as to the period of life that is most happy, 275—Letter by, ii. 212—His *Natural History*, v. 466—His account of complete vessels being found in the heart of mountains, not supported by good authority, 568—Mistakes the geography of Angora, famous for the long, beautiful, and silky hair of animals, 569—Contradicts himself respecting the brain, 572—His history of the elephant might have been better, if he had been a better classical scholar, *ibid.*—His surprise at the rein-deer of Scandinavia being found by Cæsar in Germany, the result of his ignorance as an antiquarian, 576.
- Burette, Mr. de, his *Dissertation in the Mémoires de l'Académie*, v. 237.
- Burgoyne, general, makes some spirited motions in parliament on the subject of India, iii. 100—Sent against the Americans, ii. 132—His army taken and himself wounded, 217.
- Burgundy, Charles, duke of, particulars of his marriage with the sister of Edward the Fourth, iii. 203.
- Buriton. See Beriton.
- Burigny, his *Life of Erasmus*, v. 256.
- Burke, Mr., delight with which he was heard in the house of commons, i. 235, note—Correctness of his printed speeches, *ibid.*—His book on the French revolution, 269, 312, ii. 433—Denominated, in his quarrel with Mr. Fox in the house of commons, an eloquent and rational madman, i. 323—His *Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* considered, v. 285.
- Burman, character of, as a critic, v. 224.
- Busbequius's *Travels*, account of, v. 580.
- Buxentium, iv. 269.
- Byers, Mr., Scotch antiquary, our author's guide in examining the curiosities of Rome, i. 196.
- Byng, admiral, ii. 35.
- C.
- Cadamosta, Venetian, his voyages, v. 194, 199.
- Cade, Jack, speech of, i. 9.
- Cadell, Mr., literary dinner at his house on the publication of the last volume of Mr. Gibbon's *History*, i. 262.
- Cadis, account of, ii. 478.
- Cæsar, Don, his surrender of Ferrara to the Pope, iii. 458—Inquiry into his birth, 463.
- Cæsar, Julius, description of his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 187, note—Remarks on his assassination, iv. 95—On his character and writings, 408—His detention in Egypt ascribed to the Etesian winds, 552—On his sacerdotal dignities, v. 63.
- Caille, abbé, his book on Perspective recommended, ii. 50.
- Calabria, account of, iv. 278, 282.
- Caligula, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 188, note.
- Calonne, wild projects entertained by, of a counter-revolution in France, i. 311.
- Calvin, his character as a theologian, ii. 20—His conduct to Servetus examined, v. 401—His *Letters to Jacques de Bourgoyne*, 424.
- Cambis, Madame de, ii. 208.
- Cambridge. See Universities.
- Camel, none of the species remaining in a state of nature, v. 576—Originally a native of Arabia, *ibid.*
- Camden, lord, his opinion of Mr. Gibbon's *History*, ii. 132.
- Campania, account of, iv. 225, 240.
- Canada, revolt of, apprehended, ii. 140.
- Cauaries, the Fortunate Islands of Plutarch, v. 171—Conquest of, by William de Bethancourt, 173.
- Candianus, his conduct and death, iii. 407.
- Canusium, iv. 281.
- Capet, Hugo, state of the feudal government under, iii. 198.
- Caplin, Mr. Gibbon's valet, ii. 331.
- Capree, licentious seat of Augustus, iv. 264.
- Capua, iv. 243.
- Caracalla, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 191, note.
- Caroline de Lichfield, novel of, ii. 400.
- Carleton, general, resolves never to capitulate with rebels, ii. 142—Made knight of the Bath, 168.
- Carmarthen, lord, ii. 212.
- Carré, his *Méthode pour la Mesure des Surfaces*, ii. 47.
- Carter, Miss, ii. 318.
- Casinum, iv. 239.
- Cassini, his *Elémens d'Astronomie* recommended, ii. 49.
- Cassock, etymology of the word, ii. 109.
- Castallo ou the Temples of Peace and Janus, v. 352.
- Castrum Minervæ, iv. 286.

- Castrom Novum, ancient town of Italy, doubts respecting, *iv.* 192.
- Cat, Mr. le, his Treatise on the Senses, *v.* 422.
- Catalogue of armies, why considered by epic poets as essential, *iv.* 327.
- Catrou on Virgil, *i.* 90.
- Catullus, inquiry respecting the time of his death, *i.* 494, 513, 530.
- Caylus, count, character *qf.*, *i.* 163, note—Letter by, *ii.* 43—His seeming neglect of Mr. Gibbon, 55—His Memoir on the Ruins of Persepolis, *iii.* 77—His Dissertation on Painting compared with that of M. de la Nauze, *v.* 214—His Memoirs on Sculpture, *ibid.*—On the Mausoleum, 215.
- Caxton, obliged to comply with the bad taste of the times in the books he printed, *iii.* 564.
- Celesia, Madame, daughter of Mallet the poet, *i.* 108, note.
- Cellarius compared with Emmius, *v.* 286.
- Cellini, Benvenuto, *i.* 6.
- Celtic colonies, account of, *iv.* 160.
- Centenary of gold, true meaning of, *v.* 553.
- Centumcellas, *iv.* 191.
- Cere, or Agylla, account of, *iv.* 193.
- Cervantes, exact observer of geography, *ii.* 479.
- Chablais, duke of, *i.* 179, note.
- Chais, Mr. la, his Letters on Jubilees, *v.* 468.
- Chapelle, Mr., his Necessity of Public Worship, *v.* 449.
- Charles the Bald, state of the feudal government under, *iii.* 196.
- Charles the Fourth; besieges Zurich, *iii.* 324—Result of this proceeding, 325.
- Charles the Eighth, chosen by Mr. Gibbon as a subject of historical composition, and afterwards rejected, *i.* 149—Critical Remarks on his Title to the Crown of Naples, *iii.* 205—His investiture depended on the justice of Frederick's deposition, 216.
- Charles the Simple, *iii.* 198.
- Charlemagne, character of, *iii.* 194.
- Charlevoix, his History of New France, *v.* 448.
- Chateaufort, Mr. de, French resident at Geneva, his haughtiness on taking leave, *i.* 360—His address to the Genevese respecting the conduct of their magistrates, *ii.* 448.
- Chatham, lord, funeral of, *ii.* 224.
- Chaufepie's Dictionary, *v.* 468.
- Chelsam, Dr., correspondence with Mr. Gibbon, *ii.* 217, 218—Contrasted with Mr. Davis, *iv.* 602—with Dr. Watson, 605—His opinion respecting the military service of the first Christians, examined, 609—Examination of his opinion of the conduct of Marcellus the centurion, 615—of his remarks on Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, 623—of his opinion of Eusebius's moral character, 636.
- Chemistry, studied by Mr. Gibbon, *i.* 229.
- Chéseaux, Mr. de, remarks by, on the dominion of the beasts in Daniel, *v.* 48—On Daniel's vision, 49.
- Chesterfield, lord, his use of the French language, *i.* 132—First acquaintance of Mr. Gibbon with, 208—His Letters, *ii.* 114.
- Chillingworth, account of his religious opinions, *i.* 66—His History of Protestants commended, *ii.* 37.
- China, policy of, in not working its silver mines, *v.* 87.
- Chivalry, question of the origin of, *ii.* 104.
- Choiseul, duke of, *ii.* 208.
- Christianity, history of, in the first three centuries, very imperfect, *iv.* 593.
- Christina, encouragement she gave to, and advance she made in, literature, *iv.* 18—Memoirs of, *v.* 467.
- Chronology, new, of sir Isaac Newton, compared, as to the Greek and Egyptian history, with the common chronology, *iii.* 150—Critical remarks on this new chronology, 152.
- Chorus, ancient, advantage of, *v.* 127.
- Church of England, triumph of, in parliament, *ii.* 74.
- Cicconius, on the Columna Rostrata of Duillius, *v.* 551.
- Cibber, Colley, *i.* 6.
- Cicero, best editions of, *i.* 89—Advantages, moral and literary, derived from reading his works, *ibid.*—Description of his bust in the Florence Gallery, 187, note—His country-houses, *iv.* 231, 236—His mode of travelling from Rome to Cilicia, minutely examined, 446—His treatise De Oratore, *v.* 275—Mistaken, in making Ecbatana the royal seat of Mithridates, 551.
- Cid, of Corneille, account of, *v.* 501.
- Circeii, *iv.* 237.
- Cisalpine Gallic war, some transactions respecting, *iii.* 222, *et seq.*
- Citizen of the world, the title condemned, *ii.* 1—Good citizen characterised, 31—Free voice of a citizen, *v.* 454.
- Civil wars in France and England, difference of, *v.* 536—Effect of on the minds of men, 537.
- Clairon, French actress, preferred by Mr. Gibbon to Dumesnil, *i.* 164.
- Clarendon, profits of his History, how applied at Oxford, *i.* 72.
- Clarke,

- Clarke, Mr., sudden death of, i. 200. ii. 120.
- Clarke, Godfrey, member for Derbyshire, ii. 72, 110, 117, 120.
- Claviere, exiled citizen of Geneva, one of the six ministers of the French republic, i. 357.
- Clemens, observations on his Epistles regarding Bishops, iv. 552.
- Clement, Saint, authenticity of his two Epistles, v. 473.
- Clement the Sixth, Letter on a bull of, dispensing sovereigns from the obligation of oaths, v. 450.
- Clerc, Mr. le, his *Bibliothèque Universelle*, Vol. 1st, v. 224—Vol. 2d, 227—Vol. 3d, 234—Compared with Bayle, 235—His *Dissertation on the Greek Middle Verb*, examined, and compared with Kuster's, 254—Quotation from, rectified, iv. 543.
- Clergy, ignorance of, till the period of the Reformation, iii. 562.
- Clermont Tonnerre, M. de, victim of the French revolution, ii. 457.
- Clitumnus, river, described, iv. 201.
- Clogher, bishop of, his *Essay on Spirit*, v. 471.
- Clos, Mr. de, his *History of Lewis the Eleventh*, v. 448—His *Considerations on Morals*, v. 472.
- Club, Cocoa-tree, i. 154, note—Roman, 200—Literary, 217.
- Clusium, iv. 197.
- Cluverius, his *Antiqua Italia*, i. 177—The work examined, v. 356—Gives the different names, limits, extent, and figure of the country, 357—Travels along the coast of Liguria from the Varus, 358—Represents the policy of Augustus, 359—His account of the Rhaeti and Euganei, *ibid.*—Proceeds through the province of Venetia, 360—Treats of the Carni and of Aquileia, 361—Examines Cisalpine Gaul, 363—Treats of the Insubres, Orobiti, Cenomani, &c. 365—Of the Boii, Lingones, and Senones, 366—Of the passages of the Alps, and those who first crossed them, 370—Of the name and origin of the Tuscans, 381—Of Tarquinii and Veii, 384—Gives an account of Umbria, 388—Describes Picenum, and several communities distinguished by their valour, 389, 404—Regards the whole history of the first ages of Rome as fabulous, 406—Describes Latium, 409, 415—Treats of the extensive territories of the Volsci, 416—Of the Ausones, and Lastrigones, 417—Of Campania, 418—Of Apulia, 423—Of Lucania, 425—Conclusion and character of his work, 426—Farther observations on, 429.
- Coalition, political, of lord North and Mr. Fox, i. 247. ii. 346—Administration of, dismissed, 350—Proposed one of all parties, i. 355, 382.
- Coalition, of princes, against France, fears respecting, i. 324, 395.
- Cobourg, prince of, ii. 484.
- Cocoa-Tree. See Club.
- Colman, his *Man of Business*, ii. 115.
- Comala of Ossian, remarks on, ii. 101.
- Commerce, state of, in the fourteenth century, iii. 39.
- Commonalty, instances of great disorders committed by, iii. 283.
- Common-place book, the practice of keeping one not recommended, i. 97.
- Comedy and tragedy, observations on, iv. 134, *et seq.*
- Concord, account of a temple to, v. 325.
- Condamine, his *Travels*, v. 477.
- Condillac, his *Treatise on Systems*, v. 465.
- Confucius, family of, the most illustrious in the world, i. 4.
- Congium, ancient measure, v. 127.
- Conjugal faith, splendid example of, iii. 530.
- Conquest, right of, odious, iii. 221—Made only for wild beasts, 222.
- Conrad, son of Henry the Black, embraces a devotional life, iii. 517—After abdicating the royal title, ascends the throne, 524.
- Conrad, St., character of, iii. 507.
- Constantinople, wealth of, in the twelfth century, v. 146.
- Consularis Aquarium, when this office ceased to exist in Rome, v. 549.
- Conway, governor of Jersey, ii. 230.
- Cooke, Dr., Letters by, to lord Sheffield, ii. 496, 498.
- Copper, originally the only money of the Romans, v. 101—Its abundance with the Romans compared with silver and gold, *ibid.*—Instances of the reduction, in weight and value, of this money, 104.
- Cornifinium, iv. 296.
- Cornelius Nepos, excellence of, as a school-book, i. 32—Remarks on the character and writings of, iv. 416.
- Cornwall, rural sketch of, ii. 113.
- Cornwallis, lord, ii. 230.
- Correspondence, familiar, sentiments respecting, i. 377, ii. 33, 355.
- Correspondance Secrète, by Mirabeau, characterised as diabolically good, i. 287.
- Cortes of Spain, when, and of what persons, composed, v. 158.
- Corsini's Dialogues, v. 269.
- Cosa, ancient town, iv. 191.
- Couci, Enguerrand de, his war with the dukes

- Dukes of Austria for the recovery of his maternal estates, v. 520.
- Coventry, lord Sheffield returned for, i. 251—Not returned for, 309.
- Covigian, his voyages, v. 198.
- Courayer, his translation of Father Paul's Council of Trent, v. 301—His Defence, 405.
- Cowper, the poet, victim to melancholy, ii. 502.
- Coxheath, ii. 224.
- Cragius's History of Denmark, v. 365, 370, 382.
- Craufurd, Mr., i. 421, 422.
- Cremona, iv. 319, 321.
- Crevier, adopts an emendation, suggested by Mr. Gibbon, which clears an obscure passage of Livy, i. 100—Lester by, on this subject, 432.
- Crillon, düké de, ii. 478.
- Criticism, those who apply themselves to, should be cautious of conjectural emendations, i. 466—Reflections upon, iv. 36—Its materials and employment, 38, 39—Farther reflections on, 45.
- Cromwell, observation respecting, that he should never have been born, or never have died, ii. 471—His claim to the title of Great, examined, v. 498.
- Cromwell, Mr., solicitor, only male descendant of the Protector, ii. 323.
- Croton, ancient town of Italy, account of, iv. 174.
- Crown Point, burnt and abandoned by the Americans, ii. 182.
- Crousaz, de, his book on Logic commended, i. 88, note, 89.
- Crousaz, Madamé de. See Montolieu.
- Crusades, Dr. Robertson differs from Mr. Gibbon respecting, ii. 425—The first, in the eleventh century, iii. 13—Advantages derived from it, *ibid.*—Account of the second crusade, 17—Crusades in the thirteenth century, 27—Crusade of Richard the First against the Saracens, v. 488.
- Ctesias, his character as a writer, iii. 58—Instance of his inaccuracy, 70.
- Cumberland's Treatise on the Laws of Nature, translated and commented by Barbeyrac, v. 424.
- Cumæ, account of, iv. 257.
- Cuper's Letters, v. 412.
- Curators, question of their functions and power, v. 506.
- Curehod, Mademoiselle, afterwards Madamé Necker. See Necker.
- Cyaxares, account of, iii. 116, 136.
- Cyrus, Xenophon's account of, iii. 122—Real character of, 132—Examined in his conduct towards his enemies, 133—Towards Cyaxares and the Medes, 136—Towards his subjects, 142—Nature of his death, 145—Further particulars of his character, 146—Immense treasures which he brought from Asia, v. 92.

D.

- Dacier, Mr., his book on Horace, i. 90—Mistaken in supposing the Metellus of Lucilius was the Metellus Numidicus, v. 548.
- D'Agaisseau, Madamé, ii. 475.
- D'Aiguillon, duchess, i. 127. ii. 54.
- D'Alembert, anecdote by, of the king of Prussia, i. 273, note—His *Mélanges*, v. 217.
- Dalin's History of Sweden, v. 458, 466.
- Dalrymple, sir David, antagonist of Mr. Gibbon, i. 232.
- Damaidenus, Theodore, account of his MS. entitled, *Augusta Decora Romano-Brunsvicensis*, iii. 479.
- Damers, sons of lord Milton, i. 193. ii. 72. v. 465.
- Damien, supposed accomplice of, ii. 56.
- Daniel, antiquity and authenticity of the book of, defended, ii. 83—Fragment on the subject, 94.
- Daniel, father, sentiment of, iii. 220.
- D'Anville, engages to construct four maps of Roman geography for Mr. Gibbon's History, but fails in his engagement, ii. 201—His map of the Euphrates and Tigris erroneous, 427—His Memoir on the Geta, v. 214—His remarks on the Roman mile, 443.
- Darius, name of merchant given to him by the Persians, v. 136—Table of the provinces of his empire, and the tribute paid by them, *ibid.*
- Darrel, Mr., i. 24, note 291, 422.
- Datch, nickname given to one of lord Sheffield's sons, ii. 73, 75.
- D'Augny, Mr., son of Mrs. Majlet, favourable mention of, ii. 55.
- Davel, persecution in Berne put a stop to by his boldness, ii. 21.
- David, king, history of, v. 355—Dissertation on his curses, v. 433.
- Davis, Mr., receives a royal pension for his examination of Mr. Gibbon's history, i. 231—Mr. Walpole's opinion of this pensioned work, ii. 156—The examiner's objections answered, iv. 515—Reasons for the answer, 519—His notice of errors of the press, 527—His charge of misrepresentation accounted for, by the different editions consulted, 528—His mention

- mention of the Jewish history, 529—
His charge of plagiarism examined, 587.
- Death, different views of, in serious and gay moments, ii. 66—Number of deaths of religious persons in France annually, v. 529.
- Deane, Silas, sent by America to the court of Vienna, ii. 223—His character, 319, note.
- Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.—See Roman Empire.
- Dedications, account of, iv. 3—One from the author to his father, *ibid*.
- Daffand, Madame du, characterised as an agreeable young lady of eighty-two years, ii. 207—Letter by, 212.
- Degrees, whence borrowed, and how might be rendered meritorious, i. 49.
- Dejoces, king of the Medes, account of, iii. 108.
- Delany's Sermons, v. 432.
- Delme, Mr., returned to Parliament for Southampton, i. 25.
- Demetrius Soter, v. 524.
- Democratical principles, described as leading by a path of flowers to the abyss of hell, i. 354.
- Denier, copper coin, weight of, v. 70, 482—Silver denier, 127.
- Denmark, court of, anecdotes respecting, ii. 72, 73, 76—Mallet's History of, examined, 111, 231—Cragius's History of, v. 365, 370.
- Deslandes, his History of Philosophy, v. 326—His Essay on the Marine of the Ancients, 462.
- D'Estaing's fleet, ii. 224.
- Devizes, town of, designated as popular and disorderly, i. 135.
- Devonshire, duchess of, Mr. Gibbon's apprehensions for, during her journey from France to Switzerland, i. 352—Disapproves of a proposed coalition of parties, 355—Winters at Pisa, 372.
- Deuverdun, Mr., the early friend of Mr. Gibbon, i. 77—Companion of his studies, 91—Some particulars of, 199—Obtains a situation in the office of the Secretary of State, 296—Engages in a periodical work, 207—Undertakes the office of travelling tutor, 208—Settles at Lausanne, and receives Mr. Gibbon as an inmate in his house, 248—Interesting correspondence between him and Mr. Gibbon on the subject of this arrangement, ii. 274—303, 307, 313, 320—Harmony in which they lived together, 341, 359—Particulars of his illness and death, i. 267, 281, 282—His loss estimated by Mr. Gibbon as irreparable, ii. 432.
- Dictionary of human economy, desirable, v. 120.
- Diodorus, charged with inaccuracy, ii. 69, 106—Character of his Universal History translated by Abbé Terrason, v. 589.
- Dion Cassius, edited by Reimar, v. 472—References to, supported, iv. 564.
- Dionysius of Athens, and Dionysius of Paris, confusion respecting, v. 489.
- Disappointed, no word in the French language corresponding with, i. 454.
- Dissenters, violent and active against the war with America, ii. 141.
- Ditton's Demonstration of the Christian Religion, v. 386.
- Dive Downs, Dr. ii. 117.
- Dodwell, character of, v. 224—His book *De Cyclis*, 270.
- Domitian, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 189, note—Road made by him, iv. 249, 337—The supposition of his having enacted laws against the Christians, a mistake, v. 560.
- Douglas, Mr., i. 405.
- Drachm, or drachma, Attic, value of, v. 74, 82, 125, 128—Decimal tables of, 130.
- Dragoon, and philosopher, compared, ii. 261.
- Dress, particoloured, of the Greeks and Romans, account of, v. 515.
- Dryden's Virgil, less interesting to Mr. Gibbon in his youth than Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, i. 35.
- Dubois de France, compared to Cerberus, ii. 459.
- Duchesne, his publication of *Les Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, iii. 569.
- Dugdale, sir William, i. 12.
- Dummer, Mr., unsuccessful candidate for Southampton, i. 25.
- Dumourier, styled a heaven-born general, i. 363—Characterised as a dragon, ii. 484.
- Dunning, motion by, on the influence of the Crown, i. 236—against a dissolution of Parliament in 1780, ii. 348.

E.

- East India Affairs, In 1773, ii. 99, 100—
In 1774, 120—In 1777, 197—In 1779, 235—In 1782, 263—In 1783, 339—
Statistic account of the East Indies, particularly its money, weights and measures, v. 163.
- Ebuto, his poem on the Troubles of Sicily, v. 449.
- Eccard, account of his *Guelphicæ Originæ*, iii. 365.
- Eccelin the First, character of, iii. 432—
The Second, *ibid*—The Third, 434.
Ecard's

- Echar'd's Roman History, delight with which it was read by Mr. Gibbon in his youth, i. 42.
 Edgar, sir Gregory, i. 11.
 Edmond's Negotiations, v. 465.
 Education, every man receives from one from his teacher, the other from himself, i. 88.
 Edwards, Dr., his attack on Mr. Gibbon, i. 233.
 Egaliseurs, democratic party at Geneva, conduct of, i. 385.
 Egeria, wood of, in the neighbourhood of Rome, discussion respecting, v. 346.
 Egerton, sir John, candidate for the county of Lancaster, ii. 75.
 Eggs, art of hatching, v. 465.
 Egide, Mr., his account of a mission into Greenland, v. 42.
 Einsidlen, monks and abbey of, iii. 273.
 Eisenschidt, Mr., character of, his book on Ancient Weights and Measures, v. 67.
 Elections, contested, in 1772, ii. 75.
 Electoral college, first rudiments of, iii. 514.
 Eleusis, the most illustrious of the religious societies of the ancients, iv. 472.
 Elgin, lord, i. 402.
 Elliot, Mr., afterwards lord, Mr. Gibbon how related to, i. 20—Mr. Gibbon by his advice, sent to Lausanne, 73—Obtains for Mr. Gibbon a seat in the House of Commons, i. 120, ii. 128—Mr. Gibbon's letter to, justifying himself for accepting the office of one of the commissioners of trade, i. 236, note—Deprives Mr. Gibbon of his seat in parliament for Lesgaard, 289.
 Ellis, his Voyage to Hudson's Bay, v. 461.
 Ellis of the Rollin, i. 285.
 Elliston, Mr. Edward, i. 20.
 Elmsley, i. 408, 411.
 Emmius, his Geographical Description of Greece, v. 286—Compared with Cellarius, *ibid.*
 England, atmosphere of, pernicious to the gout, ii. 358—Conduct of, on the execution of Lewis the Sixteenth, commended, 484—State of, in the ninth century, iii. 3—In the tenth, 7—In the eleventh, 10—In the twelfth, 12—In the thirteenth, 26—In the fourteenth, 35—In the fifteenth, 45.
 Ephemera, his system, iv. 75—Did not prevail till the time of the emperors, 77.
 Eporidia, Roman colony, geographical and chronological mistake respecting, iv. 180.
 Era, Christian, abolished by the French, i. 402.
 Erasmus, the encouragement he gave to literature, iv. 18—His Life by Bungly, examined, v. 256—His Ciceronianus, 259—His Colloquia, 266.
 Eratosthenes, first who measured the earth, geographical error of, v. 172—Why styled Beta, 180, note.
 Ernesti, his edition of Cicero commended, i. 89.
 Este, connection of the family of, with the marquis of Tuscany, iii. 386—Decline of the family of, 427—Castle of Este taken, 434—Account of their marriages, 449—Extinction of the legitimate race, 456—Power of the princes, 468—Their characters, 469. See farther, Guelph.
 Estrade, count of, his letters, v. 413, 421.
 Ethico, resentful conduct of, towards his son, for abdicating the Guelphic name, iii. 505.
 Etruscan colonies, account of, iv. 162.
 Etruria, its extent, iv. 183, 188—Its inhabitants, 184.
 Eudoxus, ancient circumnavigator, account of, v. 175.
 Europe, supposed design of reducing it to three great empires, i. 454.
 Eusebius, passage from, respecting the persecution in Egypt, iv. 574—Another respecting Maxentius, 556—Account of the Chronicle attributed to him and Jerom, 557—His Ecclesiastical History considered, 623—Examination of his moral character, 637.
 Ezo, obtained the daughter of the Emperor Otho by a game at dice, iii. 497.
 Fables, their utility, i. 32.
 Fabricius on the Theology of Water, v. 369.
 Faction, the inseparable sister of liberty, iii. 431.
 Fairy Queen, the most precious jewel in the coronet of the Spencers, i. 4.
 Falconieri, his Dissertation on the Pyramid of Cestius, v. 351.
 Faleri, account of, and its inhabitants, iv. 195.
 Falernus, iv. 243.
 Farce, observations on, iv. 142.
 Farquar, Mr., i. 143.
 Fashion, influence of, upon particular sciences, at particular periods, iv. 15.
 Fasti of Ovid, observations on, iv. 254—Dauphin edition of, censured, iv. 445—Book the fourth, 451—The fifth, 452—Sixth, 453.
 Fathers

- Fathers of the Church, ignorance of, in the most valuable of all sciences, v. 387.
- Fatimite Caliph, dynasty of, in the tenth century, iii. 6.
- Fauquier, Mr., ii. 82.
- Faustus, John, inventor of printing, died of the plague, v. 433.
- Fayette, marquis de la, some account of, ii. 197.
- Faalty and homage, nature of, in the feudal system, iii. 184.
- Ferdinand, descended from the House of Arragon, iii. 207—Legitimated by a solemn act, 209—His title to the crown doubtful, 210.
- Ferdoussi, Persian poet, account of, iii. 75.
- Ferentinum, curious inscription in which this word occurs, iv. 204—Town of, 254.
- Ferguson, Adam, letters by, ii. 160, 162.
- Feronia, temple and grove of, iv. 197—Town of, 247.
- Ferrara, literary pleasures of, iii. 455—Distinguished by the birth of Ariosto and Tasso, 457—Surrender of, by Don Cæsar, to the pope, 458.
- Fielding, Henry, his descent, i. 4—High commendation of his novel of Tom Jones, v. 373, note.
- Fiens, baron Say and Seale, ancestor of Mr. Gibbon, some account of, i. 9.
- Fishes, natural history of, v. 413.
- Flattery, prolific parent of falsehood, i. 57.
- Flatus, character of, drawn by Mr. Law, supposed to be that of Mr. Gibbon's father, i. 216.
- Fleury, Abbé, his work on the Method of Study, v. 454.
- Floral games, v. 453.
- Florence, history of the republic of, under the House of Medicis, a desirable subject for composition, i. 154—Festival of its patron saint, 184, note—Its gallery of arts, 186, note—Ancient state of, iv. 195.
- Florida Blanca, prisoner in Spain, character of, ii. 481.
- Folard, compared with Guichard, v. 222—His Translation of Polybius, 223.
- Foncemagne, Mr. de, his evening conversations, i. 163—Dispute at his house between the Abbé Mably and Mr. Gibbon, 227.
- Fontenelle, his opinion as to the period of life that is most happy, i. 274—His comedies examined, iv. 142—Character of his works, v. 223—Mistaken in supposing Porphyry to have produced oracles favourable to the Christians, 562—Mistaken in supposing the Romans to have prohibited the Carthaginians from offering any more human sacrifices, 363—Mistaken in calling Homer and Hesiod the first Grecian philosophers, *ibid.*
- Fonterne, Abbé de, his work *Sur le Culte des Divinités des Eaux*, v. 236.
- Food of the first men, letter concerning, v. 447.
- Foote, his Bankrupt, ii. 112—Mr. Gibbon a frequenter of his theatre, 136—Representation of one of his pieces stopped by the duchess of Kingston, ii. 137.
- Formisæ, iv. 239.
- Fortunate Islands. See Atlantic.
- Forum Gallorum, battle of, between Marcus Antony and Pansa, iv. 310.
- Foster, lady Elizabeth, Mr. Gibbon's anxiety for her safety, in her journey from Florence to Switzerland, i. 352—Executes a drawing of his house, 371—Passes a winter at Pisa, 372—Spends a month at Lausanne, ii. 335—Letters to, 471, 483.
- Foster's Sermons, v. 300.
- Foster, Mr., chosen speaker of the Irish House of Commons, i. 386.
- Fourmont, his *Réflexions Critiques* examined, v. 295—His *Chinese Grammar*, 422.
- Fowler, Mr., i. 376.
- Fox, Mr., defends the church in parliament, ii. 74—Loses a large sum at hazard, 75—Resigns his office at the Admiralty, under lord North, and commences patriot, 77—His debts, 114—Witticism by, 115—Character of, as a speaker and leader of a party, i. 222—Talents displayed by in the American question, ii. 132—Madame Necker's character of him, 194—Mr. Gibbon in a foreign country proud of his fame, 339—On the death of lord Rockingham resigns, i. 259—His union with Mr. Pitt desirable, ii. 347—Joins lord North, i. 246—Spends two days with Mr. Gibbon at Lausanne, 252—His rupture with Mr. Burke, 323—His democratical principles lamented, 286—Mr. Gibbon's love of him in spite of his politics, 392.
- Fox, Stephen, brother of the preceding, ii. 115.
- France, signs a treaty of commerce with America, ii. 221—Recalls its ambassador from London, 222—Its fleet, under D'Estaing, master of the sea, 225—Peace with, proclaimed, 319—English commercial treaty with, 399—Statistic account of, in the fifteenth century, v. 151—

- 151—Abridged table of the money of, from Charlemagne to Lewis the Fourteenth, 152.
- Fragments Regalia**, by sir Robert Naunton, i. 151.
- Franklin**, Dr. ii. 199, 208.
- Fraser**, general, killed, with two thousand of his men, ii. 217.
- Fraser**, honourable Mrs., ii. 368.
- Fraser**, honourable Simon, denominated the Mountaineer, ii. 192.
- Frederic**, duke of Austria, contends for the imperial crown, iii. 272—Renounces his claim, 284.
- Frederic the Second**, lawful king of Naples, iii. 207—Sentence of Innocent the Fourth respecting him, irregular, 213.
- Freedom of thought**, hints respecting, v. 540.
- French**, have had the smallest share in the fame and benefits of great naval discoveries, v. 202—Their Senegal and Guinea Company, a fiction, 203.
- French empire**, ruin of, in the ninth century, iii. 2—State of, in the tenth, 5—in the twelfth, 15—In the thirteenth, 24—In the fourteenth, 33—In the fifteenth, 48.
- French language**, by what means diffused in Europe, i. 139—Englishmen the least conversant with it, *ibid*.
- French noblesse**, origin of, iii. 187.
- French revolution**, sentiments and reflections of Mr. Gibbon respecting, i. 269, 304, 327, 347, 368, 433. ii. 469, 474—Of Madame Necker, 457.
- Frentani**, iv. 297.
- Fœret**, his character as a writer, iii. 56—Quotation from, respecting fondness for systems, iv. 16, note—His Dissertation on the Marble of Paros, 215—His Dissertation on the Deluge of Ogyges and Deucalion, 232—Quotation from, respecting the secret of mysteries, 473—His Essay on the the Ancient Measures, v. 67—His Dissertation on the passage in Pliny respecting the circuit of Rome, 364.
- Fresnoy**, mistaken in supposing Maximilian the First to have possessed Groningen, Overysse, and Frize, v. 515.
- Frey**, Mr., i. 73, 169, note.
- Friendship**, Hurd's Essay on, characterised as base and malignant, i. 209.
- Froulay**, countess de, ii. 54, 227.
- Fuller**, Rose, ii. 119.
- Fullerton**, Mr., secretary of embassy, ii. 206.
- Funds**, unfavourable opinion respecting, i. 344—Favourable opinion, ii. 388.
- G**
- Gale**, his *Opuscula Mythologica*, i. 148—His Collection of Monkish Historians, iii. 566.
- Gallia Cisalpina**, valuable productions of, iv. 313.
- Gallienus**, false honours attributed to, v. 324.
- Gallo**, countess de, i. 192, note.
- Gama**, Vasco de, his Voyages, v. 191.
- Gaming**, reflections on, i. 171, note.
- Garganus Mons**, iv. 281.
- Garrick**, Mr., i. 114, 155. ii. 34—Letter by, 153.
- Gebauer**, his Life of Richard of Cornwall, emperor of Germany, v. 428.
- Gedoyne**, his Dissertations compared with those of Mr. de la Barré, v. 238.
- Gendre**, Mr. le, his Antiquities of the French Nation, v. 406.
- Generation**, number of years that constitute one, iii. 553.
- Geneva**, society of, i. 345—Defensive proceedings of, against a French invasion, 357—Convention between and France, 362, 365. ii. 440—Revolution of, i. 344. ii. 468—Its new constitution, 394—Noble conduct of its magistrates, ii. 448—Farther political account of, 473.
- Genlis**, countess de, letters by, ii. 234.
- Genoa**, some particulars of, i. 181, note—Curious description of its chief magistrate, 182, note.
- Geoffrin**, Madame de, her parties, i. 162. ii. 54.
- George of Cappadocia**, particulars of, v. 490.
- Georgia**, returns to his loyalty, ii. 192.
- Germaine**, lord George, ii. 114, 176.
- German mercenaries**, eighteen thousand hired by England to act against America, ii. 142.
- Germans**, their situation in the tenth century, iii. 5—In the eleventh, 9—In the twelfth, 15—In the thirteenth, 23, 240—In the fourteenth, 32—In the fifteenth, 43—Manners of the ancient Germans, 184.
- Germany**, Mr. de, brother of Mr. Necker, short character of, i. 345.
- Germany**, present emperor of, i. 346—Statistic account of, particularly its money, v. 152.
- Gesner**, instance of his vanity, i. 101—Letters between him and Mr. Gibbon, 486, 502, 515.
- Geta**, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 191, note.
- Giacónius**, on the Columns Rostrata of Duilius, considered, v. 351.
- * * *
- Gianponc's

Giannone's History of Naples, its utility in forming the historical turn of mind of Mr. Gibbon, i. 97—Character of the work, v. 413—Errors in, 505.

Giants, authorities for and against the existence of, v. 504.

Gibbon, Edward, grandfather of our author, some account of, i. 14.

Gibbon, Edward, our author's father, account of, i. 20, 25, 216.

Gibbon, Edward, author of the present work, his motives for undertaking the *Memoirs of his Life*, i. 1.—His ancestry, 6—One branch of his family of gigantic stature, 15—His grandfather arbitrarily treated as a South-Sea director, 16—Some particulars of his father, 23—Place of our author's birth, 24—His attachment to his sister, 25—Weakness of his early constitution, 27—Affectionate care taken of him by his aunt Porten, *ibid.*—His early skill in arithmetic, 28—Is placed under the care of a private tutor, *ibid.*—Is removed to a school at Kingston upon Thames, 31—His sensations on entering it, *ibid.*—Is taken from thence in consequence of the death of his mother, 33—Grief of his father on that melancholy event, *ibid.*—His aunt Porten the true mother of his mind as well as his health, 34—Books first read by him, 35—Enters Westminster school, 36—Date of his entrance into that school ascertained, ii. 488, 489—Quits Westminster for Bath, on account of his health, i. 38—Is placed at Esher, under Mr. Francis, the translator of Horace, 39—His admission at Oxford, 40—His taste for history, how acquired, 41—His stock of learning previous to his introduction to the university, 41—His feelings on his admission, 45—The time he passed there, the most idle and unprofitable of his whole life, 47—His academical tutor, 54—His studies under him, 55—His irregular conduct at, and elopements from, college, 58—His first principles of religion favourable to the church of Rome, 60—Becomes a convert and is admitted into the pale of that church, 64—Expelled from the university in consequence, 65—To cure his spiritual malady, is sent to Lausanne, under the tuition of a Calvinist minister, 73—His studies under that tutor, 80—Retracts the errors of popery, 82—His extraordinary diligence and progress in learning, 87—Excellent method adopted by him of improving in French and Latin, 88—Benefit derived by him from

reading the works of Cicero, 89—Resumes the study of the Greek language, 91—Applies to the mathematics, but makes no proficiency in that science, 94—Studies the law of nature and nations, 95—Books to which he remotely owed his writing the *History of the Roman Empire*, 96—Makes the Tour of Switzerland with his Lausanne tutor, 97—Corresponds with learned men of different nations, 100—His introduction to Voltaire, 103—His first experience of love, 105—Effects produced on his character by his residence at Lausanne, 108—Is recalled home, 109—His affectionate reception, 113—The profession of the law recommended to him, but rejected, 113—His occupations in London, 114—His pursuits during his residence at his father's house in Hampshire, 116—Begins to form a library, 119—His joy at exchanging a twenty pound note for the first twenty volumes of the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*, *ibid.*—Useful practice observed by him in reading, 121—Effect produced on his mind by the perusal of the historical works of Hume and Robertson, 122—His account of the writing and publishing of his first work, the *Essai sur la Littérature*, 122—His own critique of this performance, 129—Embraces the military profession, as captain in the Hampshire regiment of militia, 133—Account of his employments, professional and literary, while a soldier, 134; *et seq.*—His self-examination on his birth-day, 147, note—His difficulties in choosing a subject for historical composition, 149—Revisits the continent, 155—Men of letters with whom he became acquainted at Paris, 161—Visits again his favourite town of Lausanne, 164—Takes up his abode in the elegant establishment of Mr. de Mesery, 168—His first acquaintance with Mr. Holroyd, afterwards lord Sheffield, 169—His disappointment at not obtaining the vacant office of *Directeur des Etrangers*, at Lausanne, *ibid.* note—His reflections on some losses he met with at cards, 171, note—Prevents a duel between one of his Lausanne friends and a Dutchman, 175, note—His readings while at Lausanne, 176—His departure from, and description of the place, 178, note—His journey to Italy, 179—Introduced at Turin to his Sardinian Majesty, 183—His stay at Florence, 184—His sensations on entering Rome, 186—His

196—His route from Rome to Lyons, 197—When and where the idea was first formed of his writing the *Decline and Fall*, 198—Arrives in England, 199—Attends the monthly meetings of the militia, and is promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, *ibid.*—Comforts of his home, at Beriton, the country-seat of his father, *ibid.*—Forms a weekly convivial club in London, 200—Withdraws from the militia, 201—His reflections on not having embraced any lucrative profession, 202—Writes an historical Essay on the Liberty of the Swiss, 204—From the disapprobation of his friends, commits it, as he supposes, to the flames, 205—Engages in a periodical work, entitled, *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne*, 207—Further particulars of this work, *ii.* 68—Publishes his *Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid*, *i.* 208—Laments his treatment of bishop Warburton in this essay, 211—His studies preparatory to his beginning his *Rise and Fall*, 212—Reflections on his domestic circumstances, 215—Death and character of his father, 216—Settles in London and begins his *History*, 219—His account of his difficulties as to style, *ii.* 136—Becomes a member of the House of Commons, *i.* 220—Wishes to be a speaker, but always fails in courage, *221. ii.* 130, 132, 133, 134—Publishes the first volume of his *History*, *i.* 222—Its flattering reception, 223—Makes a second visit to Paris, 226—Involved in a dispute there with the Abbé Mably, 227—Farther account of the manner of passing his time there, *ii.* 207, 211—Studies anatomy and chemistry, *i.* 229—Enters into the Arian controversy, *ibid.*—Destroys fifty sheets of the continuation of his *History*, 230—Publishes his *Vindication*, *ibid.*—Enumerates and characterises the authors who wrote against his fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, 231—By desire of ministry, writes the *Mémoire Justificatif*, in reply to the French Manifesto, 234—Appointed one of the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 235. *ii.* 233—Unjustly accused of deserting a party, by accepting that office, *i.* 236—Publishes the second and third volumes of his *History*, 239—Returned to parliament for the Borough of Lymington, 244—Loses his place as Commissioner of the Board of Trade, by the abolition of that Board, 245—His further course of readings for the continuation of his

History, *ibid.*—Writes to lord Thurlow offering his services to government, *ii.* 272—Question of his being sent as Secretary of Embassy to Paris, *i.* 247, *ii.* 317, 321—Leaves London and settles in the house of his friend Deyverdun at Lausanne, *i.* 248—Previous correspondence with Mr. Deyverdun on this subject, *ii.* 274—303—Makes known his plan and assigns his reasons to Lord Sheffield, 304, 354—Account of his journey 327—Events on his arrival, 328—Manner of passing his time, contrasted with that of lord Sheffield as a politician, 334—Seeming mortification at his political talents not having been more highly appreciated by government, 340—Farther particulars of the manner in which he passes his time at Lausanne, 341, 349, 359—Resigns all political views, 350—His feelings of satisfaction after a year's retirement at Lausanne, 368—Talks, playfully, of marrying, 370—His indifference to politics, 376, 385—Facetious letter on the report of his death, 379—His satisfaction with Lausanne after a residence of two years, 382—After a residence of three years, 396—His reflections after a trial of seven years, *i.* 249—His sentiments on quitting it, *ii.* 404—Account of his intercourse at Lausanne with Mr. Fox, *i.* 252, 282—Proceeds with and concludes his history, 255—His emotions of joy at that event, *ibid.*—Pays a visit to lord Sheffield in England, 256. *ii.* 403—Publishes the concluding volumes of his *History*, 260—Dinner in celebration of that event, *ibid.*—His reflections on returning to Lausanne, 266—His studious ardour damped by the death of his friend Deyverdun, 267—His sentiments of the French revolution, 269—Expresses his satisfaction at his lot in life, 271—Farther account of his journey to, and arrival at, Lausanne, 279—Purchases a life interest in Deyverdun's house, 290, 298—Is seized with a fit of the gout, 308—Account of his visits to Mr. Neckar, 311, 345—Wishes a declaration to be signed by all parties in England in favour of the constitution, 312, 343—His reflections on his own situation at Lausanne, 314—Gives a public ball, 318—Urges lord Sheffield and his family to visit him, 319—Particulars of this visit, 327—His account of the proceedings of the French towards Geneva, 356—His fears of being driven from Lausanne, 358, 364—His apprehensions for his

- native country, 396—His reflections on receiving intelligence of the death of lady Sheffield, 397—Hastens to England on account of that melancholy event, 398—Grateful mention by lord Sheffield of this testimony of his friendship, 404—Attractive power of his conversation, 406—Visits his father's widow at Bath, 409—Visits lord Spencer at Althorp, 410—On his return to London is taken ill, 411—Nature of his disorder, 412—His last visit to Sheffield-place, 419—His death, 423—Appearance of his body when opened, 424—His will, 426—His epitaph, 428—His usual attitude when conversing, ii. 58.
- Gibbon, John**, ancestor of our author, some account of, i. 11—Work by, on heraldry, 13.
- Gibbon, Mrs.**, second wife of Mr. Gibbon's father, i. 112—Mr. Gibbon's dislike of her converted into confidence and friendship, 113, 119—Mr. Gibbon visits her at Bath, 410—Letters to, ii. 52, 79, 81, 124, 131, 134, 135, 239, 240, 241, 244, 257, 355, 431, 469.
- Gibbon, Mrs.**, of Northamptonshire, i. 20—Her singular character, ii. 126—Further mention of, 345—Leaves her estate in Sussex to Mr. Gibbon, 432.
- Gibbon, Robert**, ancestor of our author, account of, i. 10.
- Gibbon, Thomas**, dean of Carlisle, i. 14.
- Gibraltar**, grandeur of its excavations and batteries, ii. 477.
- Gift**, singular one of a chariot and oxen of solid silver, iii. 416.
- Gimelin**, his Travels into Siberia, v. 450.
- Glaris**, account of, iii. 317—Allies itself to the Swiss confederation, 319.
- Gnatia**, or Egnatia, woud placed on a sacred stone there, is said to kindle of itself, iv. 282.
- Gods**. See Religion.
- Gold and Silver**. Mines of gold formerly in Italy, iv. 176—Effect of gold and silver as the medium of commerce, v. 85—Value of, to a state, 87—Gold and silver mines of the old and new world compared, 88—Ancient gold of coins superior to modern, ancient silver inferior, 95—Difficulty of ascertaining the value of gold and silver money, 96—Impressions made on money by different nations, to determine its value, 106—Price of silver in England and France, 121—Proportionate price of silver to gold in England and France, 122—First silver money of the Romans, 132.
- Goldoni**, memoirs of, i. 6.
- Goldsmith**, ii. 110.
- Golofskin**, count de, his family and fortunes, i. 165, note.
- Gordon**, lord George, disturbances occasioned by, ii. 240.
- Gordon's Tacitus**, i. 41—His Political Discourses, v. 406.
- Gori's Symbolæ Florentinæ**, v. 483.
- Gospel**, tradition of the Spaniards respecting, refuted, v. 492.
- Government**, feudal, particularly in France, essay on, iii. 183—Fealty and homage required by it, 184—Its military service, 188—Its hierarchy, 193—Slavery of the people under it, 199—Its termination, 202—Maxim of La Bruyère respecting governments, v. 54.
- Goujet**, his *Bibliothèque Française*, v. 432.
- Gout**, Mr. Gibbon subject to, i. 308. ii. 97, 215, 239, 329.
- Grævi Thesaurus**, v. 344.
- Grainger's Travels into Egypt**, v. 449.
- Grammont**, count de, Memoirs of, highly commended, i. 10.
- Grandison**, Sir Charles, novel of, preferred to Clarissa, ii. 36.
- Gravina**, manuscript, del Governo Civile di Roma, examined, v. 39.
- Graviscæ**, ancient town of Italy, iv. 193.
- Greaves**, character of his work on the Foot and Denier of the Romans, v. 67.
- Greece**, ancient, elucidations of its history, iii. 86.
- Greek roots**, method of learning them pointed out, v. 217.
- Greenland**, account of a mission to, v. 42.
- Greeks**, simplicity of their method of reckoning, v. 110—Their weights and measures derived from the Phenicians, 124.
- Grew**, Dr. Nehemiah, i. 12.
- Grey**, Mr., parliamentary motion by, stigmatized, i. 349.
- Grimstone**, Mrs., i. 372.
- Grotius**, his character contrasted with that of Salmasius.
- Guards**, large draught of, for America, ii. 143.
- Guazzesi's letter to Cocchi**, on the Cisalpine Gallic war, iii. 222.
- Guelph**, the root of the German and British line of the family of Este, iii. 424—The first Guelph allied to the family of Este, 492—Continuation of the Guelphic line after six generations, 503—Guelphic possessions, 505—Guelph the Third, 509—The Fourth, *ibid.*—The Fifth, 510—The Sixth, 511—The Seventh, 518—The Eighth, 518, 529—The Ninth and last, 535—The rights of the Guelpha

- Guelphs surrendered to a Ghibelline heir, 536.
- Guelphs and Ghibellines, some account of, iii. 22, 432, 490—Names of, how first occasioned, 529.
- Guichardt, his *Mémoires Militaires sur les Grecs*, v. 219.
- Guido, Marquis of Tuscany, account of, iii. 352.
- Guilford, lord, i. 383.
- Guiguer, his Memoir on the destruction of the Greek Monarchy in Bactriana, v. 214.
- Guthrie, in his Cicero's Letters, erroneously translates *Getæ* by Goths, v. 53.
- H.
- Habsburg, Rodolph, Count of, character of his reign, iii. 241—Killed in the battle of Grynau, 307.
- Habsburg, son of the preceding, heads a conspiracy against Zurich, iii. 308—Taken prisoner, 310—Set at liberty, 329.
- Hai Ebn Yokhdan, life of, i. 30—Fine production of Arabian genius, v. 234.
- Haller, speech delivered by, doubting the authenticity of the story of Tell, iii. 329, note—His catalogue of plants in Switzerland, v. 411—His character, *ibid.*—His poems translated, 450—Unintelligible note by the translator of his poems respecting the family of Muhleren and Bubenberg, 578.
- Halley, Dr., his abstract of Dodwell's book, *de Cyclis*, examined, v. 220.
- Hamilton, Gerard, ii. 263—Condemns government for suffering Mr. Gibbon to leave England, 339.
- Hamilton, sir William, envoy of Naples, i. 196.
- Hampton Court, ii. 260.
- Hannibal, some particulars in his war, elucidated, v. 370.
- Hanno, account of his voyage, v. 184—Journal of it in Greek still extant, 185—Pliny's opinion of his voyage, 186.
- Hardion, his dissertation on the Oracle at Delphi, v. 235.
- Hardouin, letters of an Ex-Jesuit on his Paradoxes, v. 386—His Commentary on the New Testament, 405.
- Hardwicke, lord, letter by, ii. 254.
- Harleian Miscellany, v. 462.
- Harris's three Treatises examined, v. 431.
- Harvey, Mrs., i. 410.
- Harwich Packet, taken, ii. 199.
- Havercamp's collection respecting the pronunciation of the Greeks, v. 382.
- Hastings's trial, i. 258. ii. 422—Mr. Gibbon dines with Mr. Hastings, 421.
- Hawkins, surgeon, i. 414.
- Hayley, Mr., his opinion of Mr. Gibbon's observations on the sixth book of the *Æneid*, i. 211—Stanzas by, complimentary of Mr. Gibbon's historical work, 260—Visited by Mr. Gibbon at his house near Chichester, 262. ii. 251, 257—Character of his *Essay on History*, 256, 259.
- Hearne, his character as an editor, i. 41. iii. 566.
- Heineccius, his *History of the German Law*, v. 365.
- Helrad, Mr., ii. 433.
- Helvetius, Mr. Gibbon's acquaintance with, and character of, i. 163, ii. 53.
- Henin, princess of, i. 368.
- Henly, Mr., afterwards earl of Northampton, unsuccessful candidate for Southampton, i. 25.
- Henry the Black, by his influence fixed the right of inheritance in the German Aristocracy, iii. 515. His superstitious end, 518.
- Henry the Fourth of France, character of, iii. 132.
- Henry the Fowler, account of, iii. 493, 495.
- Henry of the Golden Chariot, renounces the Guelphic name, iii. 505.
- Henry the Lion, his pedigree as allied to the House of Brunswick, iii. 492—Illustrious exploits of, 528—His pilgrimage to the Holy Land, 547—His marriage, 550.
- Henry the Proud, account of, iii. 519.
- Henry, prince of Portugal, voyages patronized by him, v. 193, 195—Improvement in the art of navigation effected by him, 200.
- Henry the Seventh, of Germany, said to have been poisoned, iii. 272.
- Henry, son of Rodolph the Second, account of, iii. 509.
- Heraldry, whimsical anecdote respecting, i. 9.
- Hercules, his matrimonial prowess, v. 532—Mahomet compared with him in this respect, 533.
- Herculis Liburni Portus, ancient name of Leghorn, iv. 183.
- Herculaneum, iv. 243.
- Hernici, iv. 234.
- Herodotus, his account of the Medes, iii. 107—Of the circumnavigation of the Phenicians, v. 182—Translation of his *History* by Larcher, 586.
- Hervey, lady, i. 115, 157.
- Hervey, lord, his memorial, i. 408.
- Hesiod,

- Hesiod, edited by Robinson, v. 326—Time in which he lived, 584.
- Hesse, prince of, i. 366. ii. 449.
- Heyne, professor, his opinion of Mr. Gibbon's observations on the sixth book of the *Æneid*, i. 211—Letter by, ii. 438.
- Higgins, Mr., Lectures on Chemistry by, i. 229.
- Hints of subjects proper for history, v. 487—Miscellaneous, 536.
- Hirpini, iv. 279.
- Historian, should feel himself as a witness giving oath, ii. 250—Is apt to infuse the character of his own mind into his work, iii. 126—Will choose such facts as agree best with his principles and views, 128—The sources of his information pointed out, iv. 588—Value of monkish historians, iii. 561—Are historians friends to virtue? v. 536.
- History, our author's taste for, how acquired, i. 41—History of England, four persons holding the highest offices of magistracy contributors to it, iii. 344—The desire to know the history of our own country a natural impulse, iii. 559—History the knowledge of causes and effects, iv. 63—Rules for the choice of facts in writing history, *ibid.*—Slight circumstances frequently of importance, 64—Universal History, v. 411, 413, 422, 428, 432—Hints of subjects proper for history, 487.
- Hoadley, bishop, the object of Whig idolatry and Tory abhorrence, i. 21.
- Hoare, Mr., i. 42.
- Holland, moisture of, injurious to gouty constitutions, ii. 358—Number of its inhabitants, v. 413.
- Holland, lord, statement of his property, ii. 115.
- Holme, Miss, letters to, ii. 144.
- Holomannus, mistake by, respecting the murder of Q. Lollius, corrected, v. 518.
- Holroyd, Miss, letters to, i. 333, 369.
- Holroyd, J. B., Esq. now lord Sheffield. See Sheffield, lord.
- Homer, styled the father of poetry and bible of the ancients, i. 148—Time spent in reading his *Iliad* by Scaliger and Mr. Gibbon, *ibid.*—Chronology of his birth, iii. 162—Inquiry into his life and writings, v. 216—The night adventure in the *Iliad* compared with the Nisus and Euryalus of Virgil, 218—Continuation of the *Iliad*, 226—Shield of Achilles compared with the description of the shield in Virgil, 229—Examination of the games celebrated at the funeral of Patroclus, 240—Reasons for reading Homer before any other Greek poet, 243—His life in Greek, published by Gale, examined, 247, 249, 277—His *Odyssey*, 287—Various editions of Homer, and works relating to him, 582.
- Hooper, his Inquiry into the State of the Ancient Measures, v. 68.
- Hôpital, marquis de P, his Conic Sections, i. 96.
- Horace, favourite author of Mr. Gibbon, i. 149—Inquiry into his true design in the third Ode of his Third Book, 489, 505, 522—Explanation of the thirty-fifth ode of the first book, by Mr. Addison, v. 38—The fifth Satire of the first book examined, 339, v. 443—Compared with Juvenal as a satirist, 291—First seven Epistles of the first book, 482—See farther, Hurd.
- Horse and Camel, supposed antipathy between considered, v. 575.
- Horse-races, at Florence, i. 185, note.
- Howard, his edition of Florence of Worcester, iii. 565.
- Howe, lord, i. 417. ii. 262, 420.
- Howe, sir William, ii. 166, 173, 230.
- Howell's History of the World, i. 42.
- Hugo, marquis of Tuscany, character of, iii. 405.
- Hugonin, mentioned, ii. 116, 129, 226.
- Hume, feelings of Mr. Gibbon on reading his historical work, i. 122—Early part of his History, to the reign of Henry the Seventh, characterised as ingenious but superficial, 139—Letter by, to Mr. Gibbon, on his Essay upon the Liberty of the Swiss, 204, note—Writes in the *Mémoires Littéraires*, a reply to Mr. Warburton's Doubts, 208—Letter by, to Mr. Gibbon, on his publishing the first volume of his *Decline and Fall*, 224—His indolence humorously characterised, ii. 110—Letter by, to Mr. Strahan, 161—Account of, a few months before his death, ii. 126—His death, i. 226. ii. 174—Friendship which subsisted between him and Dr. Robertson, 202, 204—Mistaken in his estimate of the number of inhabitants in all Gaal, v. 549.
- Hunter, Dr., i. 229.
- Hurd, letter by, on the authenticity of the book of Daniel, ii. 83—His Commentary on Horace's Art of Poetry, examined, iv. 113—His character of Iphigenia and Electra, considered, 119—His Rules for Epic Poetry, *ibid.*—His sentiments on the ancient chorus, examined, 127—His account of the Satyrs, Attellanes and Mimes, 130—His notes on the Epistle to Augustus, 153—His Discourse

- Discourse on the Province of the Drama, 134—His Discourse on Poetical Imitation, 143—Mistaken in supposing himself the first discoverer of the allegory in the third *Georgic*, v. 348.
- Hyacinthé, Saint, Philosophical Researches by, v. 424.
- Hyde, Dr., his investigation of the Roman Calendar, iii. 83.
- I.
- Iberian Colonies, account of, iv. 159.
- Ice, Treatise on, v. 466.
- Ignatius, account of, given by Mr. Gibbon, justified, iv. 569.
- Illyrian Colonies, iv. 158.
- Ilixa, or *Æthalia*, island of Italy, iv. 194.
- Imperator, meaning of the title, iii. 176.
- Index Expurgatorius, v. 548.
- India, Historical Disquisition concerning, ii. 434.
- Innate ideas, observations on Mr. Locke's theory of, i. 436, 447.
- Innovation, political or religious, spirit of, dangerous, i. 269, 389.
- Insects, theology of, v. 421.
- Interamna, iv. 308.
- Ireland, affairs of, ii. 377, 386.
- Irish language, inquiry respecting, v. 418.
- Iroquois and Greenlanders compared, v. 421.
- Italia Antiqua, of Cluverius, its extreme accuracy, i. 76.
- Italy, elaborate readings of our author previously to his visiting it, i. 177—Letter to his father on the subject of visiting it, ii. 38—State of, in the thirteenth century, iii. 23—In the fourteenth, 31—In the fifteenth, 43, 54.
- Italy, ancient, names of, iv. 155—People of, 158—Regions, atmosphere and soil of, 164—Its itineraries and tables, 322—Its military roads, 324—Statistic account of, particularly its weights and measures, v. 160—Description of ancient Italy much wanted, 429.
- Itineraria Vetera, edited by Wesseling, v. 293.
- J.
- Jekyl, Mr., i. 405.
- Jenius, his *Stricture Juris Romani*, v. 364.
- Jenyns, Soame, his Inquiry into the Origin of Evil, v. 215.
- Jersey, island of, invaded, ii. 230.
- Jerusalem, essay by Mr. Gibbon on the miracle which stopped the rebuilding of the temple of, i. 97—Site and extent of, described, v. 496.
- Jews, account of, in answer to Mr. Davis, iv. 529.
- Jockey Club, pamphlets written against, i. 349.
- John, St., patron of Florence, festival of described, i. 184, note.
- Johnson, sir William, ii. 76.
- Jones, sir William, letter by, ii. 252—Wishes for the appointment of chief justice of Bengal, 253.
- Journal des Savans, character of, v. 442.
- Journals, the manufacture of on the continent miserably debased, i. 133.
- Jubilees, Letters on, v. 471.
- Judith, empress, account of, iii. 377, 501.
- Julian, Life of, its utility in forming the historical turn of mind of Mr. Gibbon, i. 96—His immense revenues, v. 147.
- Junius's Letters, ii. 98.
- Junonis Lacinæ Templum, account of, iv. 274.
- Justin, difficult passages of, explained, i. 456, 477, 492, 507—Passage from, quoted by Mr. Gibbon in his history, examined and justified, iv. 560.
- Juvenal, his Third Satire examined, v. 290—His Fourth, *ibid.*—His Sixth, 291—His Seventh, 295—His Eighth, 296—His Ninth, 298—His Tenth and Eleventh, 299—His Twelfth, 302—His Thirteenth, 303—His Fourteenth, 306—His Fifteenth, 307—His Sixteenth, 309—Compared with Horace, 291, 302—With Boileau, *ibid.*—General observations on, 310.
- K.
- Keene, colonel, ii. 196.
- Kellerman, general, i. 382.
- Kenig, his Appeal to the Public, v. 472.
- Keppel, admiral, ii. 225.
- Kerseboom, his Treatise on the Inhabitants of Holland, v. 413.
- King's illness, i. 284—Debts, ii. 199.
- Kingston, duchess of, stops one of Foote's plays, ii. 137.
- Kirkby, Mr. John, tutor to Mr. Gibbon, some account of, i. 28—character of his Automathes, 30.
- Klein, his Natural History of Fishes, v. 413.
- Knowell, Dr., anecdote respecting a sermon preached by him before the House of Commons, ii. 78.
- L.
- Lactantius, quotation from, iv. 562.
- Lacus Sabatinus, iv. 196.
- Lally, count de, i. 305—Escapes from France.

- France and finds a generous refuge in the house of lord Sheffield, 355, 372, note—Short character of, 380.
- Lambelle, madame de, i. 355.
- Lambert, marquis of Tuscany, account of, iii. 380.
- Lami's Learning of the Apostles, v. 333.
- Lamotte, confined in the castle of Chillon on account of his revolutionary principles, i. 336—Condemned to fine and twenty years imprisonment, 347—Escapes from prison, 365.
- Langebec, his edition of the *Scriptores Rerum Anglicarum*, iii. 659.
- Langer, Mr., furnishes Mr. Gibbon with some intelligence of his family, i. 13—Letter to, on the subject of the *Memoirs of the House of Brunswick*, iii. 353.
- Larius, lake, iv. 176.
- Larpen, battle of, iii. 293.
- Latins, chronology of their history, iii. 165.
- Latium, towns of, iv. 226.
- Laudoun, general, ii. 80.
- Lavinium, iv. 228.
- Laurence, Henry, president of Congress, sails in the same vessel with Mr. Gibbon from Dover to Boulogne, ii. 326.
- Laureus, beautiful villa of Pliny, iii. 293.
- Laus Pompeii, town of, iv. 179.
- Law, Mr., died in the house of Mr. Gibbon's aunt, i. 20—His character and writings, *ibid.*
- Lausanne, our author's first residence at, i. 73—Revisited by him, 164—Singular society instituted there, of his young friends, male and female, 167—Mr. Gibbon settles there, 248—Nature of its society, 251. ii. 361, 365—Effects of the French revolution on, i. 269, 299, 347—Supineness of the inhabitants of, on the event of Lewis the Sixteenth's death, 395—Inquisitorial spirit of, in matters of faith, ii. 23—Expense of living at and in London compared, 376—Influx of Englishmen to, 383—Crowded with exiles, 433.
- Lee, Arthur, sent by Congress to the court of Madrid, ii. 233.
- Lee, general, particulars of his being taken prisoner, ii. 196.
- Legarde, family of, mentioned, i. 372.
- Legge, Mr., returned to Parliament for Southampton, i. 118.
- Legislative power, in whom it ought to be vested, ii. 7—That and the executive should never be united in the same person, 8.
- Legitimation, difficulties respecting the right of, iii. 409.
- Leibnitz, his character and pursuits, iii. 361, 368—Correspondence between him and Bernouilli, v. 448—His *Protogea*, 463.
- Lenborough estate, ii. 78, 79—Sale of, 99—Difficulties respecting, 123, 125—Mr. Gibbon's feelings on parting with it, 361—Sold for three-fourths of its value, 374.
- Leopold, brother of Frederic of Austria, his character, iii. 272—Defeated by the Swiss, 277.
- Lesner, his *Theology of Insects*, v. 421.
- Lessart, Mr. de, i. 346.
- Letters on Rousseau and Saurin, v. 369—From the country, 412.
- Levade, family of, mentioned, i. 372.
- Lew, his Dictionary, i. 204.
- Lewis, catholic bookseller, summoned before the Privy Council respecting Mr. Gibbon's conversion to popery, i. 64, note.
- Lewis the Débonnaire, state of the feudal system under, iii. 197.
- Lewis, duke of Bavaria, contends for the empire, iii. 272—Favourable conduct of, to the Swiss, 281—Chosen emperor, notwithstanding the anathema of the pope, 284.
- Lewis the Pious, account of, iii. 377, 501.
- Lewis the Ninth, character of, iii. 25.
- Lewis the Eleventh, History of, by Duclos, v. 448.
- Lewis the Thirteenth, question of his impotency, v. 45.
- Lewis the Fourteenth, doubts as to his birth, v. 45.
- Lewis the Sixteenth, offended with a passage in Mr. Gibbon's History, i. 244—His flight, 325—Mr. Necker's defence of him, 368—Declaration of the English Parliament in his favour, 392—His death, 395—Compared in his fate to Charles the First, ii. 484.
- Lexicon, that of Robert Constantine, the next best to that of Thesaurus, i. 144.
- Libanius, his Letters by Wolf, v. 354.
- Life, what period of, the most happy, i. 374—By what standard its duration should be measured, 275—Private and political life compared, ii. 350—The busiest season of life the most happy, 435—The life of the ancients longer than that of the moderns, iii. 159—The life of princes shorter than that of literary men, 160—Calculation of the chance of living to a hundred years, 418.
- Ligne, prince and princess of, travel from Brussels to Lausanne to act a comedy, ii. 336.
- Liguria, ancient people of Italy, account of, iv. 180.
- Linguet,

- Linguet, his History of the Age of Alexander, v. 233.
- Linneæus, his Travels into Western Gothland, v. 450.
- Literature, Essay on. See Essay.—State of, in the fourteenth century, iii. 40—Encouragement it met with at different periods, iv. 15—Its decline, to what owing, 19—Great men attached to it, 21.
- Littlebury's Herodotus, i. 41.
- Liturnum, house of Seneca at, described, iv. 242.
- Liutprand, bishop of Cremona, some account of his history, iii. 387.
- Livy, emendation of an obscure passage of, suggested, i. 434—Parallel between and Tacitus, iv. 66—Remarks on his character and writings, 422—Compared with Polybius, as to Hannibal's passage over the Alps, v. 370.
- Locke, Mr., expelled from the University of Oxford, i. 47—His Essay on the Human Understanding, 96—Observations on his theory of innate ideas, 456, 447.
- Locri Epizephyrii, account of, iv. 272.
- London, its attractions, i. 114—Introduction there less easy than at Paris, 163, note—Seat of philosophy, ii. 3.
- Longinus, commended, i. 148—His Treatise on the Sublime in the edition of Tollius considered, v. 252.
- Lothaire the Second, iii. 496, 497.
- Love, political events, and the destiny of great men in the East, seldom influenced by, iii. 106.
- Low Countries, statistic account of, particularly its monies, v. 150.
- Louth, bishop, interesting picture of his academical life, i. 46—His Pælectiones on the Poetry of the Hebrews, 51—His victory over Warburton, 210—His Translation of Isaiah mentioned with praise, iv. 532.
- Lucan, lord, i. 411.
- Lucania, connection of the inhabitants of, and the Brutians, iv. 265—Towns of, 266.
- Luca, description of, iii. 374.
- Lucerne, joins the confederation of the Swiss, iii. 287—Conspiracy of its discontented inhabitants, 289.
- Lucian, edited by Hemsterhuis and Gesner, v. 420.
- Lucretia, her character, iii. 449.
- Lucullus, and Scævola, villas of, iv. 248, 257.
- Ludolph, character of himself and his ancestors, iii. 495.
- Luna, town of, famous for its wines, iv. 188—Bay of, famous for its marble, 180.
- Lutterel, colonel, ii. 73, 131.
- Lysias, edited by Taylor, v. 369.

M

- Mabillon's Diplomatica, i. 173.
- Mably, his dispute with Mr. Gibbon on the subject of republics and monarchies, i. 227—Character of, and his works, 228, note—His Observations sur les Grecs, v. 286—His parallel of the French with the Romans, v. 406.
- Mac Carthy, Mrs., i. 180, note.
- Machiavel, a republican, v. 405.
- Mackenzie, Mr., his sentiments of the posthumous works of Mr. Gibbon, ii. 503.
- Maclaurin, his book on Fluxions recommended, ii. 46—His account of Newton's Discoveries, 50, v. 462.
- Macpherson, Mr., his translation of Ossian, ii. 103.
- Macpherson, sir John, letter by, describing his tour through Spain, ii. 477.
- Madeira, pipe of, seized at Berne, but released to Mr. Gibbon by the government, i. 286.
- Madrid, some account of, ii. 479.
- Madyes, account of, iii. 119, 120.
- Magdalen college, i. 50.
- Magi, Persian, supposed circumnavigation by one, v. 187.
- Magliabecchi, account of, his library, and his correspondence with more than three thousand persons, i. 193.
- Mahmud of Gasmā, the first prince who assumed the title of Sultan, iii. 8.
- Mairan, his Treatise on Ice, v. 466.
- Malaga, account of, ii. 477.
- Mallet, Mr., his Description of Egypt examined, v. 556.
- Mallet, Mr., our author's early intimacy with, i. 115—First representation of his play of Elvira, 155 note, 157 note—Letter by, ii. 42—His Introduction to the History of Denmark, with a translation of the Edda, iii. 231—His poem of Aminta and Theodora, v. 450.
- Malsbury, lord, i. 282—Playfully called the audacieux Harris, 352.
- Man in the Iron Mask. See Marchiali.
- Manchester, town of, takes a decided part against the Americans, ii. 145—Whitaker's History of, 146—Parliamentary bill respecting, 147.
- Manetho's History of Egypt, i. 57.
- Mann, sir Horace, British envoy at Florence, i. 192, v. 483.
- Mannes, Roger de, happy maucœuvre of, in the

- the war between Zurich and Austria, iii. 315.
- Mantua, iv. 319.
- Marcellus, the centurion, his conduct considered, iv. 618.
- Marchiali, or Man in the Iron Mask, conjectures respecting, v. 41.
- Marius, his sitting on the ruins of Carthage, iv. 117—his villa, 249.
- Marmontel, mistakes a passage in Lucan relating to the Gallic Druids, v. 576.
- Marolles, Michael de, i. 6.
- Marozia, her vices, iii. 389.
- Marquis, or Margrave, origin of the title, iii. 378.
- Marriage, preferable to celibacy, ii. 65—Early marriages the most happy, 450—Necessity of the institution in civilized countries, iii. 208.
- Marriage Act, relating to the royal family, ii. 73, 76.
- Marrusini, singular proceedings in the country of, iv. 297.
- Mars, inquiry as to the time in which he lived, iii. 162.
- Marsi, iv. 291.
- Marsham, his Canon Chronicus, i. 57. v. 245—Grounds of his defence for the Parian marble disputed, *ibid.*
- Martel, Charles, account of, iii. 190.
- Mardi's Letters, v. 333.
- Martyn's Translation of Virgil's Georgics, v. 448.
- Masquerade, Boodle's, ii. 119, 121, 122, 123.
- Massachusetts Bay, declared in a state of rebellion, ii. 132.
- Massacre aux Carmes, horrid details of, i. 373, note.
- Massieu, his History of French Poetry, v. 369.
- Matilda, countess of Tuscany, account of, iii. 513.
- Matilda, daughter of Henry the Second, her marriage, iii. 551—All the princes of Brunswick lineally derived from one of her sons, 552.
- Mathematical studies, detailed course of, ii. 44.
- Maty, Dr., some account of, i. 123—His concern in Mr. Gibbon's first publication, 126—His Letter to Mr. Gibbon on his Essay on the Study of Literature, iv. 7—Wrote a review of Mallet's *Aminta* and *Theodora* in the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, v. 450.
- Maupertuis, his Essay on Moral Philosophy, v. 465—His works, 472.
- Mayence, siege of, i. 400.
- Mazarin, Cardinal, attachment of Anne of Austria to, v. 46.
- Measures, ancient, taken from parts of the human body, v. 118—Particulars respecting, 224.
- Medals, Dissertation on the allegorical beings found on, v. 35. See farther, Addison.
- Medes, Dissertation on the Monarchy of, iii. 56—First kings of, but little known, 73—Reign of Ardeus the sixth king, 90—State of under Astibaras, 105—under Aspadas, 106—Herodotus's account of, 108—Difficulties respecting, elucidated, 110—Chronology of, 113.
- Mediterranean and Indus, maps of the country between, ii. 426.
- Melli, city and kingdom, mysterious traders of, v. 194.
- Medici, encouragement given by the family of, to literature, iv. 17.
- Mémoire Justificatif, in answer to the French Manifesto, account of, i. 234—The Memoir itself, v. 1.
- Mémoires Littéraires de la Grand Bretagne, a periodical work edited by Mr. Gibbon and his friend Deyverdun, i. 207—Contents of the first number of, ii. 69.
- Mémoires Militaires, of Quintus Icilius, studied by Mr. Gibbon when in the Militia, i. 137.
- Mémoires Militaires sur les Grecs et les Romains, account of, v. 219.
- Memnon, fable of, iii. 87.
- Merchants, mysterious, description of, v. 194.
- Mercier, author of the *Tableau de Paris*, ii. 338.
- Meridional Line, on the Position of, v. 170.
- Mesery, Mr. de, account of his house, his wife, and himself, i. 168.
- Metapontum, iv. 267.
- Metempsychosis, doctrine of, v. 415.
- Metrie, Mr. de la, his *Penelope's Web*, v. 459—His *Happy Life*, 462.
- Metromanie, Piron's Comedy of, critique on, v. 476.
- Mexico, population, mines, revenue, and religion of, v. 529.
- Meuzelius, German critic, editor of the *Bibliotheca Historica*, his character of Mr. Gibbon as an Historian, i. 264.
- Mezeriac's Ovid, v. 216, 219.
- Mickle's *Lusiad* characterised, v. 180, note.
- Middlesex election, Mr. Gibbon votes on the popular side respecting, ii. 133, 135.
- Middleton, Dr., his *Free Inquiry into the Miracles*, i. 60—Contrasted with *Baronius*, iv. 588—His *Treatise on the Roman Senate*, v. 457.
- Middleton, lord, ii. 123.

- Milau, ii. 59.
- Military service, nature of, under the feudal system, iii. 188.
- Militia, English prejudice in favour of, i. 134.—Mr. Gibbon holds a commission in a regiment of, *ibid.*—Benefits derived to him from this employment, 136, 145, note.—Regiments of reviewed at Portsmouth, 144, note.—Bill respecting, in consequence of the war with America, ii. 233.
- Milner, the methodist, antagonist of Mr. Gibbon, characterised, i. 231, note.
- Milton, his archangels described, ii. 476.
- Mincius, river, iv. 176.
- Minerva, question as to the time in which she lived, iii. 162.
- Mirabeau, marquis de, singularity of his character, i. 163, note.—Stigmatised as a demon, 252.—His Prussian Monarchy, and Secret Correspondence, 287.—Denominated the worst of men, 304.
- Micenum, iv. 260.
- Modesty, false, the meanest species of pride, ii. 39.
- Moine, Mr. le, his Treatise on Miracles censured, v. 459.
- Molesworth, lord, his vehement speech against the South-Sea directors, i. 16.
- Molesworth, Mr., fellow collegian of Mr. Gibbon, and believer with him in the Catholic religion, i. 62.
- Money, usurious interest charged on, by the Romans, v. 117.—Rate of interest of, and the price of land, compared, 117.—New system of, established by Constantine, 144. See farther, Copper and Gold.
- Monier, his Institutions Astronomiques, ii. 49.
- Monson's Naval Tracts, i. 151.
- Montagny, Mr. de, i. 290, 292.
- Montague, lady Mary, her Letters, v. 451.
- Montagu, Mrs., her visit to Paris, ii. 178.
- Montesquieu, his paradox, that modern Italy is a desert, refuted, i. 197.
- Montesquieu, general of the French army destined to act against Geneva, 356.—His conduct characterised as polite, moderate, and sincere, 366.—Account of his flight from his revolutionary pursuers, 381.—Farther commendation of, ii. 459, 472.
- Montfaucon, his Palaeographia, i. 174.—His library of Manuscripts, v. 344.—His Antiquities, 481.
- Montgon, abbé de, his Memoirs, v. 433.
- Montmorin, Mr. de, victim of the French revolution, ii. 457.
- Montlieu, Madame, Caroline of Lichfield written by, ii. 400.
- Montucla's History of Mathematics recommended, ii. 51.
- More, sir Thomas, his History of the Reign of Edward the Fifth censured by Horace Walpole, iii. 334.—Vindicated by Mr. Gibbon, 342.
- Mosell's Treasury of Imperial Medals, v. 472.
- Morgarten, battle of, iii. 276.
- Moshelm, his Syntagma Dissertationum mentioned with praise, iv. 572.—Charge of misquoting him resisted, 574.—Erroneously supposes the present Koran different from the laws given by the prophet in his life-time, v. 567.—Mistaken in representing the Norman pirates as devoid of all religion, *ibid.*
- Motteville, Madame de, her Memoirs of Anne of Austria characterised, v. 239.
- Mounier, Mr., president of the National Assembly, characterised as a serious, dry politician, i. 305.
- Mountains, height of several of the principal ones, v. 477, 479.
- Moyle, Mr., refutes the story of the Thundering Legion, iv. 617.
- Muratori, character of, and account of his productions, iii. 365.—His Dissertation on the Brazen Table found near Velleia, v. 483.
- Mutina, singular prodigy at, of two burning mountains contending with each other, iv. 312.
- N.
- Names, personal, as ancient as the use of words, iii. 368.—Originally every name had a distinct meaning, *ibid.*
- Nauybrus, story of, as connected with that of Parsondas, iii. 91.
- Naples, title of Charles the Eighth to, i. 50; iii. 207.—Situation of curiously described, i. 126.—Account of ancient Naples, iv. 259.—Question when it became a Roman colony, v. 512.
- Nardini, his account of Rome, v. 313.—Meaning he attributes to the words *Insula* and *Domus*, examined, 317.—Traces the *Via Sacra*, 321.—Depicts the infernal action of Tullia, 322.—Situation of Mount Esquilin, questioned, 323.—Gives an account of a Chapel dedicated to Concord, 324.—Mentions the different Forums, 326.—The Capitoline Mount, 328.—The Campus Martius, 329.—The Mons Palatinus, 334.—The Circus, 335.—The Tiber and its bridges, 340.—Conclusion and character of his work, 343.
- Narais, iv. 308.

- Nauze, Mr. de la**, his Dissertation on the Roman Calendar, v. 213, 270—His Dissertation on Pliny's book on Painting, 214—Compared with Count Caylus, *ibid.*—His Remarks on ancient Geography, 444.
- Necker, Madame**, previous to her marriage the object of our Author's affection, i. 123—Further account of, 127. ii. 64, 165—Her correspondence with Mr. Gibbon, 169, 176, 186, 193, 245, 440 to 468.
- Necker, Mr.**, account of Mr. Gibbon's acquaintance with and several visits to, i. 226, 311, 323, 345, 359. ii. 207, 367—His defence of the King, i. 368, 395—His book on the Finances, ii. 371—His Religious Opinions, 443, 454—Pure, though unsuccessful, in his political conduct, 486—His *Du Pouvoir Exécutif*, a testimony of his esteem for the English constitution, 488—Letter by, to Mr. Gibbon, after receiving an account of his having undergone the operation of tapping, 495.
- Nebuchadnezzar**, iii. 121.
- Negus, King of Egypt**, his character and exploits, v. 181.
- Nemesion**, account of his condemnation, iv. 554.
- Neptune**, inquiry as to the time in which he lived, iii. 162.
- Nero**, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 188, note—Revolted nature of his character, *ibid.*
- Neville, Mr.**, ii. 52.
- New Aretin**, v. 467.
- Newton, Bishop**, his fortune as a Churchman contrasted with that of Whiston, i. 6—Animadversions on his censure of Mr. Gibbon, 241.
- Newton, sir Isaac**, his *Principia*, ii. 48—Mistaken respecting the dynasty of the Piscadians, iii. 77—Mistaken in point of modern history, 114—His Chronology of the Greeks and Egyptians compared with the common chronology, 150—Critical Remarks on his new System of Chronology, 153.
- Nice**, Italian city of that name mistaken by the Abbé Mongault and Dr. Middleton for Bythinium, v. 550.
- Nicholls, Mr. John**, charged with remissness in not answering a letter, i. 352, 364.
- Nicholls, Rev. Norton**, letter by, ii. 500.
- Nicol, Mr. George**, i. 391.
- Nicoll, Dr. John**, master of Westminster School, i. 36.
- Nineveh**, mistakes, as to its situation, rectified, iii. 69—Its rising greatness, 102.
- Ninus**, doubts about the period in which he lived, iii. 62.
- Nivernois, Duke of**, Mr. Gibbon introduced to, i. 157, note.
- Normans**, their character in the eleventh century, iii. 11.
- North, Frederick**, i. 405.
- North, lord**, sketch of his party and his opposers in parliament, i. 221. ii. 133—His retirement from office, i. 245—Loses his sight, 258—His cheerfulness in retreat contrasted with the melancholy of Mr. Necker, 311—His death lamented as a grievous loss, 354—Characterised as one of the best companions in the kingdom, ii. 135—Letter by, 418.
- Notue, de la**, situation and conduct of, at the siege of Rochelle, v. 534.

O.

- Octavianus**, basely surriamed Augustus, hatred expressed to, for the death of Cicero, ii. 252.
- Odin**, religion of, iii. 232—His country, 233.
- Oedipus of Sophocles**, and *Birds of Aristophanes*, translated by Bowin, v. 586.
- Oguz Khan**, account of, iii. 119.
- Olbach**, baron de, i. 162, note.
- Olivet**, his edition of Cicero commended, i. 89.
- Olivier**, poem, character of, v. 414.
- Opposition**, History of, imputed to Macpherson, ii. 235.
- O'Reilly**, count, character of, ii. 481.
- Orford**, lord, i. 26.
- Oriel college**, discipline of, under Dr. Eveleigh, commended, i. 71, note.
- Orleans**, duke of, the Massacre aux Carmes concerted at his house, i. 376.
- Orosius**, edited by Havercamp, v. 344.
- Orpheus**, opinions respecting his Hymn to *Museus*, iv. 474.
- Osiris**, inquiry as to the age in which he lived, iii. 161.
- Ossian's Poems**, question of their authenticity, i. 225. ii. 101.
- Ossory**, lord, i. 411.
- Ostia**, iv. 228, 255.
- Othert the First**, account of, iii. 393—Othert the Second, 403.
- Otho the Great**, his conduct considered, - iii. 396, 493.
- Otter's Travels in Turkey**, v. 462.
- Ouchy**, residence in Switzerland of the duchess of Devonshire and lady Elizabeth Foster, ii. 472.
- Ounce**, Roman, weight of, v. 70.
- Outhier**, his Voyage to the North, v. 433.
- Ovid,

Ovid, anachronisms of, disgusting, iv. 47—
Minute account of his merits and defects, 354—Dauphin edition of, censured, v. 445—His *Fasti* examined, *ibid.* 451.

Oxford. See University.

P.

Padua, its university compared to a dying taper, i. 197.

Padus, river, iv. 174.

Paganism, system of, iv. 70—Oracles of the Pagans not more ancient and venerable than their mysteries, 471—Their oracles consulted upon all occasions, *ibid.*—Examination of their mysteries, 472.

Pagi, father, mistake of, respecting the Arab khalifs, v. 574.

Palestine, measure and extent of, iv. 540.

Paliser, sir Hugh,

Palmerston, lord, ii. 165. v. 485.

Pandæmonium, name given to the House of Commons, ii. 345, 351.

Pandataria, island, iv. 240.

Pandosis, iv. 275.

Panthea, story of, iii. 147.

Pantheon, scrupulous delicacy of the proprietors of, ii. 74.

Paoli, compared to Cromwell, i. 181, note.

Paolo, Fra, quotation from, supported, iv. 551.

Paris, why superior to London in the treasures of art, learning, and luxury, i. 159—Introduction to society there more easy than in London, 163, note—Denominated the centre of polished society, ii. 3—Account of its dinner and supper parties, 52—Its superiority to London in conversation, 53—Farther account of, 54, 207, 210.

Parker, archbishop, his character, iii. 565—Account of the books he published, *ibid.*

Parliament, danger of tampering with its representation, i. 386—Mr. Gibbon's reasons for deeming himself unqualified for a seat in, ii. 39—Dissolution of, in 1780, 243—Short sketch of a parliamentary life, 338, 351.

Parma, ruins of an ancient town discovered at, i. 183.

Parr, Dr., his opinion of Mr. Gibbon's observations on the sixth *Æneid* of Virgil, i. 211, note.

Parsondas, his character and history, iii. 91—Overturns the throne of Arctus, 99.

Parties, political, respective strength of, vol. v.

on the accession of lord Shelburne to the premiership, ii. 262.

Pascal, utility of his Provincial Letters, in forming the historical turn of mind of Mr. Gibbon, i. 96.

Passion, workings of, investigated, iv. 117.

Patavium, iv. 321.

Paterculus, Velleius, emendation of an obscure passage of, suggested, i. 527.

Patriots, list of, who have deserved well of mankind, iv. 95.

Pavilliard, Mr., of Lausanne, Mr. Gibbon placed under his tuition, i. 73—His character, 78—Reclaims his pupil from popery, 82.

Payne, lady, ii. 212.

Payne, sir Ralph, i. 421.

Pelagian colonies, account of, iv. 160.

Pelham administration, i. 26.

Peligni, iv. 295.

Pembroke, lady, on the death of her daughter, settles at Lausanne, ii. 354.

Perkin Warbeck, reasons for believing him to be the duke of York, iii. 339—Reasons for believing him to be an impostor, 343.

Persepolis, critical inquiries respecting, iii. 77.

Persia, elucidations of its history, iii. 74—Virtuous customs of its kings, 84.

Persian cycle, iii. 83—Tale, 419—Revenue, v. 139.

Persians, preference of, to the Greeks, examined, v. 422—Fondness of, for new customs and new pleasures, 534.

Perspective, best writers on, ii. 50.

Peter the First in France, philosophical Romance, character of, v. 382.

Peter the Third, Rulhière's account of his death by poison, v. 528.

Petersburgh, *Memoirs of the Academy of*, v. 467.

Petilla, iv. 275.

Petra Pertusa, iv. 307.

Phædrus, excellence of, as a school book, i. 32.

Phalaris's Epistles, new reason for pronouncing them spurious, v. 564.

Philo, by Mangey, v. 425.

Philosophy, of a genius for, iv. 57—What it is not and what it is, 58—Assistance it derives from literature, 59.

Photius, extracts from, commended, v. 212.

Phraortes, account of, iii. 114.

Physics, advantages of the ancients over the moderns in the study and cultivation of, iv. 53.

Picentini,

- Picentini, *iv.* 246.
 Picenum, *iv.* 302.
 Pierson, general, *ii.* 245.
 Pigot, lord, *ii.* 198; 433.
 Pindar, Translation of his Odes; by West, *v.* 584.
 Pinkerton, Mr. John; his character, *iii.* 571—Recommended as a proper person to edit the *Scriptores Rerum Anglicarum*, *ibid.*—His letter to Mr. Gibbon on this subject, *ii.* 492—Mr. Gibbon's answer, 492.
 Pisa, town of, *iv.* 186.
 Pischadians, dynasty of, *iii.* 77.
 Piron, his comedy of *Métromanie*, examined, *v.* 476.
 Piso, to whom Horace addressed his *Art of Poetry*, inquiry respecting, *i.* 487, 502, 518.
 Pithecusæ Insulæ, said to have been formed out of the sea by an earthquake, *iv.* 247, 264.
 Pithou, Peter, first editor of *Phædrus*, *i.* 33.
 Pitiscus, his *Dictionary of Antiquities*, *v.* 564.
 Pitt, first lord Chatham, illegal proceeding respecting the militia sanctioned by, *i.* 154.
 Pitt, William, son of the preceding, honourable mention of by Mr. Fox, *i.* 283—His conduct in going to war with Russia blamed, 321. *ii.* 433—Styled a virtuous and excellent minister, *i.* 344—Mr. Gibbon but little acquainted with him, 418—Chancellor at the age of twenty-three, *ii.* 260—His moderation and character favourable to political success, 348, 376—Blamed for withdrawing the Irish propositions, 384.
 Placentia, *iv.* 313—Inscription in a convent at, 314.
 Plagiarism, mistaken notions of, *ii.* 157.
 Platonic love, that between a brother and sister, the only kind that can be indulged without danger, *i.* 25.
 Plautus, critical remarks on a passage of, *iv.* 435.
 Pliny, the younger, disputed reference to, *iv.* 566—Date of his consulship, examined, 585—His advice with respect to reading, *v.* 211—His *Epiatles* edited by Cortius, 293—Mistakes in the French translation respecting him, *v.* 498.
 Fluche, abbé, his *History of the Heavens*, considered, *v.* 364.
 Poocke's Description of the East, *v.* 448.
 Pæstum, *iv.* 267.
 Poetry, its province and sources, *iv.* 23—Manners of the ancients more favourable to its cultivation than those of the moderns, 24—Means of perceiving its beauties, 26—Whether it should confine itself to the truth of history, 46, 48.
 Poland, contest for between Austria and Prussia, *ii.* 80.
 Polier, Swiss colonel, in danger of banishment, *i.* 394.
 Polier de Rollens, account of, as a preacher, *i.* 170.
 Policy, measures repugnant to, no longer just, *i.* 35.
 Pope's Homer, character of, *i.* 35.
 Polybius, character of, *v.* 366—Compared with Livy in his account of Hannibal's march over the Alps, 370—Editions and Translations of his *History*, 588.
 Polytheism, spread of, in Italy, in the thirteenth century, *iii.* 55.
 Pomeranian dog, present of, to Mr. Gibbon, *ii.* 135.
 Pondo, pound weight, of the Romans, *v.* 72, 80, 113, 128, 482.
 Pontia, island, *iv.* 240.
 Pontoppidan's *Gesta Danorum*, *v.* 405.
 Popery, Mr. Gibbon a proselyte to, *i.* 63—Penalties to which proselytes and priests of this religion are subject, 64—Errors of, retracted by Mr. Gibbon, 82.
 Popes, their struggles with the princes of Germany in the eleventh century, *iii.* 10—In the twelfth, 14—Their power in the thirteenth century, 24—Their removal to Avignon, and its consequences, 29—Their conduct in the fifteenth century, 42—Cannot depose kings, 213.
 Populonium, ancient town, *iv.* 189.
 Porsenna, his stupendous mausoleum described, *iv.* 197.
 Porson, Mr., his answer to archdeacon Travis, *i.* 240—His encomium of Mr. Gibbon's *History*, 264.
 Port Royal Greek Grammar, merits of, *v.* 244.
 Porten, James, account of his family, *i.* 24, note.
 Porten, Mrs., aunt to Mr. Gibbon, her care of his infancy, *i.* 27—Her character, 34—Takes a house near Westminster school on his account, 36—Accompanies him to Bath for his health, 38—Letters to, 85, 97. *ii.* 33, 124, 324, 336, 340—Affecting letters on her death, 388, 392.
 Porten, Sir Stanier, on his death Mr. Gibbon proposes to adopt one of his daughters, *i.* 297, 315—Account of his being in love, *ii.* 125—Consolatory letter to his lady on his death, 429.

- Porteus, Dr.**, supposed intention of, to write against the two last chapters of the *Decline and Fall*, ii. 166.
- Portraits of Mr. Gibbon**, i. 309. ii. 282, 363, 385.
- Portsmouth**, discourse of visitors on occasion of a review there, ii. 99.
- Portugal**, reduced state of its population, v. 531.
- Portuguese**, African trade of, v. 192.
- Porter**, archbishop, his *Grecian Antiquities*, v. 237, 287.
- Pouilly, Mr. de**, his opinion respecting the first five ages, iv. 40—His *Theory of Agreeable Sentiments*, v. 450.
- Pound**, ancient. See *Pondo*.
- Pouskin**, ii. 127.
- Powel, Mr.**, lord Holland's agent, ii. 115.
- Preachers**, the philosophical of the English, and rhetorical of the French compared, i. 140, note.
- Præneste**, iv. 332—Its Mosaic pavements, 250.
- Præutianus**, iv. 305.
- Preston, Mrs.**, i. 410.
- Price, Dr.**, characterised as a visionary, i. 304.
- Priestley, Dr.**, as an antagonist of Mr. Gibbon, characterised, i. 232—His correspondence with Mr. Gibbon, ii. 265.
- Premontal's Monogamy**, v. 468.
- Prevot's History of William the Conqueror**, v. 412.
- Prideaux**, dean, fears exposing to profane eyes the doctrine of the Incarnation, i. 253.
- Princes**, their interests can never be separated from those of their people, ii. 6—Should never interfere in theological minutiae, 21—To be admired must be viewed as we view pictures, 62—Their power of disposing of their kingdoms considered, iii. 217—The consent of the subjects, their fairest title, 222.
- Printing**, curious fact of a volume committed to the press, without having been written by a pen, i. 257—Period of the invention of printing, iii. 563—Jubilee of Printing, by Seiz, v. 381.
- Pritchard, Mrs.**, surprising versatility of her talents, i. 155, note.
- Privernum**, by the bold answer of a citizen, obtained the privileges of Rome, iv. 254.
- Prochyta**, ancient island, subject to earthquakes, iv. 264.
- Procopius**, Anecdotes of, deemed spurious, ii. 255.
- Prodigies**, remarks on several, relating to Augustus, v. 54, 55, 58.
- Prudentius**, quotation from, iv. 546.
- Prussia**, Frederic king of, traits of his character, i. 195, note—Described as the champion of public tranquillity, and of the independence of the German states, ii. 386—Appears throughout his writings the enemy of the English, v. 577—Instance of this in his description of the battle of *Blenheim*, *ibid.*
- Prussia**, Prince Henry of, favourable mention of, i. 252—Invited, with his declared mistress, to pass the winter at Vienna, ii. 251.
- Ptolemy**, character of, as a geographer, v. 179.

Q.

- Quintilian**, edited by Gesner, v. 364.
- Quotations**, Mr. Gibbon's mode of making them, as represented by Mr. Davis, iv. 523.

R.

- Racine**, charged with credulity, iii. 178.
- Raleigh**, sir Walter, his life chosen by Mr. Gibbon as a subject of historical composition, but afterwards relinquished, i. 150—Character of *Oldys's Life of*, 151—Remarks on his death, iii. 209.
- Randolph, Dr.**, contrasted with Mr. Davis, iv. 602—With Dr. Watson, 605.
- Rapin**, falsely supposes that Frederic the Second bequeathed Sicily to his son Henry, v. 514.
- Ratel**, Persian weight, v. 129.
- Ravenna**, why the chosen residence of the emperors, iv. 211—Why *Cæsar* established his winter-quarters there, v. 368.
- Raynal**, abbé, character of, ii. 330—His *History of the Office of Stadtholder*, v. 463.
- Reading**, mode of doing it with advantage, v. 209.
- Reate**, famous for its asses and the quick growth of its herbage, iv. 291.
- Reaumur**, his *Natural History of Bees*, v. 432—His *Art of Hatching Eggs*, 465.
- Rebellion of 1745**, i. 26.
- Reform**, club of, reprobated, i. 548—Danger of, evinced from its effect in France, 269, 349, 383.
- Religion**, how far the chief magistrate might interfere in it, ii. 31—Etymology of the word, 481—Determined by the majority of a community, iii. 214—Difficulty of arriving at the knowledge of it, iv. 70—Reason but of little use in the inquiry, 72—The Greek and Egyptian religion, 73—Of the worship of heroes, 74—Opinions of savages upon the subject confused, 78—Generation

- and hierarchy of the gods, 82—Gods of human life, *ibid.*—Systems of liberty and necessity, 83—The latter adopted by the ancients, *ibid.*—Union of the two species of divinity, 84—Gods subject to human passions, 85—Had their partialities, 86—And their contests, 87—Assumed the human form, 88—Were subject to bodily pains and pleasures, *ibid.*—See farther, Paganism.
- Religious Opinions, by Necker, ii. 443, 454.
- Religious war, effects of, v. 538.
- Renée, her character, iii. 450.
- Rennell, major, letter by, ii. 426.
- Reputation, value of, ii. 422.
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua, his speech on viewing in after-life some portraits painted in his youth, i. 130—Natural propensity of the mind to any one art or science rather than another, denied by him, 149—Portraits of Mr. Gibbon by, 309. ii. 232, 363—His death a grievous loss to Mr. Gibbon, i. 354.
- Rhegium, account of, iv. 271.
- Rheni Insula, described, iv. 310.
- Rhine, happy comparison of, i. 370.
- Richard the First, account of, v. 488.
- Richard the Third, some particulars of his life and reign examined, iii. 333.
- Richecourt, count de, character of, i. 195, note.
- Richer, his Parallel of the Arundelian marbles, v. 466—His Moses defended against Appian, 468—His Dissertation on Usher's Chronology, 471.
- Richmond, duke of, ii. 207—On the death of Lord Rockingham keeps his situation of lord lieutenant of Ireland, 260.
- Ridley, son of sir Matthew, served in the seven years war under prince Ferdinand, ii. 65, note.
- Rinaldo the First, account of, iii. 475.
- Robertson, character of, as an historian, i. 122—Not equal to Hume, ii. 10—Letter by, to Mr. Strahan, 159—Sends Mr. Gibbon a copy of his History of America, 200—Complimentary letter to, by Mr. Gibbon in return, 201—Reply to that letter, 204—Further letters by, 416, 425, 434.
- Rochefoucault, duke de, victim of the French revolution, ii. 457.
- Rockingham, lord, death of, ii. 258—Resignations in consequence of that event, 259.
- Rodolph. See Habsburgh.
- Rolle, federation dinner at, i. 394.
- Roman Empire, History of the Decline and Fall of, books to which the author remotely owed the writing it, i. 96—When and where the idea of writing it first struck him, 198—Books read by him preparatory to its commencement, 212—The first chapters of it several times recomposed, 220. ii. 136—Publication and reception of the first volume, i. 222, 223—Attacks on the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of that volume, 230—Answer to the attacks, iii. 515—Letters commendatory of the first volume, by Mr. Hume, i. 224—by Mr. Strahan, ii. 138—By Mr. George Scott, 141—By Mr. Whitaker, with some defects pointed out, 146, 149—By Dr. Warton, 152—By Mr. Garrick, 153—By Mr. Horace Walpole, 154—By Dr. Robertson, 155, 249—By Mr. Adam Ferguson, 160—By professor Campbell, 168—By Madame Necker, 172, 177—By Mr. Suard of Paris, 183—Improvements in the manner of printing it suggested, 162—Expense and profit of the third edition of the first volume stated, 167, note—Fifty sheets of the continuation of the work committed to the flames, i. 230—Publication of the second and third volumes, 239—Farther prosecution of the work, 245—Feelings of the author on the day of its conclusion, 255—Statement of the time employed on each of the last three volumes, 256, note—Concluding volumes published, 263—Foreign translations of the work, 239, 265. ii. 183, 190.
- Roman empire, proof of its being neither patrimonial nor hereditary, iii. 170—Slowest in its rise, and longest in its duration, why.
- Roman Republic, History of by Ferguson, ii. 163.
- Romans, chronology of their history, iii. 165—Controversy respecting the first five centuries, iv. 40—Reflections on that controversy, 44—Their roads and highways, 335—Marches of their armies, 352—Their triumphs minutely examined, 359—Their right of triumph, 360—Authority by which it was conferred, *ibid.*—Persons on whom it was conferred, 362—Reasons for which it was granted, 367—Gate through which they passed, 381—Conduct of the Romans to Perseus and Jugurtha contrasted, 397—Their money, weights and measures, v. 70—Their method of computation, iii. 112, 113, 132—Usury practised by, 116—Their first silver money, 132—Their hollow measures not derived from the Athenians, 135.

- Romans in Great Britain, projected work on the military history of, ii. 144.
- Romanow, ii. 127.
- Rome, ancient city of, its boundaries, walls, and gates, iv. 206—Its wonders, 210—Its four ages, 220—Its goddesses, 224—Farther account of Rome, v. 313.
- Rose, Samuel, letter by, ii. 502.
- Rosset, confined in the castle of Chillon for his revolutionary principles, i. 336—Condemned to fine, and twenty years imprisonment, 347—Escapes from prison, 365.
- Rottberg, fortress of, manœuvre by which it was surprised and taken, iii. 266.
- Rousseau, his Confessions, i. 6.
- Rozzouico, pope Clement the Thirteenth, i. 196.
- Rubicon, prohibitory statue erected on the banks of, iv. 311—Supposed by Montesquieu as authentic, v. 553.
- Ruling passion, v. 539.
- Rumford, count, variously denominated, ii. 326.
- Russel, sir John, ii. 110, 117, 124, 127—His unseasonable death, 318.
- Russia, war with, by Mr. Pitt, reprehended, i. 321—Statistic account of, v. 527.
- Russians, body of, intended to be employed against the Americans, ii. 140—Causes to which the abject state of slavery of the Russians is to be ascribed, v. 531.
- Rutilius Numanianus, his Voyage, i. 177—His Poem minutely examined, v. 435.
- Rutuli, iv. 233.
- S.
- Sabini, account of, iv. 288.
- Sacrificer, Essay on the Nature and Office of, v. 473.
- Sage, le, exact observer of geography, ii. 479.
- Saint Alban's Tavern, meeting of the country gentlemen at, ii. 349.
- Saint James, patron and apostle of Spain, account of, v. 494.
- Saladin, some account of, iii. 18.
- Salapia, iv. 280.
- Salassi, ancient people of Italy, account of, iv. 176.
- Salmasius, his character contrasted with that of Grotius, v. 209.
- Sallust, remarks on his character and writings, iv. 399—Few's translation of, 406—Blamed both as a chronologist and geographer, v. 552.
- Samnites, account of, iv. 297.
- Samnium, iv. 287.
- Sappho, her bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 188, note.
- Sardanapalus, his courageous defence of his empire in a revolt, iii. 66—Burns himself in his palace with his eunuchs, concubines, and treasure, 68—Supposed fate of his children, 71, note.
- Sardinia, king of, short account of him, i. 179, note.
- Sarpedon, as amiable a character as Patroclus, and a much greater one, v. 226.
- Sarnen, fortress of, manœuvre by which it was surprised and taken, iii. 266.
- Sataspes, story of, iv. 188.
- Saturnalia, observations respecting the festivals of that name, v. 503.
- Saurin, his pleading against Rousseau, v. 423.
- Saussure, Mr. de, letter by, ii. 436.
- Saville, sir Henry, his edition of *Scriptores post Bedam*, iii. 566.
- Savornin, Mr. de, his *Sentimens d'un Homme de Guerre*, v. 223.
- Savoy, princess of, i. 179—Duke of, *ibid.*—Invasion of Savoy by the French, 356—Its change of name, 385.
- Saxon kings and clergy, ii. 106.
- Scarron's Works, v. 473.
- Scholias, mistakes pointed out, of one who wrote commentaries on Cicero, v. 513.
- Schedius de Diis Germanis, v. 386.
- Schomberg, count de, our author's intimacy with, i. 317.
- Schools, public, best adapted to the genius and constitution of the English, i. 37.
- Sculteus, Eloge of, v. 465.
- Sciences, their connection with one another pointed out, iv. 50—Not indebted to luxury for their existence, 9^{oi}.
- Scott, Mr. George, commended as a mathematician, i. 147—Letter by, on mathematical studies, ii. 44—Invited to contribute to the *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne*, 68—Letter by, on Mr. Gibbon's historical work, 141, v. 219.
- Scott, sir William, formerly tutor in University College, Oxford, i. 70—The publication of his lectures on history desirable, *ibid.*
- Scyllaceum, situated in the narrowest part of Italy, iv. 273.
- Scythians, account of, iii. 118.
- Sectanus, his *Satires*, v. 344.
- Seiz, Mr., his Jubilee of Printing, v. 381.
- Selden, his work de *Diis Syriis* commended, v. 507.
- Seneca, description of his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 188, note.
- Septchènes, Mr. Leclerc de, undertakes the translation into French of Mr. Gibbon's *History*, ii. 190.
- Septennial act, though vicious in its origin, beneficial in its effects, i. 18.
- Septimus

- Septimius Severus, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 191, note.
- Serious Call, by Law, character of, i. 21.
- Sesostris, age of, chosen as the subject for Mr. Gibbon's first attempt as an author, i. 56—Fate of this composition, 58.
- Sesterium, nature and value of, v. 112, 483—Decimal tables of, 134.
- Servetus, his works lost in oblivion, ii. 266—Calvin's cruel treatment of him, v. 401.
- Severy, Mr. Wilhelm de, protégé of Mr. Gibbon, i. 267—Some account of, and his family, 268, 279, 294—Ill health of his father, 378, 384—His father's death, 392—Accompanies Mr. Gibbon to Frankfort, 399—Letters from Mr. Gibbon to his mother, ii. 364, 404, 413—Another, to his father, 409, 423.
- Sévigéné, Madame de, commended, ii. 37.
- Sexes, respective value of, iii. 489.
- Shaftsbury, mistaken as to the state of the arts in Rome, after despotism was established, v. 564.
- Sheffield, lord, his Prefaces as editor of the present publication, i. 1—His first acquaintance with our author, 169—His marriage, ii. 65—Captain in the regiment of Royal Foresters, 67, note—Death of his first son, 80—Makes a tour to Ireland and Scotland, 109—Deemed by Mr. Gibbon calculated to act in the place of Lord George Germaine in America, 148—His steadfast opposition to America in her dissensions with England, 216—Major of the Sussex Militia, 232—Defends Mr. Gibbon's accepting a place under lord North, i. 236—Raises a regiment of Light Dragoons, ii. 234, note—Returned to parliament for Coventry, i. 256. ii. 238—His eager and persevering zeal in Parliamentary affairs, 240—His activity in quelling the disturbances occasioned by lord George Gordon, 241—Created lord Sheffield, i. 256. ii. 243—Ordered to Canterbury and Deal to suppress disturbances, 257—Character of his writings, i. 257. ii. 327, 337—Leaves the army, 262—Loses his seat for Coventry, 351, 353—Returned to parliament for the city of Bristol, free of expence, i. 312—His lady esteemed by Mr. Gibbon above every other woman in the world, 317—His observations on the Corn Laws, 324—His visit to Mr. Gibbon at Lausanne, 327—His hospitable reception of the French emigrants, 354, 358, 365—Abjures all political connection with Mr. Fox, 392—Adapted, in Mr. Gibbon's estimation, for an active seat in the government, 396—Death of his lady, 397—His account of Mr. Gibbon's return to England in consequence of that event, 404—His narrative of Mr. Gibbon's illness and death, 414, 418, 420, 423—His reasons for publishing Mr. Gibbon's letters, 431—New edition of his works, ii. 363, 378—Further account of his writings, 386, 394—Complimentary letters to, as editor of the present volumes, 496—503.
- Shekel of the Hebrews, value of, v. 78.
- Shelburne, lord, succeeds lord Rockingham as prime minister, i. 246. ii. 522—Reigns, i. 157.
- Sheridan, Mr., his eloquence on the trial of Mr. Hastings, i. 238. ii. 422.
- Shoes, nailing them to the feet of horses not known to the ancients, v. 535.
- Silarus, river, had the property of changing wood into stone, iv. 268.
- Silius Italicus, his Catalogue examined, iv. 333.
- Silva, Madama de, i. 337.
- Simpson, Dr. Robert, his Euclid, ii. 45.
- Simpson, Thomas, his Algebra, Trigonometry and Fluxions recommended, ii. 48.
- Sinner, l'Avoyer de, letter to, ii. 427—Letter in reply, 428.
- Sinuessa, iv. 240—Its exhalations said to be fatal to animals, and sometimes to men, iv. 247.
- Sipus, territory of, the worst of ancient Italy, iv. 280.
- Sirmond, father, his advice to a young friend not to appear as an author till the mature age of fifty, exemplified in himself, i. 125.
- Sivrac, duchess of, ii. 362.
- Smart, Christopher, mistaken in supposing the first lines of Horace's Art of Poetry levelled at Ovid, v. 568.
- Smith, Dr., his Harmonics recommended, ii. 50.
- Smith, Dr. Adam, commendation of his Wealth of Nations, ii. 162—His opinion of Mr. Gibbon's History, 255—Letter by, on that subject, 429—Extract of his Wealth of Nations published in Spain by permission of the court, and the work itself condemned by the Inquisition, 479.
- Smuggling, Mr. Pitt's restraints on, ruinous to the East India companies of Antwerp and Sweden, ii. 377.
- Social contract, ties of, never dissolved by revolutions, iii. 110—Happy instance of this contract in the Swiss confederation, 280.
- Soracte, ancient mountain, iv. 196.
- South-Sea scheme, violent and arbitrary treatment of its directors, i. 16.
- Spain,

- Spain, rumour of a war with, ii. 122—Content of with the Algerines, 137—Account of a tour through, 477—Its roads and climate, 478—Its language and literature, 479—Its court, 480—State of, in the tenth century, iii. 6—In the eleventh, 12—In the twelfth, 17—In the thirteenth, 26—In the fourteenth, 36—In the fifteenth, 52—Statistic account of, particularly its weights and money, v. 156—Its population and manufactures, 530.
- Spanheim, his *De Præstantia et Usu Numismatum* examined, v. 457, 458, 460, 467, 475, 477, 478, 479, 481.
- Spear, God of war adored by the Romans under the form of, v. 322.
- Spelman's Xenophon, i. 41.
- Spencer, the Fairy Queen the most precious jewel in the coronet of, i. 4—Character of lord and lady Spencer, ii. 384.
- Spina, admirable correction of Pliny by Cluvier respecting, iv. 316.
- Spire, taken by Custine, ii. 459.
- Spoletium, iv. 308.
- Spring, name given to an association of young persons, male and female, at Lausanne, i. 167, ii. 60.
- Stael, Madame de, leaves France to take up her abode with her father, i. 347—Arrives after many miraculous escapes, 355, ii. 458—Is brought to bed of a second son, i. 383—Described as a pleasant little woman, *ibid.*—Character of, when Mademoiselle Necker, ii. 367.
- Stanyan, his calculation of the wealth of the republic of Berne, ii. 29.
- Stebbing's Defence of Christianity, v. 468.
- Stewart, Mr. Simeon, unsuccessful candidate for the borough of Southampton, i. 118.
- Stilico, his battle with the Goths, v. 258.
- Stockings, witticism respecting, ii. 116.
- Stormont, lord, ambassador at Paris, i. 203—Recalled, 222.
- Strabo, character of his book on Geography, v. 445.
- Strahan, William, letter by, on the subject of Mr. Gibbon's History, ii. 138—Letter to, suggesting improvements in the manner of printing it, 161—Farther letter to, commendatory of the History, 168—Letter to, on the death of Hume, 174.
- Stratton, Mr., ii. 233.
- Strozzi, duke, i. 192, note.
- Stuart, Andrew, applies to the pope on the subject of Arabic manuscripts in the Vatican, ii. 479.
- Stuart, cardinal, his person and manners, i. 192, note.
- Succession, uncertainty of the rights of, iii. 206.
- Suer, le, his History of the Church and Empire, i. 77.
- Suetonius by Oudendorp, v. 467.
- Suja Dowla, ii. 120.
- Sulma, iv. 296.
- Sulpitius Severus, translation of a passage of, justified, iv. 547.
- Sulpitia, Satire written by her examined, v. 311.
- Superstition, catholic, enemy of reason, and parent of the arts, i. 159—Resources of superstition inexhaustible, iii. 66.
- Susa, supposed to have been the capital of an empire, iii. 90.
- Swiss and Switzerland, slight sketch of Switzerland, i. 98—History of the liberty of the Swiss a desirable subject for an author, 153—Innocent freedom of the Swiss manners exemplified, 167—Unworthy treatment of a Swiss regiment by the French, 347, 355—Farther conduct of the French towards the Swiss, 357—ii. 460, 461—Pure air of Switzerland favourable to a gouty constitution, ii. 158—Establishment of its government in the fourteenth century, iii. 32—General history of the Swiss Republic, 239—Geographical description of Switzerland, *ibid.*—Account of Switzerland while a province of Germany, 240—Its beginning independence, 250—Arbitrary conduct of Albert the First towards the Swiss, 253—Despotism of the governors which he placed over them, 257—Particulars of a conspiracy, the result of that despotism, 261—Number of Swiss nobility sacrificed to avenge the death of Albert, who was assassinated by his nephew, 270—Conduct of the Swiss to his successor, 271—Their courageous opposition to, and defeat of, Leopold, 275—Confederation of the Swiss states, 280—Disquieted in their liberty by the house of Austria, 284—Their confederation augmented by the alliance of Lucerne, 287—By that of Berne, 296—By that of Zurich, 311—By that of Glaris, 319—By that of Zug, 320—Enter into a treaty with Rodolphus and Leopold, sons of duke Albert, 327—Farther particulars of the alliance of Berne to the confederation, 327—Statistic account of Switzerland, particularly its money, v. 153. See farther, Berne, Geneva, and Zurich.
- Sybaris, city of, critical remarks on the number of its inhabitants, iii. 178—Account of ancient Sybaris, iv. 266.
- Sylva,

Sylva, Madame de, i. 408, 422.

T.

Tacitus, parallel between, and Livy, iv. 66.
Talent, Roman, weight and value of, v. 73
—Attic, 74, 483—Tyrian, 76—Babylonian, 77—Jewish, 78—Alexandrian, 79—One in use in, the heroic ages, 110.

Tamerlane, account of, iii. 38, 40—His policy in conquests commended, 141.

Tarentum, iv. 283.

Tarquinius, nursery established there of all sorts of plants and animals, iv. 195.

Tartar conquerors, some account of, in the thirteenth century, iii. 20.

Tatwyl, battle of, iii. 313.

Taurasium, iv. 279.

Taurisci, ancient people of Italy, iv. 177.

Taylor, his Dissertation on the Laws of the Decemvirs against insolvent Debtors, v. 413.

Taylor, the Arian, character of his book on the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History, i. 231, note.

Telemachus, character of, iv. 482—Compared with Sethos, 495, note.

Tell, William, Swiss revolution unjustly ascribed to him, iii. 263—Authenticity of the story of, examined, ii. 329, note.

Temple, sir William, his use of the French language, i. 132—Mistaken as to the law of succession in the empire of the Mamluks, v. 554—Mistakes Amansor, an imaginary hero, for one of the Western caliphs, 555.

Tempssa, singular Pagan custom observed at, iv. 271.

Terrasson, his Sethos compared with Telemachus, iv. 495, note—Character of his Sethos, v. 298.

Tertullian, passage from, and the name of the Treatise from which it is taken, rectified, iv. 54—Mr. Gibbon's reason for the frequent use of this author, 545.

Test Act, ii. 74.

Tetradrachma, value of, v. 74, 83, 97.

Texier's Readings, ii. 142.

Theatre, English, Mr. Gibbon an assiduous frequenter of, i. 114.

Theatre, Greek, by Brunoy, v. 586.

Theban Legion, dissertation on the martyrdom of, v. 447.

Theological Faults, v. 428.

Thomas, his Eloge of the duke of Sully highly commended, v. 460.

Thou, pronoun, Letters on the use of, v. 472.

Thrasymenus Lacus, iv. 198. v. 387.

Thuanus, i. 5.

Thurlow, lord, letter to, by Mr. Gibbon, offering his services to government, ii. 272—Lord Thurlow's answer, 274.

Tiber, river, described, iv. 199—Observations on its depth, v. 340.

Tiberius, his age the most vicious of antiquity, iv. 65—His debaucheries at the island of Capreae questioned, v. 47.

Tibur, town of, iv. 232—Singular country-house of Adrian there, 251.

Ticonderoga, besieged, ii. 182.

Tillemont, his compilations mentioned with praise, iv. 591—His History of the Emperors, v. 266.

Timavus, account of its streams and fountains, iv. 318.

Timur. See Tamerlane.

Tithes, divinity of, ii. 107.

Toggenbourg, count de, his generous conduct to the Swiss, iii. 275—Taken prisoner, and cut afterwards into a thousand pieces, 307.

Toledo, archbishop of, some account of, ii. 481.

Toleration of the Asiatics, v. 465.

Tollius, his edition of Longinus, v. 252—His Gustus Animadversionum Criticarum, 282.

Tom Jones, novel of, highly commended, i. 5.

Torrington, lord, himself pitied, and his uncle reprobated, ii. 34.

Townley, colonel, candidate for the county of Lancaster, ii. 75.

Townshend, Mr., characterised as an acute traveller, but a bad mineralogist, ii. 478.

Townshend, Tommy, motion by, that a sermon preached before the house of commons be burned by the common hangman, ii. 78.

Trabaud, his Principes du Movement et de l'Equilibre, ii. 49.

Trade, gentility not degraded by, i. 8—Principles of, v. 361.

Trajan, his bust in the Florence Gallery described, i. 189.

Tranquebar, missious to, v. 425.

Translations, French and Latin, method respecting, adopted by Mr. Gibbon, i. 87.

Transpadana, province of, iv. 178.

Traveller, qualifications essential to, described, i. 198.

Travis, Mr., one of the antagonists of Mr. Gibbon, characterised, i. 239.

Traytorrens, Mr., his lectures on Algebra and Geometry attended by Mr. Gibbon, i. 93.

Tree,

- Tree, genealogical, from Adalbert to George the Third, iii. 478.
- Trembley, Mr., his Researches on the Poytas, v. 428.
- Trevor, Mrs., i. 336.
- Turin, account of, and its reigning family, i. 178, note.
- Turks, their conquests in the fourteenth century, iii. 37—Their conduct in the sixteenth, 41.
- Turretin Alphonso, his Elogé by Vernet, v. 325.
- Tusci, villa of Pliny, described, iv. 198.
- Tusculum, iv. 231—Proceeding of the inhabitants of, to Camillus, 252.
- Tyger Roch, escapes from the Cape to the Mauritius, ii. 130.
- V.
- Vebre, Mr. la, ii. 36.
- Vadimonium, lake, described, iv. 197.
- Vaillant, his book on medals, v. 482.
- Valois, his Dissertation on the Amphictyons, v. 235.
- Varignon, his *Eclaircissement des Infuiment Petits*, ii. 45.
- Vassal, duties of, under the fœdal system, iii. 214.
- Vegetius's Institutions, v. 428.
- Veii, situation of examined, v. 384.
- Velia, ancient Greek town, account of, iv. 268.
- Velleius Paterculus, mistake in Vossius's Life of, respecting a defeat of the Romans, v. 508.
- Veneti, their origin, iv. 314.
- Venetia, account of, iv. 314.
- Venice, league of Cambray against, iii. 444.
- Venusia, iv. 282.
- Venuti, his Discoveries of Herculaneum, v. 471.
- Vernet, his Elogé on Alphonso Turretin, v. 325—His Letters on the pronoun Thou, 472.
- Verona, iv. 320.
- Vertot, his sentiments on the Social War combated, v. 389—Historical errors committed by him pointed out, 509.
- Verus, Annius, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 190, note.
- Vespasian, his bust in the Florence Gallery described, i. 188, note.
- Vestini, iv. 296.
- Vesuvius, iv. 243—History of, by the Academy of Naples, v. 412.
- Vetulonia, ancient town of Italy, iv. 190.
- Viani, his account of Mezzabarba's Voyage to China, v. 364.
- Vibo, ancient town of Italy, account of, iv. 271.
- Vicat, civilian professor at Lausanne, commended, i. 95.
- Vincent, Dr., letters by, respecting the period of Mr. Gibbon's entering Westminster School, ii. 488, 489.
- Vindication of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History, reception of, i. 231—Commendation of, by Horace Walpole, ii. 158—By Dr. Robertson, 229—The work itself, iv. 515.
- Vnerian professorship at Oxford, excellence of, i. 73.
- Virgil, chronology of his *Æneid*, iii. 165—Necessity of being acquainted with the state of Rome, its infancy and splendour, to understand his beauties, iv. 29—His address in the conduct of the *Æneid*; 31—His *Georgics*, 32—Purpose for which they were written, 35—His anachronisms compensated by his beauties, 47—The instance of Mezentius slain by Ascanius, *ibid.*—The Episode of Dido examined and justified, 49—His *Æneid* examined by Hurd, 125, v. 216—His catalogue praised, iv. 328—His story of Mezentius examined, 329—His description of the temple of Janus, 390—Remarks on several passages of the *Æneid*, 441, 446—The interpretation of the Sixth *Æneid* by Warburton, examined and censured, 467—Account of that interpretation, 468—Nature and plan of the *Æneid* considered, 475—The character of *Æneas* examined, *ibid.*—His discourse with Anchises in the infernal regions, 487—His account of *Æneas*'s descent, 491—The episode of the infernal shades borrowed from Homer, 497—Beauties of the episode, *ibid.*—Reason why Virgil has not recorded in his Sixth *Æneid*, the secret of the Eleusinian mysteries, 498—His Life, prefixed to Holdsworth's Remarks, mentioned with praise, 500—To prove that he did not reveal the secret of the mysteries, a passage from Horace quoted, 503—Ivory gate in the Sixth *Æneid* attempted to be explained, 513—Story of Nisus and Euryalus compared with the night adventures in the *Iliad*, v. 218—Description of the shield in the Eighth *Æneid* compared with that in the *Iliad*, 229.
- Vitellius, his bust in the Florence Gallery, i. 188, note.
- Vivannes, duke of, his observation to Lewis the Fourteenth, v. 209.
- Volterra, iv. 188.
- Volkel, professor, wishes Mr. Gibbon to recommend

- recommend him as travelling tutor, ii. 438.
- Volsci, iv. 235.
- Voltaire, some particulars of, during his residence at Lausanne, i. 103—Acts in a theatre at Lausanne, built for the representation of his own plays, 104, 167—Mistaken in a point of history, iii. 272—His Age of Lewis the Fourteenth characterised, v. 247—His poem, entitled, What best pleases Women? examined, 460—His Treatise on Toleration considered, 469—His defence of the marriage of Mademoiselle, from the examples of Roman emperors, refuted, v. 558—His Dialogue between Marcus Aurelius, and a Recolet friar, 561—Erroneous in rejecting the famous inscription respecting the date of Christianity in China, *ibid.*—Commends Racine and Corneille for not showing contempt for the Jewish nation, 570.
- Vossius, Isaac, his Dissertation on the magnitude of Rome, v. 344—His character, 350.

U.

- Umbria, province of, iv. 305.
- Umbria cis Apenninum, iv. 307.
- Umbria trans Apenninum, iv. 307.
- Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, some account of, i. 44, 48—Indolence of their professors, 50—Their tutors, 54—Remissness of, in inculcating religious principles, 59—Clamour raised against the University of Oxford, on account of the popish principles of some of her sons, 64—Improvements, as to academical discipline, supposed to have been recently made in some of the colleges of Oxford, 70—Early state of Oxford, v. 522—Schools at Cambridge in the twelfth century, 523.
- Ursel, duke and duchess of, make a journey from Brussels to Lausanne, to act a comedy, ii. 336.

W.

- Wainfleet, bishop, Magdalen college founded by, i. 51.
- Waistcoats, English ladies occupied in making them for the army in Flanders, i. 413.
- Waldegrave, Dr., academical tutor to Mr. Gibbon, i. 54—Letter by, ii. 37.
- Wales, princess of, ii. 74.
- Wallace, Mr., letter by, on the death of Mr. Hume, ii. 174.
- Walpole, Horace, letters by, i. 153—158—His Historical Doubts respecting the Life and Reign of Richard the Third examined, iii. 331—Hume's reply to his Historical Doubts, 341—Inaccurate in his account of the tournament between earl Rivers and the great Bastard of Burgundy, v. 571.
- Walpole, sir Robert, events that followed on his resignation, i. 25.
- War, has its rights as well as peace, iii. 131.
- Warburton, bishop, his arbitrary disposition as a critic, i. 209—Character of his Divine Legation of Moses, 211, note—His Interpretation of Virgil's Sixth Æneid minutely examined, iv. 467.
- Warton, Dr. Joseph, letter by, ii. 152—Errors of, pointed out, as to the time in which Pericles and Apelles lived, v. 566.
- Warren, sir George, diamond star cut from his coat, at court, two birth days following, ii. 193.
- Washington, ii. 168.
- Water, Theology of, by Fabricius, v. 369.
- Watson, Dr., characterised by Mr. Gibbon as a prelate of a large mind and liberal spirit, i. 231—Letters of civility from one to the other, ii. 180, 227—Account of the difference of opinion between him and Mr. Gibbon on the subject of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Decline and Fall, iv. 597—One passage in the chapters particularly reprehended by him, 599.
- Watteville, Mr. de, a Swiss, spirited resolution of, i. 358.
- Way, Mr. and Mrs., ii. 79.
- Way, Gregory Lewis, letter by, to lord Sheffield, ii. 501.
- Webster, lady, i. 408.
- Wedderburne, Mr., afterwards lord Loughborough, procures for our author a place at the Board of Trade, 235—Confidence of Mr. Gibbon in his political talents, 396, ii. 263—Visits Ireland, *ibid.*—Letter by, 322—Letter to, on his being appointed Lord High Chancellor, 486.
- Werner, a young Swiss, his heroic conduct in a conspiracy to obtain freedom for his country, iii. 261.
- Weingarten, monk of, his Chronicle of the Lords of Altdorf, iii. 491.
- Weights, Measures, and Money of the Ancients, Dissertation on the Principles of, v. 66.
- Wesseling, his Itineraria Vetera, v. 293—His discourse on the Inscription of Benenice,

- renice, 326—His Treatise on a passage of Victor Tununensis, 333.
- Welstein's edition of the New Testament, v. 468, 472.
- Whig and Tory, absurdity of the present use of the appellations of, i. 314.
- Whitaker, Mr., his strictures on Mr. Gibbon's History characterized as malignant and illiberal, i. 243, note—His motive for writing them, *ibid.*—Letters by, to Mr. Gibbon, ii. 100, 144, 145—Bigotted adversary of Dr. Robertson, 417.
- White, Dr., antagonist of Mr. Gibbon, i. 232—His sermons commended, 233.
- Whist, favourite game at Lausanne, i. 171, note.
- Whitshed, Mr., mentions a curious question asked by a young member of parliament respecting the speaker's chair, ii. 129.
- Wilbraham, George, ii. 72.
- Wilkes, John, character of, i. 142, note.
- Wines, ancient, of Italy, iv. 248, 320.
- Witkind, alliance of the Este Guelphs with, iii. 498.
- Women, read more than men, but less profitably, i. 371—Old women, a term suitable to judges, bishops, and generals, ii.
- Wood, Antony, i. 6.
- Woodeson, Dr., schoolmaster, Mr. Gibbon of his scholars, i. 31.
- Woodfall, Mr., his Narrative of Parliamentary Debates commended, ii. 346.
- Words, number of, that might be pronounced by a rapid orator in an hour, i. 259.
- World, Outlines of the History of, iii. 1.
- Worship, conformity between the Pagan and Catholic rites of, v. 428—The Pagan, more consistent than that of the Catholic, 453—Farther statement of the conformity between, 539.
- Worsley, sir Thomas, his contest with the duke of Bolton, i. 134—His intemperance in drinking, 141, 142, note—Deyverdun, the friend of Mr. Gibbon, travelling tutor to his son, 208.
- Wynne, sir Watkin, candidate for the county of Salop, ii. 143.

X.

Xenophon, recommended to a young scholar as the best Greek author, i. 89—Essay on his *Cyropædia*, 215—Account of the *Cyropædia* and the author, iii. 122—Spelman's Translation of the *Cyropædia*, v. 537.

Y.

Yezdegerd, era of his reign, iii. 82.

York, duke of, i. 127.

Z.

Zaintes, bishop of, revolutionary murder of, i. 375, note.

Zanguebar, Arabians of, their flourishing state, v. 190.

Zarina, queen of the Saques, account of, iii. 105.

Zingis Khan, account of, iii. 20.

Zug, account of, iii. 319—Joins the Swiss confederation, 320.

Zurich, its origin, iii. 296—Revolution in its government, 300—Conspiracy of its exiles, 308—Joins the Swiss confederation, 311—Wars with Austria, 312.

THE END.