

emulate, with no hope of equalling, were the favoured offspring of this golden age. To imitate these is now adjudged the highest aim of learning, and the most laudable attempt of aspiring genius.

I shall here offer but one more remark on the subject of Grecian literature, which is, that in all the departments of knowledge in which they excelled, (and the magic of their touch changed the rudest forms to excellence, no future age or people, have added a single beauty or fresh perfection; but all their productions are now considered as standard works, which foolish vanity only strives to surpass, and which hardened dulness alone attempts to depreciate.

But however painful be the task, and with pain we turn to its performance, let us now contemplate the soil of Greece made barren of her choicest flowers, by the power, rapacity, and gold, of her arrogant Victor. Let us witness the treasures of the *Lycæum*, the *Academy*, the *Garden*, and the *Portico*, transplanted to a Roman clime, adorning the palace, and yielding to their envious violator, exhaustless riches, and resplendent fame.

Not such the cries of old; not such the stroke, When first the nations bow'd beneath our yoke. Wealth then, was theirs, unceasing and unthought; Then all had pictures by Puthian's wrought; Busts that from Myro did their form receive, And ivory, taught by Phidias' skill to live. On every side a Polydorus you view'd, And scarce a board without a Mentor stood. These Anthony and Dolabella fir'd With most rapacious phrensy, these inspir'd The sacrilegious Verres;—so for Rome They shipped their secret spoils.

Rome from the triumvirate of Augustus, and Lepidus, was gradually declining in literature, taste, science, and humanity. In the reign of Augustus, they were at the summit of grandeur and magnificence; and in the opinion of a great writer of antiquity, adulation had become so pernicious and effectual, as to impair the dignity and truth of historical composition. In Tacitus himself, we perceive with sorrow, such as the traveller feels at the sinking of the sun, the last flashes of her expiring genius. In the younger Pliny, we behold with pain, her first proof of a vitiated taste, and a depraved erudition; and in the writings of Ammonius and Porphyry, we discern with disgust, the completion of false knowledge, affected wit, and corrupted reason.

Long previous to the irruption of the Barbarians, vanity found her way to the mind, and parched in the place of laudable ambition, which had aimed only, after solid acquisitions. Superficial accomplishments hence became more general than profound knowledge, and exterior refinement, was accompanied with inward barbarity. Pleasure, indolence, vice, and extravagance, caused polite learning and refined taste, to languish and decay. When the northern hordes, therefore, burst like a torrent into the Roman territories, the human understanding, feeble and emaciated, shrunk with weakness, terror, and dismay; before the blast of barbarous valour, and triumphant rudeness. The magnificent pile of former literature, was already neglected and forsaken, exposed to the dissipations of time, and the inroad of corruption; to the waste of ignorance, and the secure pillage of every literary invader. A degrading war was waged by dulness and false taste, against the dominion of letters; and the physical hostilities of the barbarians, were but an auxiliary, to the destruction of all that valuable knowledge, and refined sentiment, that could elevate the fancy, soothe the heart, or improve the understanding. In other words, an intrinsic depravement, anterior to the presence of the barbarians, operated the ruin of Rome, in her glory, morals, politics, and literature.

In tracing the decline and fall of learning in these celebrated Empires, we may remark a striking conformity in every important circumstance common to both. The Greek, as well as Roman literature, had arrived at a degree of excellence and splendour never surpassed; and which renders it difficult to conceive, by what process of the mind, they could ever have been further improved. The same galaxy of genius sparkled in both; and the same exuberance of sublime composition, flowed from their minds, to shed lustre and happiness upon man. To carry their polite learning to brighter perfection, seems impossible; and a long course of experience and trial, has partly inspired a reasonable despair. Whence I shall derive an inductive attestation of the principle alleged by *Plume*, though not in so wide an extent. That from the moment the Arts and Sciences reach perfection, in any State, they have a necessary propensity to vitiation and decay.

As literature becomes abundant, and diffusive, so at the same time it becomes cheap and of easy attainment. The rays of learning diverge with celerity from the centre to the extremes. Needy men of shallow abilities, but formidable presump-

tion, having acquired a superficial colour of literature, put their accomplishments to sale; and corrupt the pure stream of public taste. Envious of superior endowments, they readily find the means to depress the reputation of genius, and discourage its exertions. They are prompted by malice to defamatory remarks, and are incited by vanity, to set up false principles, and by envy, to propagate unjust censures. Athens and Rome were infested by their *Sophists*, and we are not free from *Magazine Makers*. The same effect of degeneracy now subsists, in a different shape, and under another name.

Redundant affluence pervaded the ancient world, at the period of their intellectual declension. Wealth became the object of universal passion, and the aim of ambitious genius; it was the excitement to exertion, and the stimulus to vice; it seduced, soothed, and rewarded every degree of capacity, and strength of virtue. Adulation, depravity, and superficial graces, were in general, the readiest means to sudden opulence, and great power. Genius either shrunk back into obscurity, from the glare of turpitude, or ventured forth, only to have its purity corrupted, its grandeur impaired, and its brightness eclipsed. It not only lost the power of performing vast designs, and conceiving sublime theories, but it acquired a positive quality of pernicious influence, in the deprivation of taste, and the corruption of Learning.

It is likewise observable, that as genuine Philosophy, and Polite Learning were suffered to fall into neglect and oblivion by the ancients, the *Fine Arts*, became more advanced, admired, and patronised; they seemed to flourish by the death of the nobler departments of Literature. From the reign of Augustus to the time of Justinian, imperial magnificence was exclusively devoted to the encouragement of the *Fine Arts*; and the Church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, as well as the magnificence of the Byzantine Palace, are imposing examples of the prosperous state of the Arts, even amidst the ruin and desolation of polite and profound literature. In this instance, a mutual repulsion appeared to exist between them; which it is not impossible to explain, however hard it may prove, to reconcile their simultaneous access and perfection.

The Fine Arts, such as painting, sculpture, and music, are so little dependent on cultivated intellect for their existence, or a pure literary taste for their perfection, that their prevalence scarcely ever bespeaks an improving age, in the nobler subjects of genius, philosophy, and learning. The connexion between them is remote and feeble; and there appears no reason, why a period splendid in polite Letters, should be distinguished for eminence in the finer arts; and still less in the reverse of the proposition. The latter appeal only to the external senses for their reception, and depend only on imitative powers for their brilliancy. A glance of the eye, or an impression of the ear, decides their merits, promotes their patronage and success. Their beauties strike the beholder with the quickness of lightning; and the most sluggish imagination, may concur in the propriety of the picture, and confess the natural resemblance of the figure, the just arrangement of the group, and the potent effects of an impressive art. It must be also remarked, that colours and figure, affect the mind more vividly than words. The most florid and sublime Poetry, is far less obvious, the canvass, or the chisel. Hence it occurs, that almost all nations, whether barbarous or refined, possess considerable monuments in the Arts; and that those nations, that have become too enfeebled in intellect for great performances, can still display great excellence and beauty in painting, architecture, and sculpture.

Are we to deny all genius then to great artists; and are they to receive censure instead of applause? I reply no! But the genius of a few men scattered through several ages, whose powers have been directed in this manner, cannot exalt the intellectual character of any particular period, when the propensity and taste of the people called for the amusement of Pictures and Statues; a people mostly immersed in luxurious indolence, and mental apathy, which precluded the susceptibility or enjoyment of higher pleasures. And in general the artist has either fallen in with the prevailing fashion; or the wealth of the age, has bribed the artist, and moulded his productions to its peculiar form and bias, which left him no opportunity to correct depravity of taste, or reform the degeneracy of manners. This much however, sufficient to establish our position, and this much is certain, that they who are satisfied with gazing on a picture, or a statue, must ever want the impulse to exertion, and spring to great achievements. Such refined apathy, like the chill calm of death, benumbs every exertion, and genius grows torpid, at the icy touch of satisfied vanity.

From the preceding observations, we may perhaps derive some light, to guide us in our investigation, into the present state

of polite learning; which after all, however, must be principally determined, by an enlarged view of the present condition of human knowledge; by the delicacy of taste, power of conception, and faculty of original production, that are found to obtain in the current age.

From South America.

BULLETIN No. 2.

Of the Delivering army of Venezuela.
On the 3d, it was scarcely break of day when the squadron set sail for the port of Juan Griego, on the northern coast of the Island of Margarita; we had not reached the anchoring ground when a tender from the land came on board the commanding ship, with despatches for his excellency the captain general.

Soon after, arrived his excellency the general in chief, John Baptist de Aristuendi, to pay him his compliments as the Supreme Chief of Venezuela, having been already acknowledged in that high station by the army, and the inhabitants of the island.

This brave general and his officers were received by the squadron with all that enthusiasm which their brilliant proofs of courage repeatedly displayed in the heroic revolution of this island, justly inspire.

The Spanish division yet occupied the city of Ascension, the metropolis of the island, where it raised fortifications in the streets, and heights of an almost impregnable nature, holding, besides, possession of the Castle Santa Rosa, but they evacuated them on the night of the 3d, with such precipitancy as to leave behind their arms, accoutrements and provisions, and retreated to the port Pampatar. Our intrepid warriors occupied on the 3d all their posts, without firing a gun.

The success that attends the opening of this delivering campaign, gives us the strongest hope that the liberty of the whole of Venezuela is rapidly approaching, and our enemy encumbered with the weight of the crimes they have perpetrated in our territory, will soon be destroyed.

The aspect of the city Ascension, shews nothing but a place evacuated by a band of Barbarians. They have not left one stone upon another—the whole city has been consumed by fire, and we can safely predict that the destructive system adopted by the Spaniards, will move a war against them more terrible even than that of our arms.

On the 4th and 5th days, necessary measures were taken for our squadron to undertake the blockade of Pampatar, and with this object, it sailed on the evening of the 6th, making its appearance before that port yesterday morning.

The enemy raises fortifications; but our operation, will place him in the alternative of surrendering or perishing.

General Quarters of the city of Norte, in the Island of Margarita, May 3, 1816.
JAMES MARINO, Major-Gen.

BULLETIN No. 3.

On the 25th ultimo, the squadron set sail from the north point of Margarita, and on the 31st at 5 P. M. anchored in Carupano, opposite the battery of Santa Rosa, where the Spanish standard was fluttering.

On the morning of the 1st, the supreme chief of the republic who commands the delivering expedition intimated to the Spanish commander to surrender the place, & in case of refusal, he would take it by assault. A verbal answer in the negative was returned.

The column of disembarkation, under the orders of gens. Marino, and Piar and col. Soublotte, began its operations windwardly on the left, and after bearing for two hours an irregular fire of little effect, the supposed impregnable heights which command the city were occupied.

The battery Santa Rosa and the Spanish flying artillery, kept up a constant action with the squadron. General Piar attacked the enemy in the rear with the greatest success, and we took both the place and forts without any loss.

Our victory was complete, and the flight of the enemy shameful, in spite of all his advantages in positions, artillery and cavalry. The whole property of the Spaniards fell into our possession, as also the brig *Indio Bello* and the schooner *Fortuna* which were at anchor in the bay.—Our booty is very considerable.

In consequence of taking Carupano, the Spaniards have withdrawn

from Cariaco to Guiria, and our communications with Maturin are expeditious by land, and thro' Golfo Triests.

General Quarters, Caupano, June 3, 1816.

Louis du Coudray de Holstein.
Second in command.

BULLETIN 4.

Thro' the official letters of the commandant of the battalion of Barlovento, Lt. col. Pinango, we have been acquainted with the brilliant success of our expedition against Guira. Our gun boats started from lake de Naya, in the island of Margarita, the 25th ult. and reconnoitred the coast. The 3d inst. they entered the gulph of Paris, and overhauled 3 gun boats and a well-manned boat of the enemy. Upon seeing us, the enemy ran their boats on shore, and abandoned them; we took possession and immediately manned them.—The 4th piquet commanded by lieutenants Rincon and Andara, landed and made some prisoners with their arms, among which was Don Thomas Pino. A gun boat posted at the mouth of the Guarapiche, one schooner and one sloop, laden with flour were boarded and taken; the captain and most of the crew of the gun boat, fell in the engagement; in the schooner and sloop there were found among the dead 50 Spanish soldiers; their resistance was useless; and we had not a single man wounded. The same day 22 prisoners were made on shore.

On the 6th, this small detachment joined the corps under commandant Vouchet, and on the 7th, marched from Guimimita to attack the head-quarters of the enemy in Guiria, which they occupied with the greatest facility; its defenders in a most dastardly manner fled towards Cariaco, through Yaguaparo and Tunapny; about 50 escaped.

Lieutenant Colonel Pinango is approaching the general head-quarters, followed by a respectable division of veteran soldiers, full of enthusiasm for the country and for the government, having restored liberty to that beautiful part of the province of Cumana.

Our maritime forces assure our intercourse with Maturin, which will be reinforced with arms and ammunition of all kinds.

Louis du Coudray de Holstein.
Second of the Staff.

Man of Genius.—A stupid man cannot readily be persuaded out of his senses—what he sees he sees, and neither more nor less—but 'tis the easiest thing in the world to catch hold of a man of genius—you have nothing to do but to appeal from his senses to his imagination.

Sorrow is like the deaf adder, "that hears not the voice of the charmer."

Revenge.—He that waits for an opportunity of acting his revenge; watches to do himself a mischief.

POETRY.

The Kiss of wedded love.

Give me of wedded love the holy kiss,
Bestow'd with rapture and receiv'd with bliss,
Where soul embracing soul in union sweet,
Not only lips, but hearts together meet.
Give me the kiss that asks no fancied aid,
From warbling nightingale in myrtle shade,
From flow'r-enamell'd mead, or secret bow'r
Beneath the moon's pale beam at midnight hour,
Be mine the kiss that's given without a fear,
That flings not honour, and that wakes no tear.
The kiss whose raptures gold can never buy,
The kiss that ne'er remembered with a sigh,
Give me the kiss of innocence alone,
The hallow'd kiss that I can call my own.
This, this, to me yields purest richer blisses,
Than all the fam'd Johannis' nineteen kisses.