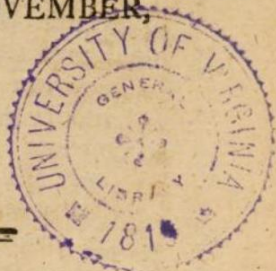


THE
BRITISH CRITIC,
A NEW REVIEW,

FOR
SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER,
AND DECEMBER,

M DCC XCIII.



SURGIT OPUS.

MANIL.



VOLUME II.

London:
PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON,
NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1793.

THE
BRITISH CRITIC

For SEPTEMBER, 1793.

PRO PATRIA.

ART. I. *The History civil and commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies. By Bryan Edwards, Esq. of the Island of Jamaica, 2 Vols. 4to. 2l. 2s. Stockdale.*

THE author of this luminous and instructive work, has, from his own observations, and by a judicious selection of materials from former writers, amassed such a body of information, and arranged it in so perspicuous a manner, that it must arrest the attention of every reader, whether his object be mere amusement, or historical research.

Style and manner are, from the fabrication of our language, and its present cultivated state, so readily attainable, that it is perhaps rather a disgrace to want, than a merit to possess them; but the diffusion of this attainment beyond the Atlantic, and to commercial men, reflects a lustre on the present age, and greatly tends to confirm our hope, that the English language will survive the ravages of time, and be looked up to by future nations with the same reverence that we now pay to the classic dialects of antiquity.

This reflection will hardly appear impertinent to any reader of the work now under consideration: the style is clear, spirited, and easy, in the narrative part; and, in the descriptive, warm without rapture, and elevated without turgidity.

As specimens of the latter kind of excellence, we shall produce two passages.

which cannot usually be otherwise presented than as probable in themselves, or resting upon the credit and testimony of the authors whose names they bear.

Before us, as reviewers, and as a part of that public to which the whole is submitted, the papers come under two different aspects. In the former character, we are to report the substance of the various articles contained in the transactions; in the latter, we have an equal right, at least, with all other individuals, to examine and enquire into the materials of each, and to deliver our opinions, founded on the best knowledge we have, concerning the facts, experiments, or other circumstances related, or the doctrines advanced. This we shall do with freedom, but not with captiousness. Having once for all thus premised our general sentiments upon the subject, we shall proceed immediately to our task.

ART. I. *An Account of two Rainbows, seen at the same time, at Alverstoke, Hants, June 9, 1792. By the Rev. Mr. Sturges. Communicated by William Heberden, M. D. F. R. S.*

These two rain-bows, which had each its secondary bow, touched each other at their lowest point, and were not concentric. Both the primary bows were very vivid for a considerable time, and at different times nearly equally so, but the lower bow was the more permanent, and was a larger segment of a circle. From the circumstance of the two bows not being concentric, the reporter very reasonably presumes that the lower proceeded from the sun itself, and the higher from the reflection of the sun in the sea, then perfectly calm, between the Isle of Wight and the land. The reflected image being lower than the sun, would of course produce a higher bow. The solution is probably right.

ART. II. *Description of the double-horned Rhinoceros of Sumatra. By Mr. William Bell, Surgeon in the Service of the East India Company, at Bencoolen. Communicated by Sir Joseph Banks, Bart. P. R. S.*

The double-horned Rhinoceros, well known to the Romans, who procured their animals of this kind from Africa, as appears by their coins, and by the epigram of Martial, where he is described *gemino cornu*, has been little examined, till lately, by the modern naturalists. It has even proved, in one instance, a snare to a celebrated traveller, who is suspected of having copied old representations designed from the species with

one horn, by way of representing that with two. This is a heavy accusation, but perhaps still capable of being disproved, when the varieties of nature shall have been more fully explored. It is certain, that all accounts, except that of the traveller above-mentioned, conspire to describe the double-horned Rhinoceros as wholly destitute of those strong folds, and armour-like appearance of the skin, which characterize the species with a single horn. Mr. Bell, indeed, here gives his Rhinoceros a line or fold from the shoulder to the legs, though but faintly marked. He says also, that there were several other folds and wrinkles on the body and legs; but then, he adds, that 'that the whole gave rather the appearance of softness,' which is directly contrary to the appearance of the Asiatic Rhinoceros. Yet, on the other hand, it may be said, that this animal was young, and his folds would certainly become more strong as his skin became thicker, and the tubercles on the skin more solid. As it was, however, Mr. Bell says expressly, that it 'had not that appearance of armour, which is observable in the single-horned Rhinoceros.' As this was found in Sumatra, where the other species also is known, it seems possible there may be a half breed, which may unite the properties of both: nor can we safely pronounce that the same may not be the case in particular parts of Africa. The Greeks also knew the double-horned Rhinoceros: Pausanias speaks of them as found among the Æthiopians, ἕς, ἐπὶ τῷ συμβεβηκοτι, ονομαζομένην ἰννοκερωσ, ὅτι σφισι ἐπ' ἀκρῆ τῆ ῥίνοι ἐν ἑκάστῳ κερας, καὶ ἄλλο ὑπερ αὐτο, ἢ μᾶζα, — 'each having one horn on the extremity of the nose, and above that another, not large.'

ART. III. *Description of a Species of Chætodon, called, by the Malays, Ecan bonna. By Mr. William Bell, Surgeon in the Service of the East India Company, at Bencoolen. Communicated by Sir Joseph Banks, Bart. P. R. S.*

The most extraordinary peculiarity in this fish appears to be the tumours in its bones. These, Mr. Bell says, 'in the first fish I saw I supposed to be exostoses arising from disease; but on dissecting a second, found the corresponding bones had exactly the same tumours, and the fishermen informed me they were always found in this fish.' He adds, after speaking doubtfully of their use, 'these tumours are spongy, and so soft as to be easily cut with a knife; they were filled with oil.' In the view of the skeleton they are distinctly represented, and have an extraordinary appearance.