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978-1-108-07739-2 - Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century:
Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons, and Intended
as a Sequel to the 'Literary Anecdotes': Volume 6

John Nichols

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The subtitle of this eight-volume set is *Consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons, and Intended as a Sequel to the 'Literary Anecdotes'*, which had been published in nine volumes by the author, editor and publisher John Nichols (1745–1826) between 1812 and 1815, and are also reissued in this series. Like its predecessor set, these 'illustrations' are a useful source of biographical material on authors and publishers at a time when many of the literary genres we take for granted, such as the novel, the autobiography and the analytical history, were first being developed. The volumes were published between 1817 and 1858, the project being continued after Nichols' death by his son and grandson. Among the 'eminent persons' included in Volume 6 are the poet Anna Seward, Dr Johnson, the bibliographer Thomas Dibdin, and King George III.

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VOLUME 6

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W. M. Gifford

Born 1756, — Died 1826.

Published Jan. 2. 1832, by J. B. Nichols, Parliament Street.

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OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
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Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters
OF
EMINENT PERSONS;
AND INTENDED AS A SEQUEL TO
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BY JOHN NICHOLS, F. S. A.

—◆—
VOLUME VI.

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DEDICATION.

TO
THE REV. WILLIAM LAYTON, M.A.
RECTOR OF ST. MATTHEW, IPSWICH,
A GENTLEMAN TO WHOM THE
LATE MR. NICHOLS
WAS INDEBTED,
DURING A FRIENDSHIP OF MORE THAN FORTY YEARS,
FOR MUCH VALUABLE LITERARY ASSISTANCE,
THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY HIS FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANTS,

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON.

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PREFACE.



THE contents of the present volume consist principally of selections from the yet far from exhausted stores of literary correspondence possessed by the late Mr. Nichols. Three series of letters are included, which would probably have been published before, had they not in the original appeared too extensive to become only portions of a volume. These are the correspondence with Mr. Gough of three eminent antiquaries: Mr. Essex, the Cambridge architect; Mr. Brooke, Somerset Herald; and the Rev. Samuel Denne. In a careful revision of the originals, for the purpose of abridgement and condensation, it has been endeavoured to omit matter already published; and indeed to retain only such portions as might be conducive to some useful purpose, if not (as in most cases) from their biographical or literary information, at least from containing intelligent and sensible remarks.

The letters of Lord Camelford are from the papers consigned to Mr. Nichols by the family of his kind friend, and assistant in this Work, Mr. Justice Hardinge. They are the composition of a highly cultivated mind, of a literary turn, and polished by an intercourse with the best society of Europe; and, although their theme is in a great degree politics,

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they will not be perused with less interest on that account, when it is recollected that the writer was a cousin of the Prime Minister of the period, and an eye-witness of those first stages of the French Revolution which furnish a principal topic for his remarks.

The biographical memoirs have in many cases been compiled from a variety of sources, and are therefore generally entitled to the term “original;” when not original, additional facts have in almost every case been introduced. The autobiography of Mr. Chafin, a clerical country squire, who in his old age turned author, after a life spent in pursuits of a very opposite character, will be found to possess many of the charms usually characteristic of that description of writing.

The following distinct articles, (most of them embracing auxiliary notices of other literary characters,) have been contributed by the Rev. James Ford, late of Ipswich, and now Vicar of Navestock in Essex.

George Richard Savage Nassau, Esq.

The Rev. William Clubbe, LL. B. and John Clubbe, M. D.

The Rev. Samuel Darby, A. M.

The Rev. John Price, Keeper of the Bodleian.

Richard Beatniffe, author of the Norfolk Tour.

The Rev. John Brand, the Mathematician.

The Rev. Richard Canning, A. M. editor of the second edition
of the Suffolk Traveller.

Edmund Gillingwater, historian of Lowestoft and Bury.

The Rev. Thomas Bishop, D.D.

Biographical notices of the Dawson family.

The Rev. George Burton, A. M.

Mr. John Mole.

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In the article which commences this volume, that of the great critical autocrat Mr. Gifford, the Editors were indebted to the late William Bulmer, Esq. both for the communication of additional information on Mr. Gifford's dramatic labours, and for the poetical trifles which at once show the good-nature of the writer's disposition, and his talents in extempore versification.

John Turner, Esq. a Commissioner of Bankrupts, has kindly contributed a portrait of his late father the Rev. Baptist Noel Turner, as well as the use of the MSS. left by that gentleman.

The Rev. Charles Turnor, F.S.A. obligingly revised the memoir of his late brother, Edmund Turnor, Esq. F.R.S. & S.A.; as did Richard Edward Kerrich, Esq. that of his late father, the Principal Librarian of Cambridge University.

The Rev. Thomas Harwood, B.D. F.S.A. of Lichfield, considerably amended the articles on the Rev. Theophilus Buckeridge, the topographer, and on Mr. Greene, the virtuoso, of that city.

The memoir of the Rev. Thomas Leman, F.S.A. was compiled with some difficulty; but at length greatly enriched by the assistance and inquiries of the Rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A. of Bath, and by the contribution of some letters and anecdotes by James Norris Brewer, Esq. F.S.A.

The interesting letters of Mr. Murphy, the architect and traveller, have been supplied by Thomas Crofton Croker, Esq. F.S.A.; and for a copy of

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the agreements between Bishop Percy and Tonson
the bookseller Mr. Nichols was indebted to Mr.
Upcott, of the London Institution, in whose pos-
session the originals, among many other documents
of a similar description, are deservedly preserved.

Jan. 1, 1831.

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[The Binder is desired to notice five starred leaves are to be inserted after p. 434; there is a cancel of pp. 637-8.]

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ADDITIONS.

P. 40. "The history of Mr. Hellins was in every respect similar to that of his friend [the Rev. Malachy] Hitchins. He was the son of a poor labourer at Ash Raigney, or Ring's Ash, in Devonshire, and was actually bound a parish apprentice to a cooper at Chumleigh. His master was fond of the boy, and finding him diligent, indulged his inclination for study, which lay wholly in arithmetic. When out of his time he ventured to open a school at Bishop's Tawton in the same county. He had not, however, been long settled there, when Dr. Maskelyne wanting an assistant in the Royal Observatory, Mr. Hellins was recommended to him, and the situation being most acceptable, he went to Greenwich, and continued there for some years. Dr. Maskelyne was so well pleased with his conduct and love of science that he gave him much valuable instruction, introduced him to several of his friends, and lastly advised him to enter into the church. With this view he retired into Devonshire, where he studied the learned languages and theology with such diligence as to pass a very close examination before Bishop Ross with marked approbation. His first appointment was to the curacy of Constantine in Cornwall; from whence he removed into Northamptonshire, to engage in the education of the young Earl of Pomfret, who, on coming of age, gave him the Vicarage of Potterspury." *Memoir of Davies Gilbert, Esq. Pr. R. S. in the Imperial Magazine for July 1823.*

P. 45. The Rev. Malachy Hitchins "was for a long series of years the principal calculator of the Nautical Almanac and the Tables for the Board of Longitude; but, though a mathematician of the first order, he never published any distinct work. Many of his solutions are to be found in the Lady's Diary, and other Miscellanies. He was entirely self-taught, even in classical learning; for, though he proceeded to the degree of B. A. at Exeter college, Oxford, his preparatory acquirements were all the result of laborious and unassisted application. His outset in life was of course very humble; but, by becoming assistant to Benjamin Donne in making the actual survey of Devon, he had opportunities of gaining the rudiments of science, which he duly improved, till qualified for the University." *Ibid.*

It is highly to the credit of the late President of the Royal Society to have been the friend and patron of Hitchins, Hellins, and, above all, of Davy.