

## ACADEMIC PURSUITS.

“There's *honour* for you!”—SHAKSPEARE.

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LIKE *you* such grinning honour? You will probably answer, No. Why, then, before you engage in the widely-different, but no less hazardous warfare of words and arguments, propositions and disquisitions, reply and rejoinder, with the long train of important *etceteras*, do, my young and sanguine friend, take a peep into a pericranium—examine the filmy texture of the brain, and the cobweb character of those fibres which compose its substance; from thence descend to the region of the stomach, and view the connexion of its digestive power, which, as well as the brain, depend upon the quiet operation of thought,—which the hurry of passion, the ardour of pursuit, or the no less dangerous tendency of

rigid and intense application, may destroy—and you may perhaps be inclined to pause upon the adventure, to examine *your* strength for the combat, to weigh the chances of the game, and to look a little more minutely at the nature of the trophies you expect to carry away; and then, having taken a cool and deliberate view of the question, you may venture to ask—Can I sit quietly down under these laureled honours, to the enjoyment of books, “friendship, and retired leisure?”

Retired leisure! where is it to be found? Not in this bustling, cheating, and worrying world. No; not even “stalled theology” will now allow it. We do not live in monkish times; there are duties to be performed, there are hungry expectants,—enemies to be watched, vigilant to observe omissions, and ready to mark or make lapses in your conduct. In short, the path to preferment has not been Macadamized; but, on the contrary, such deep ruts have been made by the jostling and jumbling of every sort of vehicle on the road,

that, through the haste of some, and the tardiness of others, not one in ten arrives at his *Living* in a whole skin, or, at least, without having been in imminent danger of destruction. I see you smile;—you have been at Oxford,—have some skill in driving, and can quarter the road with any four-in-hand whip among them. Well, sir! take your own course; but remember, if you attain to a mitre, it will not be decorated like that of a Leo, but plain, cumbrous, and heavy, like the disproportioned and enormous caps of our grenadiers. You must toil under its pressure. Again you smile.—Oh, the church is not your aim?—it is literature, polite literature; aye, that is quite another thing—I see you are viewing a garland in imagination, made up of the flowers of literature, and feasting upon the fruits in the same Barmecide way. To be sure, there are a few thorns in *that* passage to fame and fortune; which, in the shape of critics, catch at you as you pass, till you arrive ragged and stript at the end of your journey. But should the contrary of this happen, you have nothing to do but to reach the mansion of your book-



seller, the haven where you would be—and present yourself to the porter at the gate—a sort of Castle-of-Indolence-man, but only so in appearance; for he will first look narrowly at your dress, and if it has come off without many rents from the afore-said thorns, he will let you into the hall or entry, and, according to your appearance, will desire you to take a chair, or, perhaps, refreshments; but have a care of this, and remember what is said in the Proverbs about “deceitful meat.” Here you will undergo a sort of craniological examination. Your skull must serve various purposes; will the *os frontis* do for a battering-ram?—can it be levelled with advantage against church or state?—has it the organ of forgetfulness sufficiently marked for a convenient oblivion of what you advance one day to be denied on the next? These, with various other powers and capabilities, will be carefully noted; and last, and not the least of his inquiries, will be (but this will be managed aside), whether your skull will make a good drinking-cup, and whether its shape and texture are best suited to hold port, claret, or champagne.

What! you are grinning still, and you don't believe a word of this? You can get an introduction to Mr. M——y; aye, it may be so,—or to the King's Bench,—or to Bedlam,—or \* \* \* \* \* Well—  
*there I'll leave you.*

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