

twice to thrice the diameters of the primaries, from which they are generated, in which case the entire spot is covered with coloured rings to the center, exactly like primary sets, but if they are much larger, a few rings only at the circumference are seen, and when they are so large as to approach to straight lines, segments only of a few at the circumference can be perceived. Other sets of this new kind of rings, are also formed by the interference of the *intersectionaries*, either with transmitted, or reflected sets, in a beautiful and astonishing variety, which it is scarcely possible to convey an adequate idea of, without seeing the experiment. It is therefore even doubtful, whether the above description can be fully understood, without drawings, which are intended to accompany a future publication, wherein the experiments shall be more fully detailed. This short sketch may therefore be considered as only an *avant courèur*, of that which is to follow. I.K.

Belfast, Sept. 20, 1810.

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For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

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ON CONVERSATION.

CONVERSATION is a means of improving our minds, much superior to books, or even to reflection. In sensible conversation we are obliged to bring forth the stores of our minds in an orderly and systematic manner; to hear the objections of others, and either be instructed by them, or answer them.

If we have taken any thing upon trust, either from books or men; if we have viewed any thing superficially, and formed an erroneous judgment upon it, it is conversation that will show us our error; and, having made us abandon our weak possessions, will render us stronger in those that are tenable. By this means we become better acquainted with our minds, and more completely masters of our own ideas.

In the conversation of men of sense, hints are sometimes struck out, that would not disgrace the most profound philosopher; and I think we may say that they will make a stronger

impression on the mind, than when met with in reading.

Epaminondas esteemed conversation a very easy method of gaining instruction; and was on such occasions a diligent hearer of the sentiments of others. He never entered any assembly where any question of either politics or philosophy was discussed, without staying till the end; and we have reason to believe that his improvement was proportionate.

How much, then, ought we to repress every thing that tends to discourage rational conversation; drinking, smoking, gaming, the sneers of affectation, and the long, loud laugh of presumptuous ignorance. This practice of laughing in the midst of what ought to be *polite* argument, is often resorted to, for the purpose of gaining an unreal superiority. It is the means of a weak, untutored, and prejudiced mind to effect a cowardly usurpation in conversation, or to put a stop to it, when above its capacity. Such persons as would laugh in the middle of an interesting moral discussion, would probably with the utmost gravity descant upon the last new fashion, or the proper colour of gloves to be given at a wedding. As for drinking, gaming, &c. I presume they are seldom resorted to by those who are capable of any thing better.

One word more and I have done. In the present state of morals, perhaps the intercourse between the sexes ought to be cautious:—but surely it is a folly for a young lady to imagine she cannot converse with a young man without danger of inspiring him with a passion for her. We were made to improve each other, and our improvement is assisted by frequent, rational, and polite conversation.

E.C.

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REMARKS ON A JOURNEY.

TRAVELLING lately in one of those coaches, which have become so numerous within a few years in this country, and which by facilitating our transitions have made, and will still make us better acquainted with our neighbours; I fell into my usual employment and a