THE

LITERARY PANORAMA.

BEING A

REVIEW OF BOOKS, MAGAZINE OF VARIETIES,

AND

ANNUAL REGISTER;

COMPRISING

INTERESTING INTELLIGENCE

FROM

THE VARIOUS DISTRICTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM;

THE BRITISH CONNECTIONS

IN

THE EAST-INDIES,	AMERICA,	WESTERN
THE WEST-INDIES,	AFRICA,	ASIA, &c.

AND FROM

THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE,

AUSTRIA,	HOLLAND,	PRUSSIA,
DENMARK,	HUNGARY,	RUSSIA,
FRANCE,	ITALY,	SPAIN,
GERMANY,	POLAND,	SWEDEN,
GREECE,	PORTUGAL,	TURKEY, &c.

VOL. IV.

Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold——
From India and the golden Chersonese
And utmost Indian isle Tabropane,
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north,
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool:
All nations——

MILTON. *Paradise Regained.*

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September, 1808.

BRITISH IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MANUFACTURE OF SWORDS.

The following particulars in relation to a weapon so important as the Sword have appeared to us to deserve registering in the PANORAMA: they are abstracted from a paper published in Aris's Birmingham Gazette, in July, 1805. As the object of that paper was controversial, we have not given the whole of it, but only so much as contains useful information.

Previous to the year 1795, the scientific principles on which swords should be constructed, were deplorably neglected; every regiment was at liberty to order its own swords, without reference to any standard, or proof of their goodness. A weapon so important both for offence and defence was left to chance or caprice, and the consequence was the sacrifice of many a brave fellow, and an unascertainable loss to the service and the country. At that period the Board of Ordnance requested the trade to produce patterns of swords, together with the best modes of proof, in order that the highest degree of security that Art and Industry could provide, might be obtained. Accordingly each sword-maker produced his pattern, his price, and his method of proving; on accurate examination, Mr. Osborn's system of proving, mounting &c. was adopted, and established by the board, and general Ross (Surveyor general of the ordnance) desired him to lay down explicit directions for the guidance of the sword-cutlers employed by the board.

In conformity with this application Mr. O. invented a proving machine, which was exhibited by request before his Royal Highness the Duke of York, general Ross, colonel Le Merchant, and a number of field officers, at the War Office, and was unanimously pronounced to be effectual, simple, and calculated to answer the important purpose of an unerring system: he was then ordered to make nine such machines for the direction of other sword manufacturers, and one of them was fixed in the Tower, and a proper person appointed to look to the proof agreeably to rules laid down.

This regulation, though salutary, being strict, produced a few ineffectual murmurs on the part of other sword manufacturers. The establishment of these regulations, has been the happy means of saving the life of many a brave man; for there is now little danger of the sword falling fractured and useless from the arm of valour, for the blades of British swords, like the hearts of British warriors, will seldom fail.

Previous to this establishment, the army were chiefly supplied from Germany; but the German swords were, and are so ill constructed, that they would not, and will not, sustain this criterion; some few that were ordered by the board, and were procured from the German resident in London, were shivered to pieces, when submitted to the test, and from their repeated failures, no German swords have, for several years, been received into government stores, and no swords whatever, but such as would, in every respect, endure this proof.

In consequence of these successful exertions, Mr. O. was honoured with a recommendatory letter from a gentleman of the highest respectability and high in office, to the then Chairman of the Committee of the honourable East-India Company, who, among other handsome things, says, "I have great pleasure in saying, that in the course of the last four or five years, he has supplied the ordnance with near twenty thousand cavalry swords; Mr. Osborn would readily agree that all the swords, that he should furnish to the Company, should be examined and proved at the Tower, and it would, no doubt, be much for the advantage of your service that they should undergo the strictness of our examination."

The honourable East-India Company caused an order to be given to the German resident in London, and Mr. O. for each to produce ten regulation light-cavalry swords, to be publicly tried at the Tower, under the inspection of Major Cunninghame; the trial of workmanship therefore took place on the 7th of November, 1804; but as the German found, by having his swords secretly proved, that they would not stand the slightest proof, he did not think proper to attend.

A regulation light-cavalry sword is 32½ inches long in the blade, and should spring one inch in every six, viz. 5½ inches, which will take it down to 27 inches. Several of the swords were sprung to 22, 21, and 20 inches, which was 5, 6, and 7 inches beyond proof; and all beyond 27 inches was considered as being superfluous; but the parties wished them put to the utmost test, hence the reason why they were continued to be sprung till one or the other lost its elastic powers. The moment a sword becomes soft (set) or breaks, it is disabled. The process of proving is as follows: After being ground to a gauge, and weighed to see that they are conformable to the scale, they are struck back and edge over a block of wood, this is called chopping; then they are struck flat-ways on an even surface of wood, this is called slapping; and, finally, they are sprung to 27 inches: every *warranted* sword undergoes this proof, and which is considered equivalent to every hardship a sword undergoes in the field of battle.