
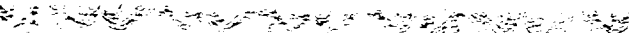


SELECT ESSAYS

BY

ANDREW A. COOPER



SELECT ESSAYS

FROM THE

ENCYCLOPEDIA.



SELECT
ESSAYS
FROM THE
ENCYCLOPEDIA
OR DICTIONARY

THE MOST CURIOUS, ENTERTAINING,
AND INSTRUCTIVE PARTS
OF
THAT VERY EXTENSIVE WORK,
WRITTEN BY
MALLET, DIDEROT, D'ALEMBERT,
AND
OTHERS, the Most Celebrated WRITERS of the AGE.

LONDON,
Printed for SAMUEL LEACROFT, opposite to Spring-
Gardens, Charing-Cross.
M,DCC,LXXII.

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TO THE PUBLIC

IN that amazing multitude of articles with which the celebrated Dictionary, known by the title of ENCYCLOPEDIA, abounds, a great number of them cannot be read or understood but by a few persons conversant with the more abstruse sciences: others were intended only for being occasionally consulted, but never to be the objects of a continued reading, or particular study: several indeed are within the reach of all capacities that have had any share of cultivation, and are to be considered as fo many complete essays, or short treatises, wherein are centred all the powers of wit, taste, elegance, solid philosophy, judicious

The FRENCH COMPILER'S

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criticism, polished erudition, and every thing that can contribute to render such performances instructive and interesting.

This, however, is not the proper place for entering into a particular scrutiny, whether so great an undertaking hath been executed in a manner that completely answers the end which the authors of the work had originally proposed to themselves, or whether it has attained the utmost perfection of which it is capable. Let it suffice at present to aver, that it is enriched with a great variety of ingenious tracts, which being judiciously selected, must form a most valuable collection, the more likely to be of general benefit, as the acquisition can be made on very moderate terms.

There are but few persons who can afford to purchase the Encyclopedia: and even those who are equal to the expence, will find it a very hard matter now to come at one, the edition being almost out of print.

This great scarcity was one of the chief motives that induced us to proceed, in favour of the public, to select from the Encyclopedia, and to publish in a small compass, its most exquisite articles, thereby to facilitate a perusal of them, not only to those persons that without the advantage of such an epitome must remain excluded

from that instruction which they may now reap; but even to the more wealthy possessors of the whole, by saving the irksome toil of seeking them amidst a crowd of far less interesting subjects. Moreover, the difficulty of conveying from one place to another such huge volumes in folio, must on many occasions prevent recourse being had to them.

It has been thought proper to give a table of the *selected Essays*, with the names of the several celebrated authors who had declared themselves; which displays a satisfactory view of what this volume contains. So pleasingly diversified an assemblage exhibits a very entertaining picture, wherein every curious reader may make an immediate choice of what shall appear the most alluring, and best agree with his own peculiar taste; although it may upon the whole be asserted, that there is not perhaps an article, or essay, to be found in this compilation, but what must prove amusing to the generality of judicious and tasteful readers.

The reason then is obvious, that, according to the plan proposed, as no room can be given to confined tracts upon mechanical arts, trades, abstruse sciences, or dry grammatical discussions; so neither can astronomy, geometry, medicine, surgery, jurisprudence, theology, chymistry, geography; &c.

PHILOSOPHY OF DES CARTES

find any place here, because the chief and sole intent is to limit this publication to essays philosophical, moral, gallant, political, and literary; which therefore is to be looked upon as the spirit of the *Encyclopedy*. On a selection of the most interesting, curious, and entertaining, as well as the most philosophical articles to be met with in that vast and justly celebrated Dictionary; those pieces only having been extracted, which seemed calculated to give general satisfaction, and to suit the taste of every reader, especially those of a more polished education.

In regard to those articles discovered to be offensive to religion, morality, and consequently to the welfare of society in general, we thought it our duty cautiously to abstain from meddling in any shape therewith; inasmuch as the prohibitory censure with which they had been stigmatized, has from time to time suppressed the continuation of the *ENCYCLOPEDIA* being published.

Nor is the want of them to be regretted, for the very good reasons, that they are the worst written and least entertaining essays of the whole, and that moreover the compiler's view was to prove useful, not hurtful, to mankind: wherefore, as all virtuously disposed men should, they have steered clear of every subject that, instead of meliorating the heart, and cultivating the mind, tended to deprave the former, and mislead the latter.

PHILOSOPHY OF DES CARTES

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