

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY. A COLLECTION
OF THE MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND
AMUSING LIVES EVER PUBLISHED.
VOL. XXIII. MEMOIRS OF GOLDONI.
IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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CARLO GOLDONI & JOHN BLACK

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BARON GOLDONI.

Portrait of Baron Goldoni, by G. B. Tiepolo.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

A Collection

OF THE

MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING

LIVES

EVER PUBLISHED,

WRITTEN BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES.

WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS
SEQUELS CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE
DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOLUME XXIII.—GOLDONI.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

LONDON:

C. AND W. BERNELL, PRINTERS, BROAD STREET, GOLDEN SQ.

MEMOIRS

OF

Caricature

GOLDONI,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

FORMING A COMPLETE

HISTORY OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH,

BY JOHN BLACK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON, 1828.

PRINTED FOR HUNT AND CLARKE,

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

INTRODUCTION.

THE variety of event and adventure abounding in the autobiography of the ingenious GOLDONI would give it an undeniable claim to a place in this series, were it less distinguished than it is by the ease, nature, and vivacity of the narrative. The claims of the author, as a dramatist and the acknowledged reformer of Italian comedy, also tend to create an interest superior to that which belongs to lives of mere theatrical vicissitude, in the character of manager or actor, attractive as even the latter usually prove. Various causes exist for the pleasure taken in this description of reading. In the first place, the ideal creations of dramatic genius by mental habit become indissolubly associated with the parties by whom they are either formed or ably personified; to this may be added, the superior strength of the impressions received in early life, the usual season of close attention to the drama by the majority of people, either as readers or spectators. Lastly, a strong source of excitement exists in the intrigue, jealousy, party spirit, and whole host of great and small

passions, which usually rage with as much activity behind the curtain of a theatre as in the rear of those equally convenient curtains, social and political, which are so dexterously drawn up and down, as occasion serves, in the drama of real life. This creates a bustle; for, as the song says, "What is life without passion?" and we insensibly take a lively interest in the concerns and feelings of a class of personages who very seldom fall into the error of under-estimating their own importance. All this however applies to GOLDONI and his Memoirs only in the best and most attractive sense; for, besides claims as a dramatist, which, with a little flattery, possibly, but not altogether without foundation, have attained for him the appellation of the "Italian Moliere," the same gentle and domestic spirit which prevails in his dramas pervaded his own character; and we are as much pleased with the man as amused by the incidents which he relates. The experience of GOLDONI was also in a field, little description of which has reached England through the medium of any writer but himself—alluding to the management and practical conduct of the Italian stage. Thus a character of originality runs throughout his Memoirs, at least as to incident and locality, which, aided by more general merits, has rendered them among the most popular and esteemed of the very entertaining class to which they belong.

P R E F A C E

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

No comic writer since Moliere, has attained to such universal celebrity as GOLDONI. Eighteen editions of his voluminous works were given to the world during the life-time of the author; selections from his comedies have been repeatedly published in almost every capital of Europe; and we learn from Lord Byron that some of them have even been translated into the dialects of modern Greece.

To give pleasure to nations differing widely from each other in manners and customs, in knowledge and civilization, is one of the most unquestionable tests of merit in a dramatic author. The comedy which pleases in one country and is not relished in others, may not on that account be bad; but the comedy which gives pleasure in all countries we may at once pronounce to be good. The wit and humour must be genuine which can bear exportation.

The first literary characters of Europe have vied with each other in bearing testimony to the merits of GOLDONI. By Voltaire, who uniformly expressed the most enthusiastic admira-