

**A TREATISE ON THE
SITUATION, MANNERS, AND
INHABITANTS OF GERMANY:
AND THE LIFE OF AGRICOLA**

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A Treatise on the Situation, Manners, and Inhabitants of Germany: And The Life of Agricola by
John Aikin

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ON THE
SITUATION, MANNERS, AND INHABITANTS
OF
GERMANY,
AND THE
LIFE OF AGRICOLA:
BY
C. CORNELIUS TACITUS:
Translated into English,
BY JOHN AIKIN, M. D.
WITH COPIOUS NOTES,
AND A
MAP OF ANCIENT GERMANY.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

A SMALL volume which I offered some time ago to the public, consisting of Tacitus's *Life of Agricola*, in the original and in an English translation, was principally designed to furnish youth, either at a place of education, or in their private studies, with an agreeable specimen of that excellent author, in a form which might encourage them to commence an acquaintance with his works. The attempt was honoured with a reception which produced a demand for a republication.

But, in the mean time, the admirable edition of Tacitus lately published at Paris by M. Brotier* falling into my hands, I was led to consider the subject in a different view; and could not but wish to make such use of the valuable materials before me, as might adapt my translation to the purposes of a higher class of readers. Upon this plan, I thought it would be unnecessary to reprint the Latin; and that its place might be advantageously supplied by adding another piece of the same author, equally detached and complete with the *Life of Agricola*, and perhaps still more instructive and interesting. The *Treatise on the Manners of the Germans* has ever been esteemed as one of the most precious relics of the political or historical writings of antiquity; and

* In four volumes 4to. The first edition is dated 1771.

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by the course of events has been rendered more important to modern times than its author probably expected, who could scarcely foresee that the government, policy, and manners of the most civilized parts of the globe, were to originate from the woods and deserts of Germany. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the merits of a work, the great value and authority of which are sufficiently manifested by the use which some of the most eminent modern writers have made of it. A defect under which it labours is, that the conciseness both of matter and style which characterizes its author prevails in it to such a degree, as to render in many places either the sense less clear, or the information less perfect, than might have been wished. No part of Tacitus, therefore, stood so much in need of a learned and judicious commentator;

and such an one in the fullest extent it has found in M. Brotier, from whose excellent notes I have liberally borrowed whatever seemed necessary as an explanation, or useful as an illustration, of the text.

Still further convinced of the preference due to close and accurate translation, whenever the matter of the original is singular or important, I have aimed at nothing so much as clearly and precisely to reflect the author's meaning. The *Treatise on Germany*, indeed, from the nature of its subject, effectually precluded any attempts at ornamental language or harmonious period. And even in the more rhetorical *Life of Agricola*, accuracy appeared to me of so much greater importance than the elegant flow of a sentence, that in order to obtain it I have very frequently deviated from my

former translation. So numerous, indeed, are the alterations, that the correctness of my first attempt will probably be much impeached by them. For this deficiency, the only apology I have to offer is the want at that time of such an edition as M. Brotier's, which, besides its many ingenious comments on difficult passages, suggests several happy emendations of the mutilated text.

The reader will please to observe, that all the notes to both treatises are extracted from M. Brotier, except a few, to which a particular signature is annexed.

