

## **Prospectus of a new periodical work, intitled The philosophical magazine.**

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Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
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LONDON, June 1, 1798.

PROSPECTUS  
OF A  
NEW PERIODICAL WORK,  
INTITLED  
*THE PHILOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE.*

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*Nec araneorum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt. Nec noster vilior, quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.*

JUST. LIPS. *Monit. Polit.* lib. i. cap. 1.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the present enlarged state of Science, the Public in general have very little opportunity of being early acquainted with the improvements which are daily made in the different branches of Human Knowledge. A want of this kind, in a country like Great Britain, where the Arts and Manufactures, so much dependent on these improvements, are become of the highest importance to the National Welfare, cannot be a matter of indifference. To supply this want, therefore, the present Work is undertaken: and the Conductors flatter themselves that, though some Publications of a similar kind are already in existence, there will still be sufficient room for their labours; and that the Plan which they have adopted, if not entirely new, will at least have the merit of being more extensive than any ever yet proposed. As it would be superfluous to enlarge on the utility of such an undertaking, they will without further apology give the following Outlines of their Plan, which they submit to the consideration of the Public in general, and in particular of those who are fond of cultivating the Philosophical Sciences.—

AS the improvements made in the Arts and Sciences on the Continent are, for the most part, consigned in the first instance to the Transactions of Academies, Works too dear to be purchased by Readers in general, and written, besides, in languages with which few are acquainted, the Conductors have opened a correspondence with the different countries of Europe, by which they will be enabled to obtain these Works as soon as they are published; and they intend to select and translate from them such Papers as they think will afford gratification to the Public, or be useful to the Arts  
and



and Manufactures of Great Britain. They must beg leave to observe that, in making this selection, they will not exclude Papers which, though not of such a practical nature as to be immediately useful; may yet lead to important discoveries; and even those which may answer no other purpose than that of gratifying harmless and laudable curiosity will not be rejected. Attention will be paid also to every thing new or remarkable, in regard to the Productions, Curiosities, Manners, or Customs of Foreign Nations; for, though these can be of little practical use, they must still be highly valuable to the Friends of True Philosophy, especially the two last, as they serve to illustrate the History of the Human Mind—a subject hitherto not cultivated with that attention which it deserves. It is from facts or experience, and not from speculation, that this History can ever be carried to perfection; and therefore such facts as are likely to add to our stock of knowledge on that subject cannot be misplaced in a Philosophical Journal.

Another source of information, which the Conductors mean to avail themselves of, is, Foreign Journals. A great variety of these are published at different places on the Continent, particularly in Germany, France, and Italy. In selecting from these Journals, the same plan will be pursued as in selecting and translating from the Transactions of Academies. Preference will, in general, be given to Practical Articles, which may be serviceable to Artists, Manufacturers, &c.; but choice will be made also of such Theoretic Essays as seem to present grounds for real improvement, or to suggest hints that may enable others to pursue the like ideas to a greater length. One object to which the utmost attention will be paid, is to give accurate Descriptions, with correct Engravings, of New Machines and New Mechanical Inventions.

Though one great end of this Work be to supply the English Reader with an Account of the Discoveries and Improvements made on the Continent, the Conductors by no means intend to neglect those of their own country. Extracts will be given, therefore, from the Transactions of the Public Societies in Great Britain; and the Conductors pledge themselves to consult every source of information that may be likely to furnish them with materials for their undertaking.

In giving an account of New Patent Machines, and other Inventions, the Conductors will not content themselves merely with descriptions. When necessary, they will take a short view of the principles upon which each is constructed; the errors of those constructed upon false principles will be pointed out; and the fallacy of the theories which have given rise to them will be exposed; for it is a well known fact, that Patents have been obtained for machines, and other contrivances, which, so far from answering the end proposed, are unfit for any purpose whatever. Those not well acquainted with Mechanics are thus misled; the Public are deceived; and others, by adopting, as true, the principles on which such machines, &c. have been constructed, are often induced to waste much labour and time, without any advantage to themselves, in the pursuit of inventions built on a similar foundation.

In the last place, the Conductors would consider their plan very defective, were it not meant to include original communications on Scientific Subjects, and particularly such as relate to the Arts and Manufactures. On this head they are proud of being enabled to announce, that they have received assurances of assistance from some of the most distinguished characters in the kingdom as  
Philo-



Philosophers and Mechanics; and they trust that the liberality with which they are determined to execute their plan, will secure them that approbation from the Public which it will be their constant endeavour to deserve.

With regard to what may be called New Discoveries, or Inventions, the Conductors think it necessary to say a few words by way of explanation. As this Work is designed for the use of the common ranks as well as of the learned, and as there are many things in Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and the Arts, which though already known to a few, are still unknown to numbers who have not enjoyed the same opportunities, the Conductors will not hesitate to recur for articles of information to Foreign Works published some time ago, when they can find Papers which have never been translated into English, or which are not sufficiently known in this country. One great advantage arising from this will be, that many improvements, connected with or founded on others made several years ago, will be better illustrated; for it is well known to those who have been in the habit of reading the Foreign Philosophical Journals, or the Transactions of Learned Societies, that there are many Papers given in them which have a reference to preceding Papers, and which the Authors take it for granted must be known to every Reader. In attending to this point, however, care will be taken not to fill the Work with uninteresting matter, and to give that which is newest in preference to what may be of an older date—unless particular circumstances, or the important nature of the subjects, should render it necessary to reverse this arrangement.

The subjects which the Conductors mean to comprehend in this Journal, are, Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Chemistry, Economics, Natural History, Mechanics, Geography, Statistics, Astronomy, Meteorology, Antiquities; and, in a word, every thing that relates to Science, the Liberal and the Fine Arts, Trade, Manufactures, and Agriculture.

Under the head of Economics (a subject too much neglected in this country), articles will be introduced which the Conductors have reason to think will be highly gratifying to their Readers. As it would require more room than can be well spared in a Prospectus to particularize them, the Conductors will confine themselves to the mention of one which they conceive to be of the greatest importance to mankind in general. Few of the most common necessaries being free from adulteration, with articles often highly prejudicial to health, chemical modes of detecting such mixtures will occasionally be given, and, where possible, means for separating them. In short, every thing that can promote the health, convenience, or comfort of domestic life will meet with the utmost attention.

In the end of each Number it is intended, as far as materials can be found for the purpose, to give short notices of New Discoveries and Improvements; as it will often happen that these can be obtained before a complete account of them has been published. Such information must, at any rate, be gratifying to the curious; but care will be taken that the articles communicated in this way shall be of some utility or importance. The Deaths of Men who have rendered themselves eminent either in Science or the Arts will also be announced, with a short account of their Lives and Works, when it can be procured. Some account will likewise be given of valuable New Books relating to Science, and extracts will be occasionally made from them.



As many articles, in a Work of this kind, must necessarily require to be illustrated with Plates, it is intended that each Number of the Journal shall contain three at least. That this part of the Work may afford as much satisfaction to the Public as possible, the Conductors have engaged a Draftsman and an Engraver of the first eminence; and they flatter themselves that they shall be able to give Plates, which, in regard both to correctness of design and neatness of execution, will be superior to any that ever yet appeared in Works on the same subjects.

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The Conductors having now given the Outlines of their Plan, take the liberty of soliciting the support of the Public to a Work, which they flatter themselves will be of considerable benefit to the community, and to every individual interested in the progress of Science. They cannot help here observing, that young persons, of every description, who wish to improve themselves in the Philosophical Sciences, will find it of the utmost utility; as it will be the constant care of the Conductors, while they gratify the wishes of the Learned, to insert also some Papers suited to more slender capacities, and such as may at the same time unite amusement with instruction. They will here find brought together in one point of view a variety of matter collected at great expence, and with much labour, from Works which in general they can have no opportunity of seeing; and will thus easily acquire information respecting the newest and most important Discoveries either in Science or the Arts. That the Work may be of more benefit to this class of Readers, the Conductors will often recur to first principles; and the young Philosopher will, therefore, be thus insensibly led to a knowledge of the different subjects, even though he may not have previously pursued a regular course of Philosophical Studies. The present is an age of enquiry; and it is certainly far better that young minds should be engaged with such objects as will form the subject of this Journal, than in being bewildered with speculations, which often mislead instead of enlightening; and which, far from rendering men wiser, induce them sometimes to engage in plans, destructive to themselves, and hurtful to society.

\* \* \* The First Number of this Journal, price 2s. (to be continued monthly) containing seven sheets octavo size, neatly printed on a fine wove demy paper, and illustrated with four Plates, will appear on the 30th instant.

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Orders are requested to be addressed as early as possible to Messieurs RICHARDSON, *Cornhill*; MURRAY and HIGHLEY, No. 32, *Fleet-Street*; BELL, No. 148, *Oxford-Street*; and HARDING, No. 36, *St. James's-Street*, *London*.