general it denotes power, or the perfection of any thing, whether natural or supernatural, animate or inanimate, eſſential or accessory. But, in its more proper or reſtrained ſenſe, virtue signifies a habit, which improves and perfects the possessor and his actions. See Moral Philosophy, n⁰ 84.

VIRTUOSO, an Italian term lately introduced into the Engliſh, ſignifying a man of curioſity and learning, or one who loves and promotes the arts and ſciences. But among us the term ſeems to be appropriated to thoſe who apply themſelves to ſome curious and quaint rather than immedi­ately uſeful art or ſtudy; as antiquaries, collectors of rarities of any kind, microscopical obſervers, &c.

VIRULENT, a term applied to any thing that yields a virus ; that is, a contagious or malignant pus.

VISCERA, in anatomy, a term signifying the ſame with entrails ; including the heart, liver, lungs, ſpleen, intestines, and other inward parts of the body.

VISCIDITY, or Viscosity, the quality of ſomething that is viſcid or viſcous ; that is, glutinous and ſticky like bird lime, which the Latins call by the name of *viſcus.*

VISCOUNT *(Vice Comes),* was anciently an officer un­der an earl, to whom, during his attendance at court, he acted as deputy to look after the affairs of the country. But the name was afterwards made uſe of as an arbitrary title of honour, without any ſhadow of office pertaining to it, by Henry VI. ; when, in the 18th year of his reign, he created John Beaumont a peer by the name of *viſcount Beaumont ;* which was the firſt inſtance of the kind.

A viſcount is created by patent as an earl is ; his title is *Right Honourable ;* his mantle is two doublings and a half of plain fur ; and his coronet has only a row of pearls cloſe to the circle.

VISCUM, in botany ; a genus of plants of the claſs *diacia,* order *tettandria,* and in the natural ſyſtem arranged under the 48th order, *aggregate.* The male calyx is qua­dripartite; the antheræ adhere to the calyx: the female calyx consiſts of four leaves; there is no ſtyle; the ſtigma is obtuſe. There is no corolla ; the fruit is a berry with one ſeed. There are 9 ſpecies ; only one of which is a native of Bri­tain, viz. the *album,* or common misseltoe. It is a ſhrub growing on the bark of ſeveral trees : the leaves are conju­gate and elliptical, the ſtem forked ; the flowers whitish in the alæ of the leaves. This plant was reckoned ſacred among the druids.

VISHNOU, that perſon in the triad of the Bramins who is conſidered as the preserver of the univerſe. *Brahma* is the creator and Siva the deſtroyer ; and theſe two, with Viſhnou, united in ſome inexplicable manner, conſtitute *Brahme,* or the ſupreme numen of the Hindoos. See Polythe­ism, n⁰ 36.

VISIBLE, ſomething that is an object of sight or viſion ; or ſomething whereby the eye is affected ſo as to produce this ſenſation.

VISIER, an officer or dignitary in the Ottoman empire, whereof there are two kinds ; one called by the Turke *River-azem,* that is, “ grand visier,” is the prime miniſter of ſtate in the whole empire. He commands the army in chief, and preſides in the divan or great council. Next to him are six other ſubordinate visiers, called *visiers of the bench ;* who officiate as his counſellors or aſſessors in the divan.

VISION, in optics, the act of ſeeing or perceiving ex­ternal objects by means of the organ of sight, the eye. See Anatomy, n⁰ 142, and Metaphysics, n⁰ 49—54.

VISTULA, or Weisel, a large river of Poland, which taking its riſe in the mountains ſouth of Silesia, viſits Cra­cow, Warſaw, &c. and continuing its courſe northward, falls into the Baltic ſea below Dantzic.

VISUAL, in general, ſomething belonging to vision.

VITAL, in phyſiology, an appellation given to whatever miniſters principally to the constituting or maintaining life in the bodies of animals : thus the heart, lungs, and brain, are called *vital parts ;* and the operations of theſe parts by which the life of animals is maintained are called *vital functions.*

VITALIANO (Donati), an eminent naturaliſt, was born in Padua the 8th of September 1717. He ſhowed from his childhood the greateſt inclination for botany and natural hiſtory ; and, at the age of twelve years, knew all the medicinal plants, and had made a collection of natural productions. When ſome years older, he profited by the friendſhip of the celebrated Pontedero, and was generouſly furniſhed with books and informations by the living professor Valliſneri junior. His beſt maſters were, however, his own mountain and maritime peregrinations ; which he be­gan in Dalmatia in 1743, and continued for five years. He was choſen for adjutant to the marquis Poleni, public profesſor of experimental physic, and cultivated under ſo great a master all the parts of phyſico-mathematics. With him he made a journey to Rome, and there became an inti­mate friend of Leprotti the papal physician, to whom he afterwards dedicated his *Saggia della storia naturale dell' Adriatico ;* a work of great merit, which count Ginanni of Ra­venna endeavoured to depreciate, though with little succeſs. The essay of Donati was publiſhed in 1750, and was afterwards translated into French. The same which our author acquired induced his Sardinian majeſty to appoint him profeſſor of botany and natural hiſtory at Turin. He went there very willingly ; made many excurſions among the mountains of Savoy and Genoa, and would have been happy could he always have converſed with the mountain­eers, who generally are harmleſs people. The king his maſter sent him out of the way of his enemies, whole envy and hatred his merit alone had raised; he commanded him to ſet out on a voyage to Egypt, and from thence to viſit Sy­ria, Paleſtine, Arabia, and the Eaſt Indies, to make obſervations and to collect the tareſt productions of nature. In 1759 he was in Alexandria, law Egypt as far as the great cataract of the Nile, and a great part of Paleſtine, Arabia, and Chaldea ; and in all thoſe travels was expoſed to ſuffer the cruel conſequences of a bad choice which he had made of his companions. While he ſtaid at Baſſora, waiting for orders from court, he fell ill of a putrid lever, and died in a few days. The news of his death came to Turin about the end of October 1763. He left in manuſcript two volumes in folio.

VITELLUS, the yolk of an egg. See Egg.

VITIS, in botany : A genus of the claſs *pentandria,* or­der *monogynia;* and in the natural ſyſtem arranged under the 46th order, *pectoracea.* The petals cohere at the top, and are withered ; the fruit is a berry with five ſeeds. There are 11 ſpecies ; the moſt important of which is the *vinifera* or common vine, which has naked, lobed, sinuated leaves. There are a great many varieties ; but a recital of their names would be tiresome without being uſeful. All the sorts are propagated either from layers or cuttings, the former of which is greatly practiſed in England, but the latter is much preferable.

In chooſing the cuttings, you ſhould always take such ſhoots of the laſt year’s growth as are ſtrong and well ripen­ed ; theſe ſhould be cut from the old vine, juſt below the place where they were produced, taking a knot, or piece of the two-years wood to each, which ſhould be pruned ſmooth; then you ſhould cut off the upper part of the ſhoots, so as to leave the cutting about ſixteen inches long. When the piece or knot of old wood is cut at both ends, near the