doctrines of Linnæus.@@1 The substance of it was incorpo­rated in his Philosophy of Natural History; and his opinions were then controverted by Dr. Rotheram, afterwards professor of natural philosophy at St. Andrews. Of his proficiency in these studies we find a more conspicuous proof. While he was attending the botanical class, the pro­fessor sprained his leg so severely that for a considerable interval he was unable to meet his students ; and on this occasion he selected Smellie to continue the course of lec­tures. In a botanic garden, lectures cannot be servilely read from papers, either written by the lecturer himself, or supplied by others.

On the 25th of March 1765 he commenced business as a printer, in conjunction with two brothers named Robert and William Auld, the former of whom was a solicitor. His pri­vate resources were obviously scanty; and two of his friends, Dr. Robertson, professor of oriental languages, and Dr Hope, professor of botany, advanced to him the sum of seventy pounds, which we reckon equivalent to two hundred in our present currency. This copartnery was dissolved within the space of less than two years, by the retirement of Ro­bert Auld ; but a new company, consisting of Baltbur, W. Auld, and Smellie, commenced business on the 22d of De­cember 1766. John Balfour, who was likewise a bookseller, had been apartner in the house of Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill. The new house published the Journal, a newspaper suppos­ed to have been unprofitable. Their connexion only con­tinued till the month of November 1771 ; and the modified firm of Balfour and Smellie continued the business from the twelfth of that month. Beside his share of the profits, the junior partner was to receive ninety pounds a-year, and he was bound to conduct the entire business of the office. His average income amounted to about L.200. After an interval of more than two years, he easily obtained from Lord Kames the favour of his becoming surety to the Royal Bank for a cash-account to the extent of two or three hun­dred pounds. Their acquaintance had arisen from a se­ries of anonymous strictures which he communicated to his lordship when the Elements of Criticism were passing through the press of Murray and Cochrane. The author requested the acquaintance of his nameless critic, and afterwards hon­oured him with various marks of his friendly attention. He incidentally mentions his supping with Lord Kames, in com­pany with Hume and other guests. He was likewise a guest at the learned suppers of Lord Monboddo ; and he reckoned Lord Hailes, as well as Lord Gardenstone, among the number of his friends and well-wishers.

Balfour and Smellie were appointed printers to the uni­versity. The chief advantage which attended this appoint­ment was the profit of printing the dissertations written by candidates for medical degrees. Smellie likewise printed the theses written by candidates for admission to the Fa­culty of Advocates ; and his knowledge of the Latin lan­guage was in both cases found very serviceable to the writers. He rendered material assistance to his friend Dr. Buchan, in the composition of a work which attained to very exten­sive popularity. This work, entitled “ Domestic Medicine, or, a Treatise on the Cure and Prevention of Diseases,” was published at Edinburgh in the year 1770. In the course of forty years, it is said to have passed through twenty edi­tions, each consisting of 6000 copies, besides many pirated editions in Ireland and America, and some even in Britain. Of this treatise, Smellie was sometimes represented as the sole author ; but it appears with sufficient evidence that the manuscript was placed in his hands, and that in preparing it for the press, he made many essential alterations in its form and style. It was so diffuse and redundant, that a sin­gle chapter, as originally written, would nearly have equalled the size of the entire book, as at first printed. These ser­vices were compensated with a bill for one hundred pounds.

Of Smellie’s life, we have now arrived at an era which recommends him to the more particular regard of the wτiters and readers of the present work. The first edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica consisted of only three volumes, which began to be printed in the year 1771. The princi­pal articles were written, compiled, or devised by him, and he prepared and superintended the entire publication. “ As you have informed me,” says a letter of Andrew Bell, the chief proprietor, “ that there are fifteen capital sciences which you will undertake for, and write up the subdivisions and detached parts, conform[ably] to your plan, and like­wise to prepare the whole work for the press, &c. &c., we hereby agree to allow you L.200 for your trouble.” If his capital sciences had not exceeded the old number of seven, this remuncration could scarcely have been considered as extravagant. One of his original articles, contributed to this edition, was that on *Æther,* which attracted a consi­derable degree of attention, and gave no small offence to Dr. Cullen, whose theory was there exposed, though with­out any mention of his name. From internal evidence, he was convinced that the article must have been written by his colleague Dr. John Gregory. He at length ascertain­ed the real author ; and this discovery, says the late Dr. Gregory, “gave occasion to the complete alteration and softening of the article Æther in the second and all the sub­sequent editions of the Encyclopædia ; so that nothing of it was allowed to remain that could give offence to Dr. Cullen.”@@2

Of the second edition of this work Smellie was offered a share, apparently a third, conjoined with the charge of editorship. This offer he unfortunately declined, and thus lost the only golden opportunity that fortune ever present­ed to him. “ At the death of Mr. Macfarquhar, printer, in April 1793, the whole work became the property of Mr. Bell. It is well known that Mr. Macfarquhar left a hand­some fortune to his family, all or mostly derived from the profits of the Encyclopædia ; and that Mr. Bell died in great affluence, besides possessing the entire property of that vast work ; every shilling of which may be fairly stated as hav­ing grown from the labours of Mr. Smellie in the original fabrication of the work, which is confessedly superior, and all of which he and his family might have shared in equally with Mr. Bell and the other proprietor, if he had not been too fastidious in his notions, and perhaps too timid in his views of the risk which might have been incurred in the mercan­tile part of the speculation.”@@3 His chief objection is stated, not with much probability, to have arisen from a difference of opinion as to the general plan : “ because the other per­sons concerned, it has been said upon the suggestion of a very distinguished nobleman of the highest rank and most princely fortune, insisted upon the introduction of a system of general biography ; which Mr. Smellie objected to, as by no means consistent with the title." If this statement is accurate, we consider the nobleman as decidedly right, and Smellie as decidedly wrong ; inasmuch as the historical and biographical part of the work has recommended it to many readers, who do not feel an equal degree of interest in the arts and sciences. The perfection of such a work is to ren­der it agreeable as well as instructive to the greatest pos­sible number of readers. The second edition, consisting of 1500 copies, began to be published in 1776. The third, extending to no fewer than 10,000 copies of eighteen vo-

@@@, Smellie’s Philosophy of Natural History, vol. i. p. 245.

@@@\* Gregory’s Additional Memorial to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, p. 188.

@@@• Kerr’« Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Correspondence of William Smellie, F.R.S. & F. A.S., vol. i. p. 363. Edinb. 1811, 2 vols. 8vo.