prints are delicate, excellent in drawing, and finely expressive of colour. His small full-lengths in crayons and his portraits of Fox, Horne Tooke, Sir Francis Burdett, and the group of the duke of Devonshire and family support his claims as a successful drafts­man and painter. He was possessed of a very thorough knowledge of the principles and history of art, and was a brilliant conversa­tionalist.

SMITH, Joseph. See Mormons.

SMITH, Sydney (1771-1845), one of the founders of the

*Edinburgh Review,* and one of the wittiest talkers and political writers of his generation, was the son of an English country gentleman, and was born at Woodford in Essex on 3d June 1771. His father, a man of restless ingenuity and activity, “ very clever, odd by nature, but still more odd by design,” who bought, altered, spoiled, and sold about nine­teen different estates in England, had talent and eccentricity enough to be the father of such a wit as Sydney Smith on the strictest principles of heredity ; but Sydney was wont him­self to attribute not a little of his constitutional gaiety to an infusion of French blood, his maternal grandfather being a French Protestant refugee of the name of Ollier, who could not speak a word of English. Sydney was the second of a family of four brothers and one sister, all remarkable for their talents. While two of the brothers, “ Bobus ” and Cecil, were sent to Eton, Sydney was sent with the youngest to Winchester, where he rose to be captain of the school, and with his brother so distinguished himself that their schoolfellows signed a round-robin “ refusing to try for the college prizes if the Smiths were allowed to contend for them any more, as they always gained them,” From Winchester Sydney went to New College, Oxford, and in due course became a fellow of his college. It was his wish then to read for the bar, but his father would add nothing to his fellowship, and he was reluctantly compelled to enter the church, and became a curate in a small village in the midst of Salisbury Plain. From this dreary in­cumbency he was relieved after two years, and conducted to the scene of the foundation of the *Edinburgh Review* by a combination of accidents. The squire of the parish in­vited the new curate to dine, was astonished and charmed to find such a man in such a place, and engaged him after a time as tutor to his eldest son. “ It was arranged,” he afterwards said, “ that I and his son should proceed to the university of Weimar. We set out, but before reaching our destination Germany was disturbed by war, and in stress of politics we put into Edinburgh.” This was in 1797. In Edinburgh, as everywhere else, Smith made numer­ous friends, whose cordiality was in no way abated by his constant quizzing of the national foibles and peculiarities ; and among those friends were the future Edinburgh Re­viewers. It was towards the end of his five years’ residence in Edinburgh, in the elevated residence of the then Mr Jeffrey, “in the eighth or ninth story or flat in a house in Buccleuch Place,” that Sydney Smith proposed the setting up of a review as an organ for the opinions and a vehicle for the ambition of the young malcontents with things as they were. “ I was appointed editor,” he says in the preface to the collection of his contributions, “and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number [October 1802] of the *Edinburgh Review.* The motto I proposed for the *Review* was ‘Tenui musam meditamur avena’—‘We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal.’ But this was too near the truth to be admitted, and so we took our present grave motto from Publius Syrus, of whom none of us had, I am sure, ever read a single line.” He continued to write for the *Review* for the next quarter of a century, and his brilliant articles were a main element in its success. They represent the very perfection of journalism. They were not merely the most readable, the most entertaining : the solidity of substance and the seriousness of purpose were quite as indisputable as the brilliancy of the execution.

The writer seemed to tackle the gravest of political and social questions in the highest of spirits, yet he never lost sight of his aim in purposeless buffoonery ; and, however heartily the reader might be made to laugh, the laughter was always directed at what seemed to the writer absurd and unreasonable opinion. It was remarked of his wit in conversation that the butts of it were often seen to laugh as heartily as the audience ; there was nothing base and personal in Sydney Smith’s raillery. The same with his writing when it was anonymous. His wonderful powers of humorous exaggeration were such as to detach a ridicu­lous opinion as far as possible from its human incarnation and present it in the bare essence of its absurdity. This was his habit as a controversialist ; and, when his purpose was simply to convey information, to give the gist of a book of travels, or a system of education, or a body of statistics, he was unequalled in the art of amusing the reader with ludicrous images in the most unexpected places without departing from the main lines of a most clear, orderly, and instructive exposition. The fact is that the serious didactic purpose in all Sydney Smith’s writing and the closeness of his adherence to the matter in hand are the main obstacles to the living permanence of his fame as the writer of the best colloquial prose of his generation ; for though his range of topics was wide—political, ecclesi­astical, educational, geographical, and otherwise miscellane­ous—they were all of immediate, practical, and passing interest, and his remarks were pushed home to the life of the time so closely as to have comparatively little inde­pendent interest for posterity.

Most of Sydney Smith’s contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* were sent from the country parish of Foston-le-Clay in Yorkshire, where he spent the best part of his life. He left Edinburgh for good in 1803, when the education of his pupils was completed ; and, yielding to his wife’s con­fidence in his powers—he had married Miss Pybus, an English lady of good family, while still unsettled in life— adventured on London, where he rapidly became known as a preacher, a lecturer, and a social lion. His success as a preacher, although so marked that there was often not standing room in the church in Berkeley Square, where he conducted the morning service, was not gained by any sacrifice of dignity : there was no eccentricity, nothing sensational in his preaching; it was a pure triumph of good sense, right feeling, earnestness, and freshness of pulpit oratory. He lectured on moral philosophy at the Royal Institution for three seasons, from 1804 to 1808; and here also, handling the ordinary topics of a philosophy chair in a Scotch university, he treated them with such vigour, freshness, and liveliness of illustration that the London world crowded to Albemarle Street to hear him. He made no pretence to originality, and in the main followed Dugald Stewart, whose lectures he had attended in Edinburgh ; but there is more originality as well as good sense in his lectures, especially on such topics as imagination and wit and humour, than in many more pre­tentious systems of philosophy. With the brilliant re­putation that Sydney Smith had acquired in the course of a few seasons in London, he would probably have obtained some good preferment had he been on the powerful side in politics. His Whig friends came into office for a short time in 1806, and presented him with the living of Foston- le-Clay in Yorkshire. He shrank from this banishment for a time, and discharged his parish duties through a curate ; but Mr Percival’s Residence Act was passed in 1808, and, after trying in vain to negotiate an exchange, he quitted London in 1809 and moved his household to Yorkshire. His most famous single production, *Peter Plymley's Letters* on the subject of Catholic emancipation, ridiculing the opposition of the country clergy, appeared