

## THE AMENITIES OF LITERATURE.

THE love of literature amounts, with those who entertain it most strongly, to an engrossing passion ; and there are few men of cultivated minds, however much engaged with other pursuits, who do not derive from it a sensible pleasure. Even when politics ran highest, and first-class periodicals, such as the "Edinburgh Review" and the "Quarterly," were toiling in the front of their respective parties, none but the most zealous partizans could deem their literary articles second in interest to their political ones ; and to the great bulk of their readers, however sincere as Whigs, or hearty as Tories, the literary ones always took the first place. They were read with avidity immediately on the delivery of the numbers which contained them, while the more serious disquisitions had to wait. Literature, in fine, was the sweetened pabulum in which the political principle of these works was conveyed to the public ; and had the pabulum been less palatable in itself, or less generally suited to the public taste, the medicine would have failed to take. It has the advantage, too, of being so general a pabulum, that men of all parties and professions, if of equal acquirement and cultivation, take an equal interest in it. It is the most catholic of predilections, and neutralizes, more than any other, the bias of caste, Church, and party. The Protestant forgets, in his admiration of their writings, that Pope and Dryden were Papists ; the High Churchman luxuriates over Milton ; old Samuel Johnson is admired by the Liberal and the Scot ; and the Tory forgets that Addison was a Whig. In this, as in other respects, a love of literature is one of the humanizing principles, and in ages of controversy and contention its tendencies are towards union. It gives to men who differ in other matters a common