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## INTRODUCTION.

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AMONGST the variety of important events which give celebrity to the present era, and add lustre to the annals of *our gracious Sovereign*, perhaps none will distinguish them more, or prove of greater importance to the community at large, than the degree of eminence the FINE ARTS have attained, under his benign auspices. A moment's reflection will evince, that the progress and researches of our Artists have greatly refined the taste of the country, and improved every branch of our manufactures, to the no small benefit of our trade and commerce; but the means by which the Arts have attained this high preeminence will always occasion great surprise, when we reflect on the very limited patronage they have received; and that they are indebted, even for existence, chiefly, to the fostering care of ROYAL PROTECTION. The establishment of the Royal Academy has given to Artists an honourable rank in society, and enabled them to make an annual display of their labours; at once the source of satisfaction to the public, and the means of calling forth the efforts of genius.

The close of the eighteenth century has been particularly distinguished by the labours of the Artists employed in embellishing the various great works now publishing; the magnificence of these undertakings does honour to the age we live in, and will make the names of BOYDELL, MACKLIN, and BOWYER, live for ages. Indeed, these are the men