



# Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

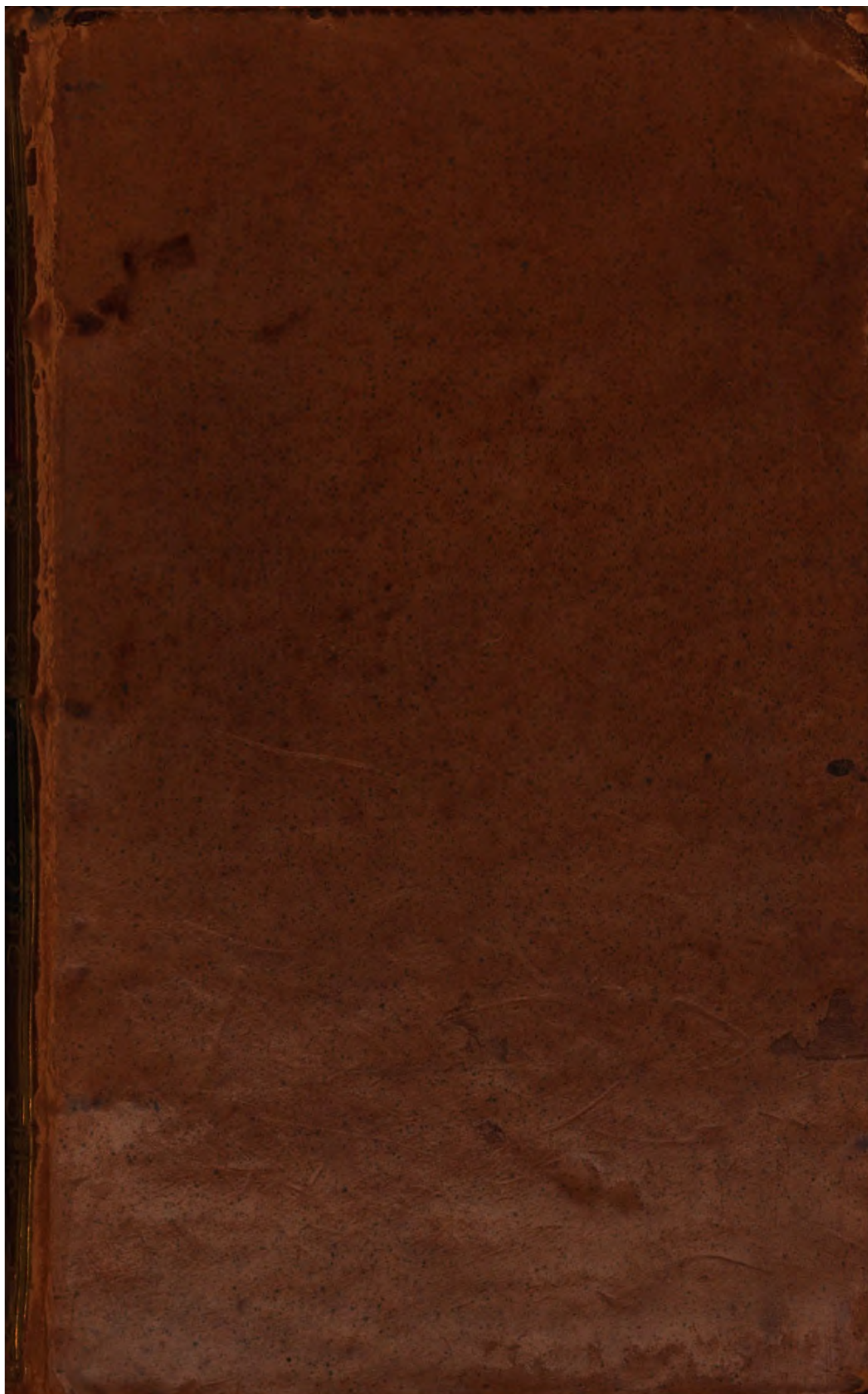
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

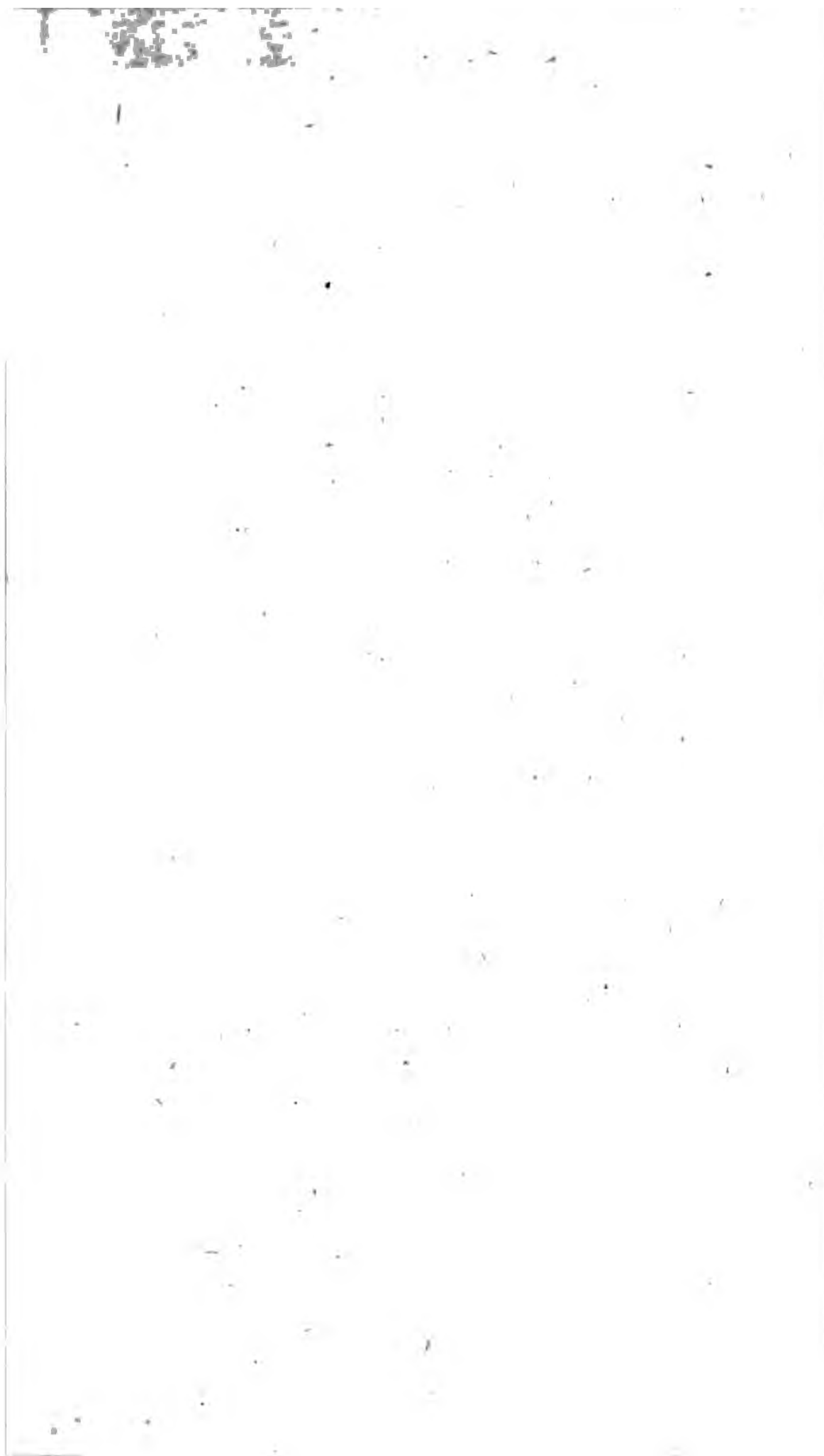
<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>

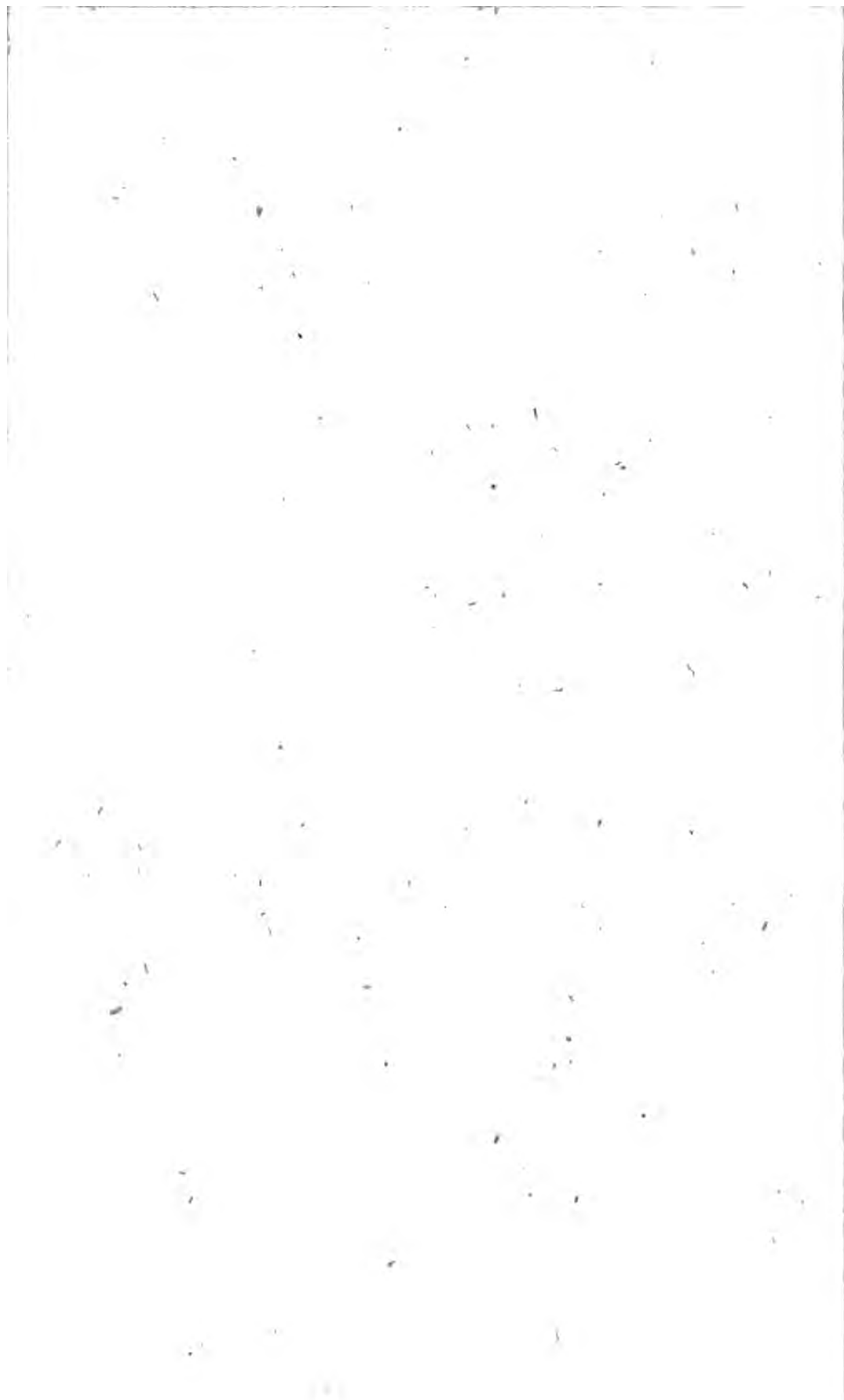


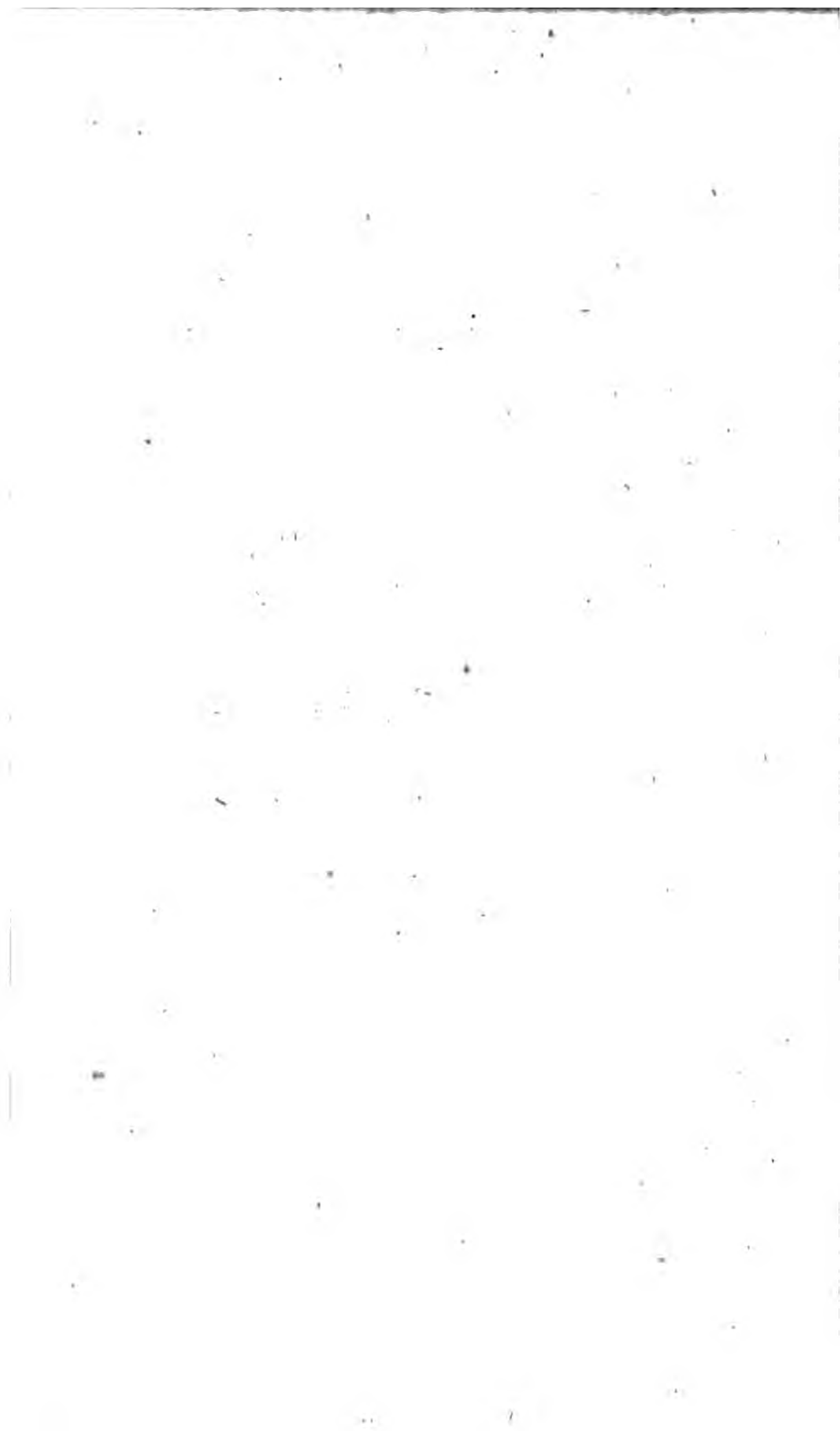
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

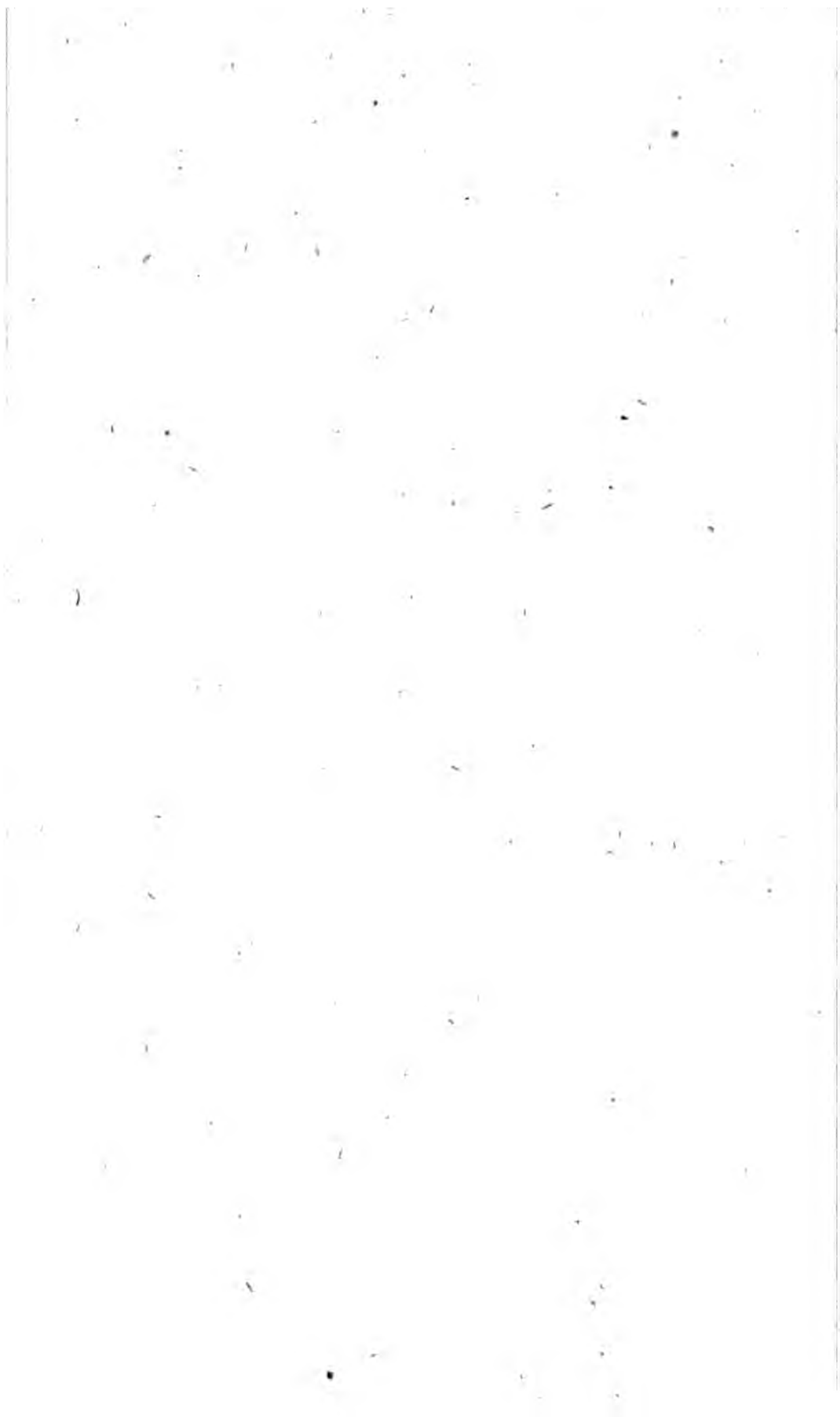


2804 f 161









P R E F A C E S,  
B I O G R A P H I C A L  
A N D  
C R I T I C A L,  
T O T H E  
W O R K S  
O F T H E  
E N G L I S H P O E T S.  
B Y S A M U E L J O H N S O N.

---

V O L U M E T H E E I G H T H.

---

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D B Y J . N I C H O L S :

F O R C . B A T H U R S T , J . B U C K L A N D , W . S T R A H A N , J . R I V I N G -  
T O N A N D S O N S , T . D A V I E S , T . P A Y N E , L . D A V I S , W . O W E N ,  
E . W H I T E , S . C R O W D E R , T . C A S L O N , T . L O N G M A N ,  
E . L A W , C . D I L L Y , J . D O D S L E Y , J . W I L K I E , J . R O B -  
S O N , J . J O H N S O N , T . L O W N D E S , G . R O B I N S O N ,  
T . C A D E L L , J . N I C H O L S , E . N E W B E R Y ,  
T . E V A N S , J . R I D L E Y , R . B A L D W I N ,  
G . N I C O L , L E I G H A N D S O T H E B Y ,  
J . B E W , N . C O N A N T , J . M U R R A Y ,  
W . F O X , J . B O W E N .

M D C C L X X X I .





P R E F A C E S

T O

S W I F T, G A Y,

B R O O M E, P I T T,

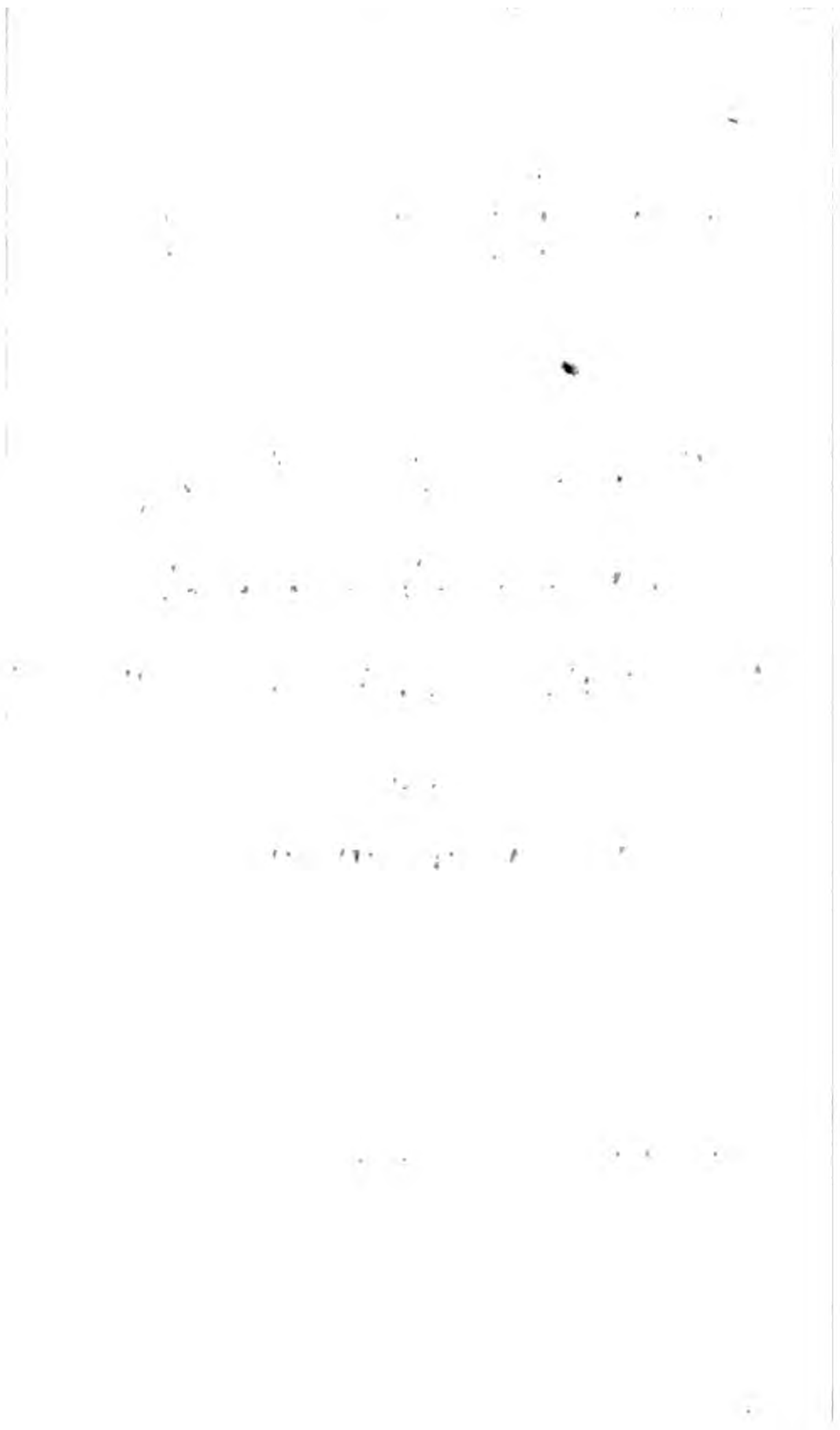
P A R N E L L, A. P H I L I P S,

A N D

W A T T S.

VOL. VIII.

a 2.



[ 1 ]

---

---

S W I F T.

**A**N Account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteness, by Dr. Hawke-worth, according to a scheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendship. I cannot therefore be expected to say much of a life, concerning which I had long since communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narration with so much elegance of language and force of sentiment.

**JONATHAN SWIFT** was, according to an account said to be written by himself, the son of Jonathan Swift, an attorney, and was born at Dublin on St. Andrew's day, 1667: according to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leicester, the son of a clergyman, who was minister of a parish in Herefordshire\*. During his life the place of his birth was undetermined. He was contented to be called an Irishman by the Irish; but would occasionally call himself an Englishman. The question may, without much regret, be left in the obscurity in which he delighted to involve it.

\* Spence's Anecdotes, vol. II. p. 273.

Whatever was his birth, his education was Irish. He was sent at the age of six to the school at Kilkenny, and in his fifteenth year (1682) was admitted into the University of Dublin.

In his academical studies he was either not diligent or not happy. It must disappoint every reader's expectation, that, when at the usual time he claimed the Bachelorship of Arts, he was found by the examiners too conspicuously deficient for regular admission, and obtained his degree at last by *special favour*; a term used in that University to denote want of merit.

Of this disgrace it may be easily supposed that he was much ashamed, and shame had its proper effect in producing

reformation. He resolved from that time to study eight hours a-day, and continued his industry for seven years, with what improvement is sufficiently known. This part of his story well deserves to be remembered; it may afford useful admonition and powerful encouragement to many men, whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions or pleasures, and who, having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.

In this course of daily application he continued three years longer at Dublin; and in this time, if the observation and memory of an old companion may be trusted,

trusted, he drew the first sketch of his *Tale of a Tub*.

When he was about one and twenty (1688), being by the death of Godwin Swift his uncle, who had supported him, left without subsistence, he went to consult his mother, who then lived at Leicester, about the future course of his life, and by her direction solicited the advice and patronage of Sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's relations, and whose father Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendship with Godwin Swift, by whom Jonathan had been to that time maintained.



Temple received with sufficient kindness the nephew of his father's friend, with whom he was, when they conversed together, so much pleased, that he detained him two years in his house. Here he became known to King William, who sometimes visited Temple when he was disabled by the gout, and, being attended by Swift in the garden, shewed him how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way.

King William's notions were all military; and he expressed his kindness to Swift by offering to make him a captain of horse.

When Temple removed to Moor-park, he took Swift with him; and when he was consulted by the Earl of Portland about

about the expedience of complying with a bill then depending for making Parliaments triennial, against which King William was strongly prejudiced, after having in vain tried to shew the Earl that the proposal involved nothing dangerous to royal power, he sent Swift for the same purpose to the King. Swift, who probably was proud of his employment, and went with all the confidence of a young man, found his arguments, and his art of displaying them, made totally ineffectual by the predetermination of the King; and used to mention this disappointment as his first antidote against vanity.

Before he left Ireland he contracted a disorder, as he thought, by eating too

much fruit. The original of diseases is commonly obscure. Almost every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience. The disease of Swift was giddiness with deafness, which attacked him from time to time, began very early, pursued him through life, and at last sent him to the grave deprived of reason.

Being much oppressed at Moor-park by this grievous malady, he was advised to try his native air, and went to Ireland; but, finding no benefit, returned to Sir William, at whose house he continued his studies, and is known to have read, among other books, *Cyprian* and *Irenæus*. He thought exercise of great necessity, and used to run half a  
3 mile

mile up and down a hill every two hours.

It is easy to imagine that the mode in which his first degree was conferred left him no great fondness for the University of Dublin, and therefore he resolved to become a Master of Arts at Oxford. In the testimonial which he produced, the words of disgrace were omitted, and he took his Master's degree (July 5, 1692) with such reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he used to pay his mother at Leicester an yearly visit. He travelled on foot, unless some violence of weather drove him into a waggon, and at night he would go to a penny lodging, where he purchased clean

clean sheets for six-pence. This practice Lord Orrery imputes to his innate love of grossness and vulgarity : some may ascribe it to his desire of surveying human life through all its varieties ; and others, perhaps with equal probability, to a passion which seems to have been deep fixed in his heart, the love of a shilling.

In time he began to think that his attendance at Moor-park deserved some other recompense than the pleasure, however mingled with improvement, of Temple's conversation ; and grew so impatient, that (1694) he went away in discontent.

Temple, conscious of having given reason for complaint, is said to have made him Deputy Master of the Rolls in Ireland ;

land; which, according to his kinsman's account, was an office which he knew him not able to discharge. Swift therefore resolved to enter into the Church, in which he had at first no higher hopes than of the chaplainship to the Factory at Lisbon; but being recommended to Lord Capel, he obtained the prebend of *Kilroot* in *Connor*, of about a hundred pounds a year.

But the infirmities of Temple made a companion like Swift so necessary, that he invited him back, with a promise to procure him English preferment, in exchange for the prebend which he desired him to resign. With this request Swift quickly complied, having perhaps equally repented their separation, and they  
lived

lived on together with mutual satisfaction; and, in the four years that passed between his return and Temple's death, it is probable that he wrote the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*.

Swift began early to think, or to hope, that he was a poet, and wrote Pindarick Odes to Temple, to the King, and to the Athenian Society, a knot of obscure men, who published a periodical pamphlet of answers to questions, sent, or supposed to be sent, by Letters. I have been told that Dryden, having perused these verses, said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet;" and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy with his manuscripts to Swift, for whom he had obtained, from King William, a promise of the first prebend that should be vacant at Westminster or Canterbury.

That this promise might not be forgotten, Swift dedicated to the King the posthumous works with which he was intrusted; but neither the dedication, nor tenderness for the man whom he once had treated with confidence and fondness, revived in King William the remembrance of his promise. Swift awhile attended the Court; but soon found his solicitations hopeless.

He was then invited by the Earl of Berkley to accompany him into Ireland,



as his private secretary; but after having done the business till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one *Bush* had persuaded the Earl that a clergyman was not a proper secretary, and had obtained the office for himself. In a man like Swift such circumvention and inconstancy must have excited violent indignation.

But he had yet more to suffer. Lord Berkley had the disposal of the deanery of Derry, and Swift expected to obtain it; but by the secretary's influence, supposed to have been secured by a bribe, it was bestowed on somebody else; and Swift was dismissed with the livings of *Laracor* and *Ratbeggin* in the diocese of Meath,

Meath, which together did not equal half the value of the deanery.

At Laracor he increased the parochial duty by reading prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and performed all the offices of his profession with great decency and exactness.

Soon after his settlement at Laracor, he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella, a young woman whose name was Johnson, the daughter of the steward of Sir William Temple, who, in consideration of her father's virtues, left her a thousand pounds. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whose whole fortune was twenty-seven pounds a year for her life. With these Ladies he passed his hours of relaxation, and to them he opened

his bosom; but they never resided in the same house, nor did he see either without a witness. They lived at the Parsonage, when Swift was away; and when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the house of a neighbouring clergyman.

Swift was not one of those minds which amaze the world with early pregnancy: his first work, except his few poetical Essays, was the *Dissentions in Athens and Rome*, published (1701) in his thirty-fourth year. After its appearance, paying a visit to some bishop, he heard mention made of the new pamphlet that Burnet had written, replete with political knowledge. When he seemed to doubt Burnet's right to the work, he was told by the Bishop, that  
he

he was *a young man*; and, still persisting to doubt, that he was *a very positive young man*.

Three years afterward (1704) was published *The Tale of a Tub*: of this book charity may be persuaded to think that it might be written by a man of a peculiar character, without ill intention, but it is certainly of dangerous example. That Swift was its author, though it be universally believed, was never owned by himself, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced, and he did not deny it when Archbishop Sharpe and the Duchess of Somerset, by shewing it to the Queen, debarred him from a bishoprick.

When this wild work first raised the attention of the publick, Sacheverell, meeting Smalridge, tried to flatter him, by seeming to think him the author; but Smalridge answered with indignation, “Not all that you and I have in the world, nor all that ever we shall have, should hire me to write the *Tale of a Tub.*”

The digressions relating to Wotton and Bentley must be confessed to discover want of knowledge, or want of integrity; he did not understand the two controversies, or he willingly misrepresented them. But Wit can stand its ground against Truth only a little while. The honours due to learning have been justly distributed by the decision of posterity.

*The*

*The Battle of the Books* is so like the *Combat des Livres*, which the same question concerning the Ancients and Moderns had produced in France, that the improbability of such a coincidence of thoughts without communication is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous protestation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily disowned.

For some time after Swift was probably employed in solitary study, gaining the qualifications requisite for future eminence. How often he visited England, and with what diligence he attended his parishes, I know not. It was not till about four years afterwards

B 2 that

that he became a professed author, and then one year (1708) produced *The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man*; the ridicule of Astrology, under the name of *Bickerstaff*; the *Argument against abolishing Christianity*; and the defence of the *Sacramental Test*.

*The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man* is written with great coolness, moderation, ease, and perspicuity. The *Argument against abolishing Christianity* is a very happy and judicious irony. One passage in it deserves to be selected.

“ If Christianity were once abolished,  
 “ how could the free-thinkers, the strong  
 “ reasoners, and the men of profound  
 “ learning, be able to find another sub-  
 “ ject

“ ject so calculated, in all points, where-  
“ on to display their abilities? What  
“ wonderful productions of wit should  
“ we be deprived of from those, whose  
“ genius, by continual practice, hath  
“ been wholly turned upon raillery and  
“ invectives against religion, and would  
“ therefore never be able to shine, or  
“ distinguish themselves, upon any other  
“ subject? We are daily complaining  
“ of the great decline of wit among us,  
“ and would take away the greatest,  
“ perhaps the only, topick we have left.  
“ Who would ever have suspected Asgill  
“ for a wit, or Toland for a philoso-  
“ pher, if the inexhaustible stock of  
“ Christianity had not been at hand to  
“ provide them with materials? What



“ other subject, through all art or na-  
 “ ture, could have produced Tindal for  
 “ a profound author, or furnished him  
 “ with readers? It is the wise choice  
 “ of the subject that alone adorns and  
 “ distinguishes the writer. For had an  
 “ hundred such pens as these been em-  
 “ ployed on the side of religion, they  
 “ would have immediately sunk into  
 “ silence and oblivion.”

The reasonableness of a *Test* is not  
 hard to be proved; but perhaps it must  
 be allowed that the proper test has not  
 been chosen.

The attention paid to the papers  
 published under the name of *Bickerstaff*,  
 induced Steele, when he projected the  
*Tatler*, to assume an appellation which  
 had

had already gained possession of the reader's notice.

In the year following he wrote a *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, addressed to Lady Berkley; by whose kindness it is not unlikely that he was advanced to his benefices. To this project, which is formed with great purity of intention, and displayed with sprightliness and elegance, it can only be objected, that, like many projects, it is, if not generally impracticable, yet evidently hopeless, as it supposes more zeal, concord, and perseverance, than a view of mankind gives reason for expecting.

He wrote likewise this year a *Vindication of Bickerstaff*; and an explanation of an *Ancient Prophecy*, which, though not

completed in all its parts, cannot be read without amazement.

Soon after began the busy and important part of Swift's life. He was employed (1710) by the Primate of Ireland to solicit the Queen for a remission of the First Fruits and Twentieth Parts to the Irish Clergy. With this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley, to whom he was mentioned as a man neglected and oppressed by the last ministry, because he had refused to co-operate with some of their schemes. What he had refused, has never been told; what he had suffered was, I suppose, the exclusion from a bishoprick by the remonstrances of Sharpe, whom he describes as *the harmless tool of others hate*, and

whom he represents as afterwards  *suing for pardon.*

Harley's designs and situation were such as made him glad of an auxiliary so well qualified for his service; he therefore soon admitted him to familiarity, whether ever to confidence some have made a doubt; but it would have been difficult to excite his zeal without persuading him that he was trusted, and not very easy to delude him by false persuasions.

He was certainly admitted to those meetings in which the first hints and original plan of action are supposed to have been formed; and was one of the sixteen Ministers, or agents of the Ministry, who met weekly at each other's houses,

houses, and were united by the name of *Brother*.

Being not immediately considered as an obdurate Tory, he conversed indiscriminately with all the wits, and was yet the friend of Steele; who, in the *Tatler*, which began in 1710, confesses the advantages of his conversation, and mentions something contributed by him to his paper. But he was now immersing into political controversy; for the same year produced the *Examiner*, of which Swift wrote thirty-three papers. In argument he may be allowed to have the advantage; for where a wide system of conduct, and the whole of a publick character, is laid open to enquiry, the accuser having the choice of facts, must be very unskilful

if he does not prevail; but with regard to wit, I am afraid none of Swift's papers will be found equal to those by which Addison opposed him.

Early in the next year he published a *Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue*, in a Letter to the Earl of Oxford; written without much knowledge of the general nature of language, and without any accurate enquiry into the history of other tongues. The certainty and stability which, contrary to all experience, he thinks attainable, he proposes to secure by instituting an academy; the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud to disobey, and which, being renewed

newed by successive elections, would in a short time have differed from itself.

He wrote the same year a *Letter to the October Club*, a number of Tory Gentlemen sent from the country to Parliament, who formed themselves into a club, to the number of about a hundred, and met to animate the zeal and raise the expectations of each other. They thought, with great reason, that the Ministers were losing opportunities; that sufficient use was not made of the general ardour of the nation; they called loudly for more changes, and stronger efforts; and demanded the punishment of part, and the dismissal of the rest, of those whom they considered as publick robbers.

Their

Their eagerness was not gratified by the Queen, or by Harley. The Queen was probably slow because she was afraid, and Harley was slow because he was doubtful; he was a Tory only by necessity, or for convenience; and when he had power in his hands, had no settled purpose for which he should employ it; forced to gratify to a certain degree the Tories who supported him, but unwilling to make his reconciliation to the Whigs utterly desperate, he corresponded at once with the two expectants of the Crown, and kept, as has been observed, the succession undetermined. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing; and with the fate of a double-dealer, at last he lost his power, but kept his enemies.

Swift



Swift seems to have concurred in opinion with the *October Club*; but it was not in his power to quicken the tardiness of Harley, whom he stimulated as much as he could, but with little effect. He that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move. Harley, who was perhaps not quick by nature, became yet more slow by irresolution; and was content to hear that dilatoriness lamented as natural, which he applauded in himself as politick.

Without the Tories, however, nothing could be done; and as they were not to be gratified, they must be appeased; and the conduct of the Minister, if it could not be vindicated, was to be plausibly excused.

Swift

Swift now attained the zenith of his political importance: he published (1712) the *Conduct of the Allies*, ten days before the Parliament assembled. The purpose was to persuade the nation to a peace, and never had any writer more success. The people, who had been amused with bonfires and triumphal processions, and looked with idolatry on the General and his friends, who, as they thought, had made England the arbiters of nations, were confounded between shame and rage, when they found that *mines had been exhausted, and millions destroyed*, to secure the Dutch or aggrandise the Emperor, without any advantage to ourselves; that we had been bribing our neighbours to fight their

their own quarrel; and that amongst our enemies we might number our allies.

That is now no longer doubted, of which the nation was then first informed, that the war was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end, if he could have continued his annual plunder. But Swift, I suppose, did not yet know what he has since written, that a commission was drawn which would have appointed him General for life, had it not become ineffectual by the resolution of Lord Cowper, who refused the seal.

*Whatever is received, say the schools, is received in proportion to the recipient.*

The power of a political treatise depends

pende much upon the difpofition of the people; the nation was then combuf-  
tible, and a fpark fet it on fire. It is  
boafled, that between November and  
January eleven thoufand were fold; a  
great number at that time, when we were  
not yet a nation of readers. To its pro-  
pagation certainly no agency of power or  
influence was wanting. It furnifhed ar-  
guments for converfation, fpeeches for  
debate, and materials for parliamentary  
refolutions.

Yet, furely, whoever furveys this  
wonder-working pamphlet with cool pe-  
rufal, will confefs that its efficacy was  
fupplied by the paffions of its readers;  
that it operates by the mere weight of  
C facts,

facts, with very little assistance from the hand that produced them.

This year (1712) he published his *Reflections on the Barrier Treaty*, which carries on the design of his *Conduct of the Allies*, and shews how little regard in that negotiation had been shewn to the interest of England, and how much of the conquered country had been demanded by the Dutch.

This was followed by *Remarks on the Bishop of Sarum's Introduction to his third Volume of the History of the Reformation*; a pamphlet which Burnet published as an alarm, to warn the nation of the approach of Popery. Swift, who seems to have disliked the Bishop with something

thing more than political aversion, treats him like one whom he is glad of an opportunity to insult.

Swift, being now the declared favourite and supposed confidant of the Tory Ministry, was treated by all that depended on the Court with the respect which dependents know how to pay. He soon began to feel part of the misery of greatness; he that could say he knew him, considered himself as having fortune in his power. Commissions, solicitations, remonstrances, crowded about him; he was expected to do every man's business, to procure employment for one, and to retain it for another. In assisting those who addressed him, he represents himself as sufficiently diligent; and desires

to have others believe, what he probably believed himself, that by his interposition many Whigs of merit, and among them Addison and Congreve, were continued in their places. But every man of known influence has so many petitions which he cannot grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he gratifies, as the preference given to one affords all the rest a reason for complaint. *When I give away a place, said Lewis XIV. I make an hundred discontented, and one ungrateful.*

Much has been said of the equality and independence which he preserved in his conversation with the Ministers, of the frankness of his remonstrances, and the familiarity of his friendship.

In

In accounts of this kind a few single incidents are set against the general tenour of behaviour. No man, however, can pay a more servile tribute to the Great, than by suffering his liberty in their presence to aggrandize him in his own esteem. Between different ranks of the community there is necessarily some distance: he who is called by his superior to pass the interval, may very properly accept the invitation; but petulance and obtrusion are rarely produced by magnanimity; nor have often any nobler cause than the pride of importance, and the malice of inferiority. He who knows himself necessary may set, while that necessity lasts, a high value upon himself; as, in a lower condition,



dition, a fervant eminently skilful may be faucy; but he is faucy only because he is fervile. Swift appears to have preferved the kindness of thofe that wanted him no longer; and therefore it muft be allowed, that the childish freedom, to which he feems enough inclined, was overpowered by his better qualities.

His difinterestednefs has been likewise mentioned; a ftain of heroifm, which would have been in his condition romantick and fuperfluous. Ecclefiaftical benefices, when they become vacant, muft be given away; and the friends of Power may, if there be no inherent difqualification, reasonably expect them. Swift accepted (1713) the deanery of  
St.

St. Patrick, the best preferment that his friends could venture to give him. That Ministry was in a great degree supported by the Clergy, who were not yet reconciled to the author of the *Tale of a Tub*, and would not without much discontent and indignation have borne to see him installed in an English Cathedral.

He refused, indeed, fifty pounds from Lord Oxford; but he accepted afterwards a draught of a thousand upon the Exchequer, which was intercepted by the Queen's death, and which he resigned, as he says himself, *multa gemens, with many a groan.*

In the midst of his power and his politicks, he kept a journal of his visits, his walks, his interviews with Ministers,

and quarrels with his servant, and transmitted it to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew that whatever befel him was interesting, and to whom no accounts could be too minute. Whether these diurnal trifles were properly exposed to eyes which had never received any pleasure from the presence of the Dean, may be reasonably doubted: they have, however, some odd attraction; the reader, finding frequent mention of names which he has been used to consider as important, goes on in hope of information; and, as there is nothing to fatigue attention, if he is disappointed he can hardly complain. It is easy to perceive, from every page, that though ambition pressed Swift into a life  
of

of bustle, the wish was always returning for a life of ease.

He went to take possession of his deanery, as soon as he had obtained it; but he was not suffered to stay in Ireland more than a fortnight before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, who began to look on one another with malevolence, which every day increased, and which Bolingbroke appeared to retain in his last years.

Swift contrived an interview, from which they both departed discontented: he procured a second, which only convinced him that the feud was irreconcilable; he told them his opinion, that all was lost. This denunciation was con-  
 tradicted

tradieted by Oxford, but Bolingbroke whispered that he was right.

Before this violent dissention had shattered the Ministry, Swift had published, in the beginning of the year (1714), *The Publick Spirit of the Whigs*, in answer to *The Crisis*, a pamphlet for which *Steele* was expelled from the House of Commons. Swift was now so far alienated from *Steele* as to think him no longer entitled to decency, and therefore treats him sometimes with contempt, and sometimes with abhorrence.

In this pamphlet the Scots were mentioned in terms so provoking to that irritable nation, that, resolving *not to be offended with impunity*, the Scotch Lords in a body demanded an audience of the

Queen, and solicited reparation. A proclamation was issued, in which three hundred pounds was offered for discovery of the author. From this storm he was, as he relates, *secured by a sleight*; of what kind, or by whose prudence, is not known; and such was the increase of his reputation, that the Scottish *Nation* applied again that he would be their friend.

He was become so formidable to the Whigs, that his familiarity with the Ministers was clamoured at in Parliament, particularly by two men, afterwards of great note, *Aislabie* and *Walpole*.

But, by the disunion of his great friends, his importance and his designs were now at an end; and seeing his services

vices at last uselefs, he retired about June (1714) into Berkshire, where, in the house of a friend, he wrote what was then suppressed, but has since appeared under the title of *Free Thoughts on the present State of Affairs*.

While he was waiting in this retirement for events which time or chance might bring to pass, the death of the Queen broke down at once the whole system of Tory Politicks; and nothing remained but to withdraw from the implacability of triumphant Whiggism, and shelter himself in unenvied obscurity.

The accounts of his reception in Ireland, given by Lord Orrery and Dr. Delany, are so different, that the credit of  
the

the writers, both undoubtedly veracious, cannot be saved but by supposing, what I think is true, that they speak of different times. When Delany says that he was received with kindness and respect, he means for the first fortnight, when he came to take legal possession; and when Lord Orrery tells that he was pelted by the populace, he is to be understood of the time when, after the Queen's death, he became a settled resident.

The Archbishop of Dublin gave him at first some disturbance in the exercise of his jurisdiction; but it was soon discovered, that between prudence and integrity he was seldom in the wrong;



and that, when he was right, his spirit did not easily yield to opposition.

Having so lately quitted the tumults of a party and the intrigues of a court, they still kept his thoughts in agitation, as the sea fluctuates a while when the storm has ceased. He therefore filled his hours with some historical attempts, relating to the *Change of the Ministers* and *the Conduct of the Ministry*. He likewise is said to have written a *History of the Four last Years of Queen Anne*, which he began in her life-time, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never published. It was after his death in the hands of Lord Orrery and Dr. King. A book under that title was published, with Swift's name, by Dr. Lucas;

Lucas; of which I can only say, that it seemed by no means to correspond with the notions that I had formed of it; from a conversation which I once heard between the Earl of Orrery and old Mr. Lewis.

Swift now, much against his will, commenced Irishman for life, and was to contrive how he might be best accommodated in a country where he considered himself as in a state of exile. It seems that his first recourse was to piety. The thoughts of death rushed upon him, at this time, with such incessant importunity, that they took possession of his mind when he first waked for many years together.

He

He opened his house by a publick table two days a week, and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more visitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnson had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the deanery. On his publick days she regulated the table, but always appeared at it as a mere guest, like other Ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a stated price, with Mr. Worrall, a clergyman of his cathedral, whose house was recommended by the peculiar neatness and pleasantry of his wife. To this frugal mode of living, he was first disposed by care to pay some debts which

which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleasure of accumulating money. His avarice, however, was not suffered to obstruct the claims of his dignity; he was served in plate, and used to say that he was the poorest gentleman in Ireland that eat upon plate, and the richest that lived without a coach.

How he spent the rest of his time, and how he employed his hours of study, has been enquired with hopeless curiosity. For who can give an account of another's studies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his business or his leisure.

Soon after (1716), in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnson by Dr. Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, as Dr. Madden told me, in the garden. The marriage made no change in their mode of life; they lived in different houses, as before; nor did she ever lodge in the deanery but when Swift was seized with a fit of giddiness. "It would be difficult," says Lord Orrery, "to prove that they were ever afterwards together without a third person."

The Dean of St. Patrick's lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends, till, about the year 1720, he, by a pamphlet, recommended to the Irish the use, and consequently the improvement, of their manufacture.

For



For a man to use the productions of his own labour is surely a natural right, and to like best what he makes himself is a natural passion. But to excite this passion, and enforce this right, appeared so criminal to those who had an interest in the English trade, that the printer was imprisoned; and, as Hawkesworth justly observes, the attention of the publick being by this outrageous resentment turned upon the proposal, the author was by consequence made popular.

In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiously distinguished by the name of *Vanessa*, whose conduct has been already sufficiently discussed, and whose history is too well

known to be minutely repeated. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom *Decanus* the *Dean*, called *Cadenus* by transposition of the letters, took pleasure in directing and instructing; till, from being proud of his praise, she grew fond of his person. Swift was then about forty-seven, at an age when vanity is strongly excited by the amorous attention of a young woman. If it be said that Swift should have checked a passion which he never meant to gratify, recourse must be had to that extenuation which he so much despised, *men are but men*: perhaps however he did not at first know his own mind, and, as he represents himself, was undetermined. For his admission of her courtship, and his indul-

indulgence of her hopes after his marriage to Stella, no other honest plea can be found, than that he delayed a disagreeable discovery from time to time, dreading the immediate burst of distress, and watching for a favourable moment. She thought herself neglected, and died of disappointment; having ordered by her will the poem to be published, in which *Cadenus* had proclaimed her excellence, and confessed his love. The effect of the publication is thus related by Delany.

“ I have good reason to believe, that  
“ they both were greatly shocked and  
“ distressed (though it may be different-  
“ ly) upon this occasion. The Dean  
“ made a tour to the South of Ireland,



“ for about two months, at this time, to  
“ dissipate his thoughts, and give place  
“ to obloquy. And Stella retired (upon  
“ the earnest invitation of the owner)  
“ to the house of a chearful, generous,  
“ good-natured friend of the Dean’s,  
“ whom she also much loved and ho-  
“ noured. There my informer often saw  
“ her; and, I have reason to believe,  
“ used his utmost endeavours to relieve,  
“ support, and amuse her, in this sad  
“ situation.

“ One little incident he told me of,  
“ on that occasion, I think I shall never  
“ forget. As her friend was an hospi-  
“ table, open-hearted man, well-beloved  
“ and largely acquainted, it happened  
“ one day that some gentlemen dropt in

“ to dinner, who were strangers to Stel-  
 “ la’s situation; and as the poem of  
 “ *Cadenus and Vanessa* was then the ge-  
 “ neral topic of conversation, one of  
 “ them said, ‘ Surely that Vanessa must  
 “ be an extraordinary woman, that could  
 “ inspire the Dean to write so finely  
 “ upon her.’ Mrs. Johnson smiled, and  
 “ answered, “ that she thought that  
 “ point not quite so clear; for it was  
 “ well known the Dean could write  
 “ finely upon a broomstick.”

The great acquisition of esteem and  
 influence was made by the *Drapier’s*  
*Letters* in 1724. One Wood of Wolver-  
 hampton in Staffordshire, a man enter-  
 prising and rapacious, had, as is said,  
 by a present to the Dutchess of Munster,

obtained a patent empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of half-pence and farthings for the kingdom of Ireland, in which there was a very inconvenient and embarrassing scarcity of copper coin; so that it was possible to run in debt upon the credit of a piece of money. The cook or keeper of an alehouse could not refuse to supply a man that had silver in his hand, and the buyer would not leave his money without change.

The project was therefore plausible. The scarcity, which was already great, Wood took care to make greater, by agents who gathered up the old half-pence; and was about to turn his brass into gold, by pouring his treasures of  
his

his new mint upon Ireland, when Swift, finding that the metal was debased to an enormous degree, wrote Letters, under the name of *M. B. Drapier*, to shew the folly of receiving, and the mischief that must ensue, by giving gold and silver for coin worth perhaps not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was universally refused: but the governors of Ireland considered resistance to the King's patent as highly criminal; and one Whitshed, then Chief Justice, who had tried the printer of the former pamphlet, and sent out the Jury nine times, till by clamour and menaces they were frightened into a special verdict, now presented the *Drapier*, but  
could

could not prevail on the Grand Jury to find the bill.

Lord Carteret and the Privy Council published a proclamation, offering three hundred pounds for discovering the author of the Fourth Letter. Swift had concealed himself from his printers, and trusted only his butler, who transcribed the paper. The man, immediately after the appearance of the proclamation, strolled from the house, and staid out all night and part of the next day. There was reason enough to fear that he had betrayed his master for the reward; but he came home, and the Dean ordered him to put off his livery, and leave the house; “for,” says he, “I know that  
“ my life is in your power, and I will  
“ not

“not bear, out of fear, either your information or negligence.” The man excused his fault with great submission, and begged that he might be confined in the house while it was in his power to endanger his master; but the Dean resolutely turned him out, without taking farther notice of him, till the term of information had expired, and then received him again. Soon afterwards he ordered him and the rest of the servants into his presence, without telling his intentions, and bade them take notice that their fellow-servant was no longer Robert the butler; but that his integrity had made him Mr. Blake-ney, verger of St. Patrick’s; an officer whose income was between thirty and  
forty

forty pounds a year, but he still continued for some years to serve his old master as his butler.

Swift was known from this time by the appellation of *The Dean*. He was honoured by the populace as the champion, patron, and instructor of Ireland; and gained such power as, considered both in its extent and duration, scarcely any man has ever enjoyed without greater wealth or higher station.

He was from this important year the oracle of the traders, and the idol of the rabble, and by consequence was feared and courted by all to whom the kindness of the traders or the populace was necessary. The *Drapier* was a sign; the *Drapier* was a health; and which  
way

way soever the eye or the ear was turned, some tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the *Drapier*.

The benefit was indeed great; he had rescued Ireland from a very oppressive and predatory invasion; and the popularity which he had gained he was diligent to keep, by appearing forward and zealous on every occasion where the publick interest was supposed to be involved. Nor did he much scruple to boast his influence; for when, upon some attempts to regulate the coin, Archbishop Boulter, then one of the Justices, accused him of exasperating the people, he exculpated himself by saying, "If I had lifted up my finger, "they would have torn you to pieces."

But



But the pleasure of popularity was soon interrupted by domestick misery. Mrs. Johnson, whose conversation was to him the great softener of the ills of life, began in the year of the Drapier's triumph to decline; and two years afterwards was so wasted with sickness, that her recovery was considered as hopeless.

Swift was then in England, and had been invited by Lord Bolingbroke to pass the winter with him in France; but this call of calamity hastened him to Ireland, where perhaps his presence contributed to restore her to imperfect and tottering health.

He was now so much at ease, that (1727) he returned to England; where he collected three volumes of Miscellanies

nies in conjunction with Pope, who prefixed a querulous and apologetical Preface.

This important year sent likewise into the world *Gulliver's Travels*, a production so new and strange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with such avidity, that the price of the first edition was raised before a second could be made; it was read by the high and the low, the learned and illiterate. Criticism was for a while lost in wonder; no rules of judgement were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when distinctions came to be made, the part which gave least pleasure was that which describes  
the

the *Flying Island*, and that which gave most disgust must be the history of the *Houyhnhnms*.

While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the King's death arrived; and he kissed the hands of the new King and Queen three days after their accession.

By the Queen, when she was Princess, he had been treated with some distinction, and was well received by her in her exaltation; but whether she gave hopes which she never took care to satisfy, or he formed expectations which she never meant to raise, the event was, that he always afterwards thought on her with malevolence, and particularly charged her with breaking her promise  
of

of some medals which she engaged to send him.

I know not whether she had not, in her turn, some reason for complaint. A Letter was sent her, not so much entreating as requiring her patronage of Mrs. Barber, an ingenious Irishwoman, who was then begging subscriptions for her Poems. To this Letter was subscribed the name of *Swift*, and it has all the appearances of his diction and sentiments; but it was not written in his hand, and had some little improprieties. When he was charged with this Letter, he laid hold of the inaccuracies, and urged the improbability of the accusation; but never denied it: he shuffles between cowardice and veracity,

city, and talks big when he says nothing.

He seemed desirous enough of recommending courtier, and endeavoured to gain the kindness of Mrs. Howard, remembering what Mrs. Masham had performed in former times; but his flatteries were, like those of the other wits, unsuccessful; the Lady either wanted power, or had no ambition of poetical immortality.

He was seized not long afterwards by a fit of giddiness, and again heard of the sickness and danger of Mrs. Johnson. He then left the house of Pope, as it seems, with very little ceremony, finding that *two sick friends cannot live*

*toget-*

*together*; and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester.

He returned to a home of sorrow: poor Stella was sinking into the grave, and, after a languishing delay of about two months, died in her forty-fourth year, on January 28, 1728. How much he wished her life, his papers tell us; nor can it be doubted that he dreaded the death of her whom he loved most, aggravated by the consciousness that himself had hastened it.

Beauty and the power of pleasing, the greatest external advantages that woman can desire or possess, were fatal to the unfortunate Stella. The man whom she had the misfortune to love was, as Delany observes, fond of singu-

clarity, and desirous to make a mode of happiness for himself, out of the general course of things and order of Providence. From the time of her arrival in Ireland he seems resolved to keep her in his power, and therefore hindered a match sufficiently advantageous, by accumulating unreasonable demands, and prescribing conditions that could not be performed. While she was at her own disposal he did not consider his possession as secure; resentment, ambition, or caprice, might separate them; he was therefore resolved to make *assurance double sure*, and to appropriate her by a private marriage, to which he had annexed the expectation of all the pleasures of perfect friendship, without the

uneasiness of conjugal restraint. But with this state poor Stella was not satisfied; she never was treated as a wife, and to the world she had the appearance of a mistress. She lived fullenly on, in hope that in time he would own and receive her; but the time did not come till the change of his manners and depravation of his mind made her tell him, when he offered to acknowledge her, that *it was too late*. She then gave up herself to sorrowful resentment, and died by the tyranny of him by whom she was in the highest degree loved and honoured.

What were her claims to this eccentric tenderness, by which the laws of Nature were violatéd to retain her, cu-



riosity will enquire; but how shall it be gratified? Swift was a lover; his testimony may be suspected. Delany and the Irish saw with Swift's eyes, and therefore add little confirmation. That she was virtuous, beautiful, and elegant, in a very high degree, such admiration from such a lover makes it very probable; but she had not much literature, for she could not spell her own language; and of her wit, so loudly vaunted, the smart sayings which Swift has collected afford no splendid specimen.

The reader of Swift's *Letter to a Lady on her Marriage*, may be allowed to doubt whether his opinion of female excellence ought implicitly to be admitted; for if his general thoughts on women

men

men were such as he exhibits; a very little sense in a Lady would enrapture, and a very little virtue would astonish him. Stella's supremacy, therefore, was perhaps only local; she was great, because her associates were little.

In some Remarks lately published on the Life of Swift, this marriage is mentioned as fabulous, or doubtful; but, alas! poor Stella, as Dr. Madden told me, related her melancholy story to Dr. Sheridan, when he attended her as a clergyman to prepare her for death; and Delany tells it not with doubt, but only with regret. Swift never mentioned her without a sigh.

The rest of his life was spent in Ireland, in a country to which not even

power almost despotick, nor flattery almost idolatrous, could reconcile him. He sometimes wished to visit England, but always found some reason of delay. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to see him; *but if not, says he, we must part, as all human beings have parted.*

After the death of Stella, his benevolence was contracted, and his severity exasperated; he drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deserted. But he continued his attention to the publick, and wrote from time to time such directions, admonitions, or censures, as the various exigency of affairs, in his opinion, made  
pro-

proper; and nothing fell from his pen in vain.

In a short poem on the Presbyterians, whom he always regarded with detestation, he bestowed one stricture upon Bettsworth, a lawyer eminent for his insolence to the clergy, which, from very considerable reputation, brought him into immediate and universal contempt. Bettsworth, enraged at his disgrace and loss, went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the author of that poem. "Mr. Bettsworth," answered he, "I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me, that, if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should

“ should ask, *Are you the author of this*  
“ *paper*, I should tell him that I was not  
“ the author; and therefore I tell you,  
“ Mr. Bettefworth, that I am not the  
“ author of these lines.”

Bettefworth was so little satisfied with this account, that he publickly professed his resolution of a violent and corporal revenge; but the inhabitants of St. Patrick's district embodied themselves in the Dean's defence; and Bettefworth declared in Parliament, that Swift had deprived him of twelve hundred pounds a year.

Swift was popular a while by another mode of beneficence. He set aside some hundreds to be lent in small sums to the poor; from five shillings, I think,

to

to five pounds. He took no interest, and only required that, at repayment, a small fee should be given to the accountant; but he required that the day of promised payment should be exactly kept. A severe and punctilious temper is ill qualified for transactions with the poor; the day was often broken, and the loan was not repaid. This might have been easily foreseen; but for this Swift had made no provision of patience or pity. He ordered his debtors to be sued. A severe creditor has no popular character; what then was likely to be said of him who employs the catchpoll under the appearance of charity? The clamour against him was loud, and the resentment of the populace outrageous; he

was

was therefore forced to drop his scheme, and own the folly of expecting punctuality from the poor.

His asperity continually increasing, condemned him to solitude; and his resentment of solitude sharpened his asperity. He was not, however, totally deserted: some men of learning, and some women of elegance, often visited him; and he wrote from time to time either verse or prose; of his verses he willingly gave copies, and is supposed to have felt no discontent when he saw them printed. His favourite maxim was *vive la bagatelle*; he thought trifles a necessary part of life, and perhaps found them necessary to himself. It seems impossible to him to be idle, and his disorders

orders made it difficult or dangerous to be long seriously studious, or laboriously diligent. The love of ease is always gaining upon age, and he had one temptation to petty amusements peculiar to himself; whatever he did, he was sure to hear applauded; and such was his predominance over all that approached, that all their applauses were probably sincere. He that is much flattered, soon learns to flatter himself: we are commonly taught our duty by fear or shame, and how can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praises?

As his years increased, his fits of giddiness and deafness grew more frequent, and his deafness made conversation difficult; they grew likewise more severe,  
till



till in 1736, as he was writing a poem called *The Legion Club*, he was seized with a fit so painful, and so long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was therefore no liberal entertainer; but was less frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either sex came to him, in expectation of a dinner, his custom was to give every one a shilling, that they might please themselves with their provision. At last his avarice grew too powerful for his kindness; he would refuse a bottle of wine, and in Ireland no man visits where he cannot drink.

Having

Having thus excluded conversation, and desisted from study, he had neither business nor amusement; for having, by some ridiculous resolution or mad vow, determined never to wear spectacles, he could make little use of books in his later years: his ideas, therefore, being neither renovated by discourse nor increased by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till at last his anger was heightened into madness.

He however permitted one book to be published, which had been the production of former years; *Polite Conversation*, which appeared in 1738. The *Directions for Servants* was printed soon after his death. These two performances shew

shew a mind incessantly attentive, and, when it was not employed upon great things, busy with minute occurrences. It is apparent that he must have had the habit of noting whatever he observed; for such a number of particulars could never have been assembled by the power of recollection.

He grew more violent; and his mental powers declined till (1741) it was found necessary that legal guardians should be appointed of his person and fortune. He now lost distinction. His madness was compounded of rage and fatuity. The last face that he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway, and her he ceased to know in a little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls;

fuls ; but he would never touch it while the servant staid, and at last, after it had stood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking ; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a-day.

Next year (1742) he had an inflammation in his left eye, which swelled it to the size of an egg, with boils in other parts ; he was kept long waking with the pain, and was not easily restrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The tumour at last subsided ; and a short interval of reason ensuing, in which he knew his physician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery ; but in a few days he sunk into lethargick stupidity, motionless, heedless, and speech-

F less.

less. But it is said, that, after a year of total silence, when his housekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the usual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birthday, he answered, *It is all folly; they had better let it alone.*

It is remembered that he afterwards spoke now and then, or gave some intimation of a meaning; but at last sunk into perfect silence, which continued till about the end of October 1744, when, in his seventy-eighth year, he expired without a struggle.



WHEN



WHEN Swift is considered as an author, it is just to estimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the stream of popularity against the Whigs, and must be confessed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the English nation. In the succeeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppression; and shewed that wit, confederated with truth, had such force as authority was unable to resist. He said truly of himself, that Ireland *was his debtor*. It was from the time when he first began to patronize the Irish, that they may

date their riches and prosperity. He taught them first to know their own interest, their weight, and their strength, and gave them spirit to assert that equality with their fellow-subjects to which they have ever since been making vigorous advances, and to claim those rights which they have at last established. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude to their benefactor; for they revered him as a guardian, and obeyed him as a dictator.

In his works, he has given very different specimens both of sentiment and expression. His *Tale of a Tub* has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity

of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of any thing else which he has written.

In his other works is found an equable tenour of easy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice. He studied purity; and though perhaps all his structures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sen-



tences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be easy to find any embarrassment in the complication of his clauses, any inconsequence in his connections, or abruptness in his transitions.

His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilised by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprize nor admiration; he always understands himself, and his reader always understands him: the peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge; it will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and

com-

common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstruction.

This easy and safe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's desire to attain, and for having attained he certainly deserves praise, though perhaps not the highest praise. For purposes merely didactick, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is in the highest degree proper, but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade.

By his political education he was associated with the Whigs; but he deserted them when they deserted their principles, yet without running into the contrary extreme; he continued throughout his life to retain the disposition which he assigns to the *Church-of-England Man*, of thinking commonly with the Whigs of the State, and with the Tories of the Church.

He was a churchman, rationally zealous; he desired the prosperity and maintained the honour of the Clergy; of the Dissenters he did not wish to infringe the toleration, but he opposed their encroachments.

Of his duty as Dean he was very observant. He managed the revenues of  
his

his church with exact œconomy; and it is said by Delany, that more money was, under his direction, laid out in repairs than had ever been in the same time since its first erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor understood musick, took care that all the singers were well qualified, admitting none without the testimony of skilful judges.

In his church he restored the practice of weekly communion, and distributed the sacramental elements in the most solemn and devout manner with his own hand. He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

He

He read the service *rather with a strong nervous voice than in a graceful manner; his voice was sharp and high-toned, rather than harmonious.*

He entered upon the clerical state with hope to excel in preaching; but complained, that, from the time of his political controversies, *he could only preach pamphlets.* This censure of himself, if judgment be made from those sermons which have been published, was unreasonably severe.

The suspicions of his irreligion proceeded in a great measure from his dread of hypocrisy; instead of wishing to seem better, he delighted in seeming worse than he was. He went in London to early prayers, lest he should be seen at church;

church; he read prayers to his servants every morning with such dexterous secrecy, that Dr. Delany was six months in his house before he knew it. ... He was not only careful to hide the good which he did, but willingly incurred the suspicion of evil which he did not. He forgot what himself had formerly asserted, that hypocrisy is less mischievous than open impiety. Dr. Delany, with all his zeal for his honour, has justly condemned this part of his character.

The person of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he washed himself with oriental scrupulosity, did not look clear. He had a countenance sour and severe, which he seldom

dom.

dom softened by any appearance of gaiety. He stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter.

To his domesticks he was naturally rough; and a man of a rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works discover, must have been a master that few could bear. That he was disposed to do his servants good, on important occasions, is no great mitigation; benefaction can be but rare, and tyrannick peevishness is perpetual. He did not spare the servants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he said, of one that waited in the room, *That man has, since we sat to the table, committed fifteen faults.* What the faults were, Lord Orrery, from whom I heard

I heard the story, had not been attentive enough to discover. My number may perhaps not be exact.

In his œconomy he practised a peculiar and offensive parsimony, without disguise or apology. The practice of saving being once necessary, became habitual, and grew first ridiculous, and at last detestable. But his avarice, though it might exclude pleasure, was never suffered to encroach upon his virtue. He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle; and if the purpose to which he destined his little accumulations be remembered, with his distribution of occasional charity, it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expence better than another,  
and



and saved only that he might have something to give. He did not grow rich by injuring his successors, but left both Larcacor and the Deanery more valuable than he found them.—With all this talk of his covetousness and generosity, it should be remembered that he was never rich. The revenue of his Deanery was not much more than seven hundred a year.

His beneficence was not graced with tenderness or civility; he relieved without pity, and assisted without kindness, so that those who were fed by him could hardly love him.

He made a rule to himself to give but one piece at a time, and therefore  
always

always stored his pocket with coins of different value.

Whatever he did, he seemed willing to do in a manner peculiar to himself, without sufficiently considering that singularity, as it implies a contempt of the general practice, is a kind of defiance which justly provokes the hostility of ridicule; he therefore who indulges peculiar habits is worse than others, if he be not better.

Of his humour, a story told by Pope may afford a specimen.

\* “ Dr. Swift has an odd, blunt way, “ that is mistaken, by strangers, for ill- “ nature.—’Tis so odd, that there’s no “ describing it but by facts. I’ll tell

\* Spence.

“ you one, that first comes into my  
“ head. . . One evening, Gay and I went  
“ to see him : you know how intimately  
“ we were all acquainted. On our  
“ coming in, “ Heyday, gentlemen (says  
“ the Doctor), what’s the meaning of  
“ this visit ! How came you to leave  
“ all the great Lords, that you are so  
“ fond of, to come hither to see a poor  
“ Dean ? ” — Because we would rather  
“ see you than any of them. — “ Ay,  
“ any one that did not know so well as  
“ I do, might believe you. But since  
“ you are come, I must get some supper  
“ for you, I suppose.” No, Doctor,  
“ we have supped already. — “ Supped  
“ already, that’s impossible ! why, ’tis  
“ not eight o’clock yet. — That’s very  
“ strange :

“ strange : but, if you had not supped,  
“ I must have got so nething for you.—  
“ Let me see, what should I have had?  
“ A couple of lobsters; ay, that would  
“ have done very well; two shillings—  
“ tarts, a shilling: but you will drink  
“ a glafs of wine with me, though you  
“ supped so much before your usual  
“ time only to spare my pocket?”—No,  
“ we had rather talk with you than  
“ drink with you.—‘ But if you had  
“ supped with me, as in all reason you  
“ ought to have done, you must then  
“ have drunk with me.—A bottle of  
“ wine, two shillings—two and two is  
“ four, and one is five: just two-and-  
“ six-pence a-piece. There, Pope, there’s  
“ half a crown for you, and there’s ano-

G

“ ther

“ther for you, Sir; for I won’t save

“anything by you, I am determined.—

“This was all said and done with his

“usual seriousness on such occasions;

“and, in spite of every thing we could

“say to the contrary, he actually

“obliged us to take the money.”

In the intercourse of familiar life, he indulged his disposition to petulance and sarcasm, and thought himself injured if the licentiousness of his raillery, the freedom of his censures, or the petulance of his frolicks, was resented or repressed. He predominated over his companions with very high ascendancy, and probably would bear none over whom he could not predominate. To give him advice was, in the stile of his friend

friend Delany, *to venture to speak to him.*

This customary superiority soon grew too delicate for truth; and Swift, with all his penetration, allowed himself to be delighted with low flattery.

On all common occasions, he habitually affects a style of arrogance, and dictates rather than persuades. This authoritative and magisterial language he expected to be received as his peculiar mode of jocularitv; but he apparently flattered his own arrogance by an assumed predominance, in which he was ironical only to the resentful, and to the submissive sufficiently serious.

He told stories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew to suit our taste. G 2

himself to do well. He was therefore captivated by the respectful silence of a steady listener, and told the same tales too often.

He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had spoken a minute, to give room by a pause for any other speaker. Of time, on all occasions, he was an exact computer, and knew the minutes required to every common operation.

It may be justly supposed that there was in his conversation, what appears so frequently in his Letters, an affectation of familiarity with the Great, an ambition of momentary equality sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the  
bar-

barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was by himself and his admirers termed greatness of soul. But a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and therefore never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power; he is either repelled with helpless indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension.

Of Swift's general habits of thinking if his Letters can be supposed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He seems to have wasted life in discontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He



is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant; he scarcely speaks of himself but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with insolent superiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the Letters that pass between him and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind, that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They shew the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation.

When the Queen's death drove him into Ireland, he might be allowed to regret for a time the interception of his views,

views, the extinction of his hopes, and his ejection from gay scenes, important employment, and splendid friendships; but when time had enabled reason to prevail over vexation, the complaints, which at first were natural, became ridiculous because they were useless. But querulousness was now grown habitual, and he cried out when he probably had ceased to feel. His reiterated wailings persuaded Bolingbroke that he was really willing to quit his deanery for an English parish; and Bolingbroke procured an exchange, which was rejected, and Swift still retained the pleasure of complaining.

The greatest difficulty that occurs, in analysing his character, is to discover

by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almost every other mind shrinks with disgust. The ideas of pleasure, even when criminal, may solícite the imagination; but what has disease, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with this gross corruption before his long visit to Pope. He does not consider how he degrades his hero, by making him at fifty-nine the pupil of turpitude, and liable to the malignant influence of an ascendant mind. But the truth is, that Gulliver had described his *Yahoos* before the visit, and he that had formed those images had nothing filthy to learn.

I have

I have here given the character of Swift as he exhibits himself to my perception; but now let another be heard who knew him better; Dr. Delany, after long acquaintance, describes him to Lord Orrery in these terms.

“ My Lord, when you consider  
“ Swift’s singular, peculiar, and most  
“ variegated vein of wit, always rightly  
“ intended (although not always fo  
“ rightly directed), delightful in many  
“ instances, and salutary, even where it is  
“ most offensive; when you consider his  
“ strict truth, his fortitude in resisting  
“ oppression and arbitrary power; his  
“ fidelity in friendship, his sincere love  
“ and zeal for religion, his uprightnes  
“ in making right resolutions, and his  
“ steadi-

“steadiness in adhering to them; his  
“care of his church, its choir, its œco-  
“nomy, and its income; his attention  
“to all those that preached in his ca-  
“thedral, in order to their amendment  
“in pronunciation and style; as also  
“his remarkable attention to the inte-  
“rest of his successors, preferably to  
“his own present emoluments; invin-  
“cible patriotism, even to a country  
“which he did not love; his very va-  
“rious, well-devised, well-judged, and  
“extensive charities, throughout his  
“life, and his whole fortune (to say  
“nothing of his wife’s) conveyed to the  
“same christian purposes at his death;  
“charities from which he could enjoy  
“no

“no honour, advantage, or satisfac-  
 “tion of any kind in this world.

“When you consider his ironical and

“humorous, as well as his serious

“schemes, for the promotion of true

“religion and virtue; his success in

“soliciting for the First Fruits and

“Twentieths, to the unspeakable bene-

“fit of the established Church of Ire-

“land; and his felicity (to rate it no

“higher) in giving occasion to the

“building of fifty new churches in

“London.

“All this considered, the character

“of his life will appear like that of his

“writings; they will both bear to be

“re-considered and re-examined with

“the

“ the utmost attention, and always dis-  
 “ cover new beauties and excellencies  
 “ upon every examination.

“ They will bear to be considered as  
 “ the sun, in which the brightness will  
 “ hide the blemishes; and whenever pe-  
 “ tulant ignorance, pride, malice, ma-  
 “ lignity, or envy, interposes to cloud  
 “ or fully his fame, I will take upon me  
 “ to pronounce that the eclipse will not  
 “ last long.

“ To conclude—no man ever de-  
 “ served better of any country than  
 “ Swift did of his. A steady, perse-  
 “ vering, inflexible friend; a wise, a  
 “ watchful, and a faithful counsellor,  
 “ under many severe trials and bitter

“persecutions, to the manifest hazard  
“both of his liberty and fortune.

“He lived a blessing, he died a be-  
“nefactor, and his name will ever live  
“an honour to Ireland.”







IN the Poetical Works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critic can exercise his powers. They are often humourous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression, or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they

they consist of *proper words in proper places.*

To divide this Collection into classes, and shew how some pieces are gross, and some are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often not to his judgement, but his humour.

It was said, in a Preface to one of the Irish editions, that Swift had never been known to take a single thought from any writer, ancient or modern.

This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that in all his excellencies

lencies and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.



## G A Y.

**J**OHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manour of \* Goldworthy in Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the school of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being

\* *Goldworthy* does not appear in the *Villare*.

born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a silk mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of softness and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or fervility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The dutchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as secretary: by quitting a shop for such service he might gain leisure, but he certainly

tainly advanced little in the boast of independence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inscribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have received him into his inmost confidence; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than

a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published *The Shepherd's Week*, six English Pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rusticks in parts of England remote from London. Steele in some papers of the *Guardian* had praised Ambrose Philips as the Pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published Pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison of his own compositions with those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write  
the

the *Shepherd's Week*, to shew, that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as grossness and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reasonable; but the Pastorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with such imitation as they could attain of obsolete language, and by consequence in a stile that was never spoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to shew them groveling and degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations by those who had no interest



in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the stage, but it received no applause; he printed it, however; and seventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the publick taste, he offered it again to the town; but though he was flushed with the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party; but the Queen's death put

an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that obstructed all kindness from the house of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the princess of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour that both the Prince and Princess went to see his *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comick, and the action grave; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwel, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the

laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty, and was so much favoured by the audience that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffen a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called the *Key to the What d' ye call it*; which, says Gay, *calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave.*

But Fortune has always been inconstant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with *Three Hours after Marriage*; a comedy written,

as

as there is sufficient reason for believing, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve: the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, disgusted the audience, and the performance was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally supply something more generally

rally welcome, a soft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to please them; but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at the *What d'ye call it* would raise the fortune of its author; and finding nothing done, sunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire; the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, the two rural lovers

were

were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his Poems by subscription with such success, that he raised a thousand pounds; and called his friends to a consultation, what use might be best made of it. Lewis, the steward of lord Oxford, advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest; Arbuthnot bad him intrust it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase an annuity.

Gay in that disastrous year \* had a present from young Craggs of some South-sea-stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds.

\* Spence.

His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase an hundred a year for life, *which, says Fenton, will make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day.* This counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shewn particular tendernefs, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the

prin-

princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the princess and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan screen. The princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay after all the disturbance was still to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives* \* I know not ; but he now thought himself in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young duke of Cumberland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

\* It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1723.



Next year the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and Gay was to be great and happy; but upon the settlement of the household he found himself appointed gentleman usher to the princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There seem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour, and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her interest for his promotion; but solicitations, verses, and flatteries were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All

All the pain which he suffered from the neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the *Beggar's Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian Drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected; it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of *making Gay rich, and Rich gay*.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wish to know the original and progress, I have inserted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words.

“ Dr.

“ Dr. Swift had been observing once  
“ to Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty sort  
“ of a thing a Newgate Pastoral might  
“ make. Gay was inclined to try at  
“ such a thing for some time ; but after-  
“ wards thought it would be better to  
“ write a comedy on the same plan.  
“ This was what gave rise to the *Beg-*  
“ *gar's Opera*. He began on it ; and  
“ when first he mentioned it to Swift,  
“ the doctor did not much like the pro-  
“ ject. As he carried it on, he shewed  
“ what he wrote to both of us, and we  
“ now-and-then gave a correction, or a  
“ word or two of advice ; but it was  
“ wholly of his own writing.—When it  
“ was done, neither of us thought it  
“ would succeed.—We shewed it to Con-

“ greve; who, after reading it over,  
“ said, It would either take greatly, or  
“ be damned confoundedly.—We were  
“ all, at the first night of it, in great  
“ uncertainty of the event; till we were  
“ very much encouraged by overhear-  
“ ing the duke of Argyle, who sat in  
“ the next box to us, say, “ It will do—  
“ it must do! I see it in the eyes of  
“ them.” This was a good while before  
“ the first Act was over, and so gave us  
“ ease soon; for that duke (besides his  
“ own good taste) has a particular  
“ knack, as any one now living, in dis-  
“ covering the taste of the publick. He  
“ was quite right in this, as usual; the  
“ good nature of the audience appeared

B

“ stronger

“ stronger and stronger every act, and  
 “ ended in a clamour of applause.”

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad* :

“ This piece was received with greater  
 “ applause than was ever known. Besides  
 “ being acted in London sixty-three days  
 “ without interruption, and renewed the  
 “ next season with equal applause, it  
 “ spread into all the great towns of Eng-  
 “ land; was played in many places to  
 “ the thirtieth and fortieth time; at  
 “ Bath and Bristol fifty, &c. It made  
 “ its progress into Wales, Scotland, and  
 “ Ireland, where it was performed twen-  
 “ ty-four days successively. The ladies  
 “ carried about with them the favourite  
 “ songs of it in fans, and houses were

“ furnished with it in screens. The fame  
“ of it was not confined to the author  
“ only. The person who acted Polly,  
“ till then obscure, became all at once  
“ the favourite of the town; her pic-  
“ tures were engraved, and sold in great  
“ numbers; her Life written, books of  
“ letters and verses to her published,  
“ and pamphlets made even of her say-  
“ ings and jests. Furthermore, it drove  
“ out of England (for that season) the  
“ Italian Opera, which had carried all  
“ before it for ten years.”

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece

that placed all kinds of vice in the strongest and most odious light; but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said that after the exhibition of the *Beggar's Opera* the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is therefore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive  
of

of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the playhouse, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection however, or some other rather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The \* publication was so much favoured, that

\* Spence.



though the first part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the second.

He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the duke and dutchess of Queensbury, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. The \* duke, considering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the Court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old

\* Spence.

distemper, an habitual colick, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it he was impressed with the preconception of some misfortune.

After his death was published a second volume of Fables more political than the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow sisters, who inherited what he left,

as his lawful heirs ; for he died without a will, though he had gathered \* three thousand pounds. There have appeared likewise under his name a comedy called the *Distrest Wife*, and the *Rehearsal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope † is this, that *he was a natural man, without design, who spoke what he thought, and just as he thought it ; and that he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great ;* which caution however, says Pope, was of no avail.

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critick remark, *of a lower order*. He had not in any great degree the *mens divini*, the dignity of genius. Much

\* Spence.

† Spence.

however must be allowed to the author of a new species of composition, though it be not of the highest kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at first was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the experience of half a century been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgement or of luck, the praise of it must be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His first performance, the *Rural Sports*, is such as was easily planned and

exe-

executed ; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The *Fan* is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand ; but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work ; for having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegories*. A *Fable* or *Apologue*, such as is now under consideration, seems to be, in its genuine state,

state, a narrative in which beings irrational, and sometimes inanimate, *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale or an Allegory; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with liveliness; the versification is smooth, and the diction, though now-and-then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims: it is spritely, various, and pleasant.

fant. The subject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn; yet some of his decorations may be justly wished away. An honest blacksmith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauseous and superfluous; a shoeboy could have been produced by the casual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both cases; there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any supernatural interposition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal, and a bastard may be dropped by a human strumpet. On great occasions, and on small, the mind is repelled by useless and apparent falsehood.

Of

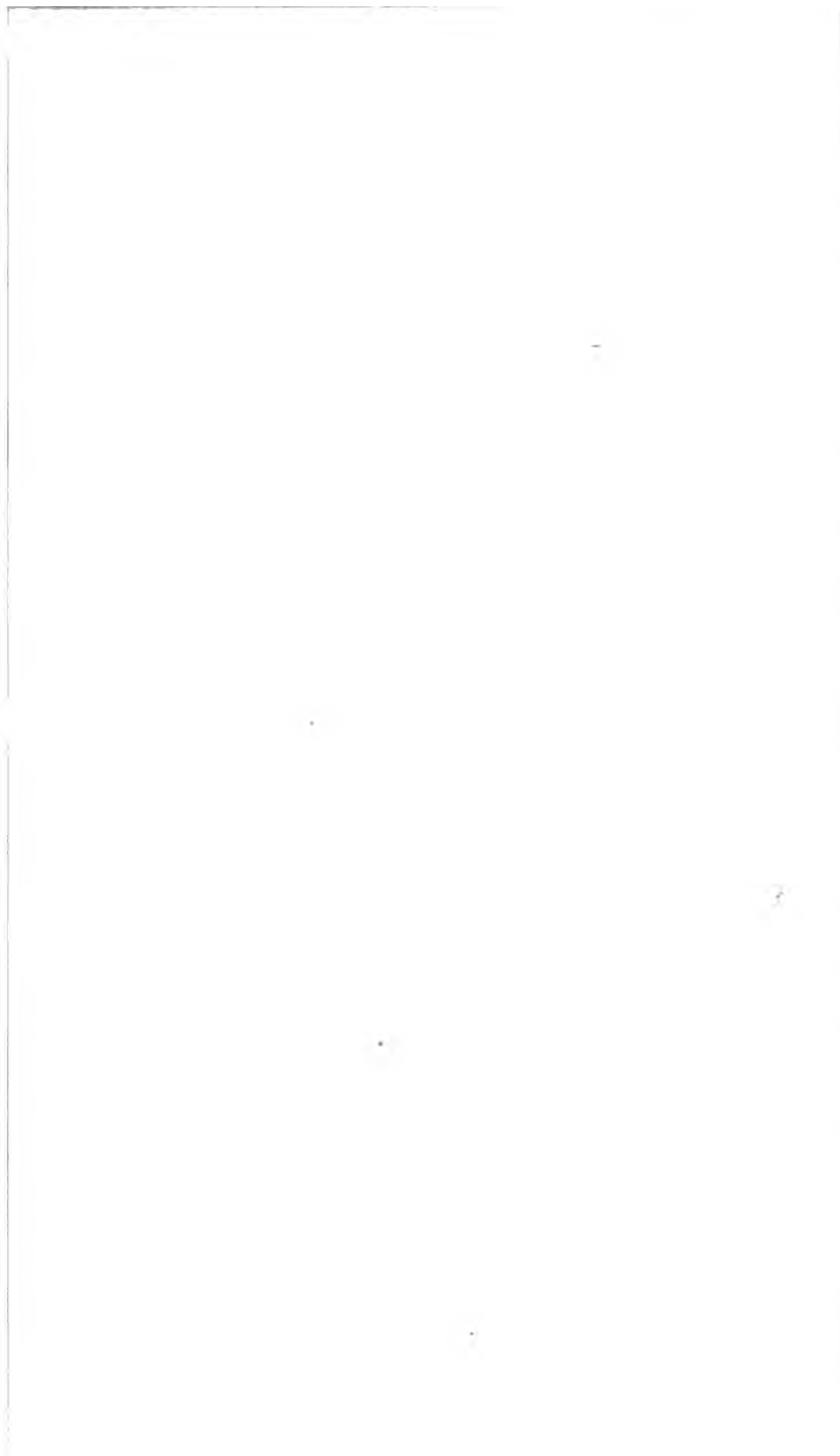
Of his little Poems the publick judgement seems to be right ; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised. Those that please least are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occasion ; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction ?

*Dione* is a counterpart to *Amynta*, and *Pastor Fido*, and other trifles of the same kind, easily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy conclusion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event, but the stile of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is something in the poetical *Arcadia* so remote from known reality and speculative possibility, that we can never support



port its representation through a long work. A Pastoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such scenes please Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise, and nations grow learned.







---

---

**B R O O M E.**

**W**ILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheshire, as is said, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the first part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eaton, and was captain of the school a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a scholarship at King's College. Being by this delay, such as is said to have happened very rarely, superannua-

A

ted,

ted, he was sent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a small exhibition.

At his College he lived for some time in the same chamber with the well-known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him described as a contracted scholar and a mere versifyer, unacquainted with life, and unskilful in conversation. His addiction to metre was then such, that his companions familiarly called him *Poet*. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himself, as Ford likewise owned, from great part of his scholastick rust.

He appeared early in the world as a translator of the *Iliads* into prose, in

conjunction with Ozel and Oldisworth. How their several parts were distributed is not known. This is the translation of which Ozel boasted as superior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long since vanished, and is now in no danger from the criticks.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then visiting Sir John Cotton at Madingly near Cambridge, and gained so much of his esteem that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Eustathius for the notes to the translation of the *Iliad*; and in the volumes of poetry published by Lintot, commonly called *Pope's Miscellanies*, many of his early pieces were inserted.

#### 4 B R O O M E:

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the *Iliad* gave encouragement to a version of the *Odyſſey*, Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his Life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burthen of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds

I esta-

I establish my narration. That the version was not wholly Pope's was always known: he had mentioned the assistance of two friends in his proposals, and at the end of the work some account is given by Broome of their different parts, which however mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the sixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth by himself; though Pope, in an advertisement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curiosity after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to enquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation



given in the note *a lie* ; but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchased this assistance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know but by hearsay ; Broome's is very distinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the *Dunciad*.

It is evident, that, according to Pope's own estimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could

merit three hundred pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at least to four, had certainly a right to more than six.

Broome probably considered himself as injured, and there was for some time more than coldness between him and his employer. He always spoke of Pope as too much a lover of money, and Pope pursued him with avowed hostility; for he not only named him disrespectfully in the *Dunciad*, but quoted him more than once in the *Bathos*, as a proficient in the *Art of Sinking*; and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets distinguished for the profound, he reckons Broome among

among *the* Parrots *who* repeat another's words in such a hoarse odd tone as makes them seem their own. I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship.

He afterwards published a Miscellany of Poems, which is inserted, with corrections, in this compilation.

He never rose to very high dignity in the church. He was some time rector of Sturston in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards, when the king visited Cambridge (1728), became Doctor of Laws. He was (1733) presented by the Crown to the rectory of *Pulham* in *Norfolk*, which

he held with *Oakley Magna* in *Suffolk*, given him by the lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the vicarage of *Eye* in *Suffolk*; he then resigned *Pulham*, and retained the other two.

Towards the close of his life he grew again poetical, and amused himself with translating Odes of Anacreon, which he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the name of *Chester*.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Abbey Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be said that he was a great poet, it would be unjust to deny that he was an excellent versifyer; his lines are smooth and sonorous, and his diction is select and elegant.

gant. His rhymes are sometimes unfuitable; in his *Melancholy* he makes *breath* rhyme to *birth* in one place, and to *earth* in another. Those faults occur but seldom; and he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation; but, in his original works, recollection seems to have been his business more than invention. His imitations are so apparent, that it is part of his reader's employment to recal the verses of some former poet. Sometimes he copies the most popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour at concealment; and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners. His lines to Fenton,

Serene,

Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts  
beguile,

And make afflictions objects of a smile;  
brought to my mind some lines on the  
death of queen Mary, written by Barnes,  
of whom I should not have expected to  
find an imitator;

But thou, O Muse, whose sweet nepen-  
thean tongue

Can charm the pangs of death with  
deathless song;

Canst *stinging plagues* with easy thoughts  
*beguile,*

*Make pains and tortures objects of a  
smile.*

To detect his imitations were tedious  
and useless. What he takes he seldom  
makes

makes worfe; and he cannot be juſtly thought a mean man whom Pope choſe for an affociate, and whoſe co-operation was conſidered by Pope's enemies as ſo important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous diſtich :

Pope came off clean with Homer; but  
they ſay

Broome went before, and kindly ſwept  
the way.



## P I T T.

**C**HRISTOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I shall relate, more than has been already published, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. War-  
ton, was born in 1699 at Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed.

He was, in 1714, received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance; and, at his removal to New College in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and



voluntary studies, a compleat version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe.

This is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded. The suppression of such a work, recommended by such uncommon circumstances, is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable, to load libraries with superfluous books; but incitements to early excellence are never superfluous, and from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had resided at his College three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimpern in Dorsetshire (1722), by his relation, Mr. Pitt of Stratfeildsea in Hampshire; and, resigning his fellowship,

con-

continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Master of Arts (1724).

He probably about this time translated *Vida's Art of Poetry*, which Triftram's elegant edition had then made popular. In this translation he distinguished himself, both by its general elegance, and by the skilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expressed; a beauty which Vida has with great ardour enforced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living, a place very pleasing by its situation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he passed the rest of his life, revered for his virtue, and beloved for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. Before

strangers he had something of the scholar's timidity or distrust; but when he became familiar he was in a very high degree cheerful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindness of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he composed his *Miscellany*, published in 1727, it is not easy nor necessary to know: those which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not observed that any rise above mediocrity.

The success of his *Vida* animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he published a ver-  
sion

sion of the first book of the *Æneid*. This being, I suppose, commended by his friends, he some time afterwards added three or four more; with an advertisement in which he represents himself as translating with great indifference, and with a progress of which himself was hardly conscious.

At last, without any further contention with his modesty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete English *Eneid*, which I am sorry to see excluded from this collection. It would have been pleasing to have an opportunity of comparing the two best translations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the same author.

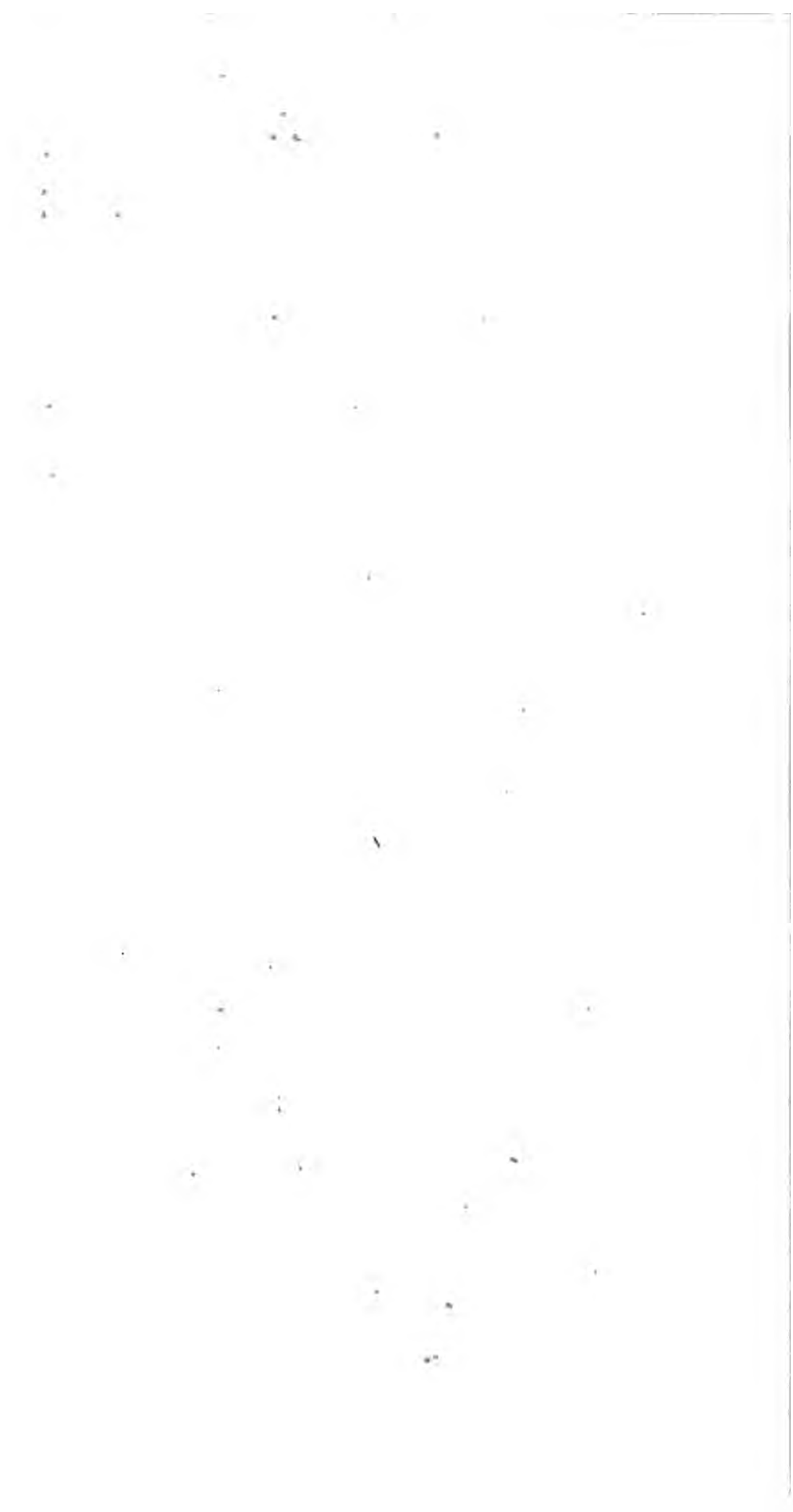
Pitt engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally observed his failures and avoided them ; and, as he wrote after Pope's Iliad, he had an example of an exact, equable, and splendid versification. With these advantages, seconded by great diligence, he might successfully labour particular passages, and escape many errors. If the two versions are compared, perhaps the result would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of a single couplet ; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and listless perusal ; that Pitt pleases the criticks and Dryden

den the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deservedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Blandford, on which is this inscription:

In memory of  
CHR. PITT, clerk, M. A.  
Very eminent  
for his talents in poetry;  
and yet more  
for the universal candour of  
his mind, and the primitive  
simplicity of his manners.  
He lived innocent,  
and died beloved  
Apr. 13, 1748,  
aged 48.





---

---

## PARNELL.

**T**HE Life of Dr. PARNELL is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Goldsmith, a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness, and general without confusion; whose language was copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness.

A

What



What such an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an abstract from his larger narrative; and shall have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of a departed genius.

*Tò γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανάτων.*

THOMAS PARNELL was the son of a commonwealthsman of the same name, who at the Restoration left Congleton in Cheshire, where the family had been established for several centuries, and, settling in Ireland, purchased an estate, which, with his lands in Cheshire, descended to the poet, who was born at Dublin in 1679; and, after

after the usual education at a grammar-school, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the College, where, in 1700, he became master of arts; and was the same year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a dispensation from the bishop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a priest; and in 1705 Dr. Aftie, the bishop of Clogher, conferred upon him the archdeaconry of Clogher. About the same time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by whom he had two sons who died young, and a daughter who long survived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of queen Anne's reign, Parnell was persuaded to change his party, not with-

out much censure from those whom he forsook, and was received by the new ministry as a valuable reinforcement. When the earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the croud in the outer room, he went, by the persuasion of Swift, with his treasurer's staff in his hand, to enquire for him, and to bid him welcome; and, as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as a favourite companion to his convivial hours, but, as it seems often to have happened in those times to the favourites of the great, without attention to his fortune, which indeed was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was desirous to make himself  
conspi-

conspicuous, and to shew how worthy he was of high preferment, as he thought himself qualified to become a popular preacher, he displayed his elocution with great success in the pulpits of London; but the Queen's death putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence: and Pope represents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latter life he was too much a lover of the bottle is not denied; but I have heard it imputed to a cause more likely to obtain forgiveness from mankind, the untimely death of a darling son; or, as others tell, the loss of his wife, who died (1712) in the midst of his expectations.

He

## 6 P A R N E L L.

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from his personal interest with his private friends, and he was not long unregarded. He was warmly recommended by Swift to archbishop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 presented him to the vicarage of Finglas in the diocese of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from such a man, inclines me to believe that the vice of which he has been accused was not gross, or not notorious.

But his prosperity did not last long. His end, whatever was its cause, was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment

ferment little more than a year; for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Chester, on his way to Ireland.

He seems to have been one of those poets who take delight in writing. He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably published more than he owned. He left many compositions behind him, of which Pope selected those which he thought best, and dedicated them to the earl of Oxford. Of these Goldsmith has given an opinion, and his criticism it is seldom safe to contradict. He bestows just praise upon the *Rise of Woman*, the *Fairy Tale*, and the *Pervigilium Veneris*; but has very properly

perly remarked, that in the *Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in English their original effect.

He tells us, that the *Bookworm* is borrowed from *Beza*; but he should have added, with modern applications: and when he discovers that *Gay Bacchus* is translated from *Augurellus*, he ought to have remarked, that the latter part is purely Parnell's. Another poem, *When Spring comes on*, is, he says, taken from the French. I would add, that the description of *Barrenness*, in his verses to Pope, was borrowed from *Secundus*; but lately searching for the passage which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-piece on Death* is indirectly preferred

ferred by Goldsmith to Gray's *Church-yard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment. He observes that the story of the *Hermit* is in *More's Dialogues* and *Howell's Letters*, and supposes it to have been originally *Arabian*.

Goldsmith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is perhaps the meanest; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happiest of Parnell's performances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I suspect to have been borrowed from Cleiveland.

The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension, or



fertility of mind. Of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction: in his verses there is *more happiness than pains*; he is sprightly without effort, and always delights though he never ravishes; every thing is proper, yet every thing seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing. Of his other compositions it is impossible to say whether they are the productions of Nature, so excellent as not to want the help of Art, or of Art so refined as to resemble Nature.

This

This criticism relates only to the pieces published by Pope. Of the large appendages which I find in this edition, I can only say that I know not whence they came, nor have ever enquired whether they are going. They stand upon the faith of the compilers.



Handwritten text, possibly a list or notes, located in the upper right quadrant of the page. The text is faint and difficult to read.

Small handwritten mark or signature at the bottom left of the page.

---

---

## P H I L I P S.

**O**F the birth or early part of the life of AMBROSE PHILIPS I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's College in Cambridge, where he first solicited the notice of the world by some English verses, in the Collection published by the University on the death of queen Mary.

From this time how he was employed, or in what station he passed his life, is not yet discovered. He must have pub-

A

lished

lished his Pastorals before the year 1708, because they are evidently prior to those of Pope.

He afterwards (1709) addressed to the universal patron, the duke of Dorset, a *poetical Letter from Copenbagen*, which was published in the *Tatler*, and is by Pope in one of his first Letters mentioned with high praise, as the production of a man *who could write very nobly*.

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore easily found access to Addison and Steele; but his ardour seems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; since he was reduced to translate the *Persian Tales* for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked  
for

for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many sections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean found.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomising Hacket's *Life of Archbishop Williams*. The original book is written with such depravity of genius, such mixture of the fop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The Epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little spirit or vigour.

In 1712 he brought upon the stage *The Distrest Mother*, almost a translation of Racine's *Andromaque*. Such a work

4 P H I L I P S.

requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his interest. Before the appearance of the play a whole *Spectator*, none indeed of the best, was devoted to its praise; while it yet continued to be acted, another *Spectator* was written, to tell what impression it made upon Sir Roger; and on the first night a select audience, says Pope \*, was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the most successful Epilogue that was ever yet spoken on the English theatre. The three first nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the

\* Spence.

play,

play, but whenever it is recalled to the stage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epilogue is still expected, and is still spoken.

The propriety of Epilogues in general, and consequently of this, was questioned by a correspondent of the *Spectator*, whose Letter was undoubtedly admitted for the sake of the Answer, which soon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to stimulate curiosity and continue attention. It may be discovered in the defence, that Prior's Epilogue to *Phædra* had a little excited jealousy; and something of Prior's plan



## 6 P H I L I P S.

may be discovered in the performance of his rival.

Of this distinguished Epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budget, whom Addison used to denominate \* *the man who calls me cousin*; and when he was asked how such a silly fellow could write so well, replied, *The Epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first.* It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author of it, and that when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budget, that it might add weight to the foli-

\* Spence.

citation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his translations from Sappho had been published in the *Spectator*; he was an important and distinguished associate of clubs witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happiness, but that he should be sure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the first notice from the publick was his *Six Pastorals*, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian scenes, probably found many readers, and might have long passed as a pleasing amusement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The rustick Poems of Theocritus were so highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whose Eclogues seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for no shepherds were taught to sing by any succeeding poet, till Nemesian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was soon discovered that a dialogue of imaginary swains might be composed with little difficulty; because the conversation of shepherds excludes profound or refined sentiment; and, for images and descriptions, Satyrs and Fauns, and Naiads and Dryads, were always within  
call;

call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, supplied variety, which having a natural power to sooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern Pastorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word *Eclogue* of rural meaning, he supposed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions *Æglogues*, by which he meant to express the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by subsequent writers, and amongst others by our Spenser.

More than a century afterwards (1498) Mantuan published his *Bucolicks* with

such success, that they were soon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into schools, and taught as classical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, spread far and continued long. Mantuan was read, at least in some of the inferior schools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the present century. The speakers of Mantuan carried their disquisitions beyond the country, and censured the corruptions of the Church; and from him Spenser learned to employ his swains on topics of controversy.

The Italians soon transferred Pastoral Poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote *Arcadia* in prose and verse;  
Tasso

P H I L I P S.      FI

Tasso and Guarini wrote *Favole Bosche-reccie*, or Silvan Dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with *Thyrsis* and *Damon*, and *Thestylis* and *Phyllis*.

Philips thinks it *somewhat strange* to conceive how, in an age so addicted to the *Muses*, pastoral Poetry never comes to be so much as thought upon. His wonder seems very unseasonable; there had never, from the time of Spenser, wanted writers to talk occasionally of *Arcadia* and *Strephon*; and half the book, in which he first tried his powers, consists of dialogues on queen Mary's death, between *Tityrus* and *Corydon*, or *Mopsus* and *Menalcas*. A series or book of Pastorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately published.

Not

- Not long afterwards Pope made the first display of his powers in four Pastorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenser, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addison, and by Addison's companions, who were very willing to push him into reputation. The *Guardian* gave an account of Pastoral, partly critical, and partly historical; in which, when the merit of the moderns is compared, Tasso and Guarini are censured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry, and the  
pipe

pipe of the Pastoral Muse is transmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenser, and from Spenser to Philips.

With this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted; he therefore drew a comparison of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The design of aggrandising himself he disguised with such dexterity, that, though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Published however it was (*Guard.* 40), and from that time Pope and

Philips



Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence.

In poetical powers, of either praise or satire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addison's approbation, as disaffected to the government.

Even with this he was not satisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to grosser insults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chastise Pope, who appears to have been extremely exasperated; for in the first edition of his

Let-



Letters he calls Philips *rascal*, and in the last still charges him with detaining in his hands the subscriptions delivered to him by the Hanover Club.

I suppose it was never suspected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with sufficient means, the gratification of him by whose prosperity he was pained.

Men sometimes suffer by injudicious kindness; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands which the first breath of contradiction blasted.

When upon the succession of the House of Hanover every Whig expected to be happy, Philips seems to  
 have

have obtained too little notice; he caught few drops of the golden shower, though he did not omit what flattery could perform. He was only made a Commissioner of the Lottery (1717), and, what did not much elevate his character, a Justice of the Peace.

The success of his first play must naturally dispose him to turn his hopes towards the stage: he did not however soon commit himself to the mercy of an audience, but contented himself with the fame already acquired, till after nine years he produced (1721) *The Briton*, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the scenes, between *Vanoc* the British Prince and *Valens* the Roman General,

is

is confessed to be written with great dramatick skill, animated by spirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle, though he had been silent; for he exhibited another tragedy the same year, on the story of *Humphry Duke of Gloucester*. This tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His happiest undertaking was of a paper called *The Freethinker*, in conjunction with associates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then only minister of a parish in Southwark, was of so much consequence to the government, that he was made first bishop of Bristol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may easily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be understood as implying only freedom from unreasonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read; nor can impartial criticism recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal essays; but he knew how to practise the liberality of greatness and the fidelity of friendship. When he was advanced to the height of ecclesiastical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be slenderly supported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and,

and, making him his secretary, added such preferments as enabled him to represent the county of Armagh in the Irish Parliament.

In December 1726 he was made secretary to the Lord Chancellor; and in August 1733 became judge of the Prerogative Court.

After the death of his patron he continued some years in Ireland; but at last longing, as it seems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtless survived most of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagonist Pope. He found however the duke of Newcastle still living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchased an annuity of four hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to pass some years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him: he was struck with a palsy, and died June 18, 1749, in his seventy-eighth year.

Of his personal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgement may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Philips," said he, "was once at table, when I asked him, How came thy king of Epirus to drive  
 " oxen,

“ oxen, and to say *I'm goaded on by love?*

“ After which question he never spoke  
“ again.”

Of the *Distrest Mother* not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no subject of criticism: his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the Poems comprised in this collection, the *Letter from Denmark* may be justly praised; the Pastorals, which by the writer of the *Guardian* were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the rustick Muse, cannot surely be despicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which does not exist, nor ever existed, is not to be objected; the supposition of such a state is allowed to Pastoral.



ral. In his other poems he cannot be denied the praise of lines sometimes elegant; but he has seldom much force, or much comprehension. The pieces that please best are those which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of *Namby Pamby*, the poems of short lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the *steerer of the realm* to miss Pulteney in the nursery: the numbers are smooth and spritely, and the diction is seldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet if they had been written by Addison they would have had admirers: little things are not valued but when they are done by those who can do greater.

In

In his translations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obscurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his sublimity; he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke.

He has added nothing to English poetry, yet at least half his book deserves to be read: perhaps he valued most himself that part, which the critic would reject.





---

---

W A T T S.

**T**HE Poems of Dr. WATTS were by my recommendation inserted in this Collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleasure or weariness they may find in the perusal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the same name, kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a shoemaker.

He appears, from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Isaac, the eldest of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I suppose, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorne, a clergyman, master of the Free-school at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his scholar afterwards inscribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at school was so conspicuous, that a subscription was proposed for his support at the University; but he declared his resolution to take his lot with the Dissenters. Such he  
was

was as every Christian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

He therefore repaired in 1690 to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-students Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Hort, afterwards archbishop of Tuam. Some Latin Essays, supposed to have been written as exercises at this academy, shew a degree of knowledge, both philosophical and theological, such as very few attain by a much longer course of study.

He was, as he hints in his Miscellanies, a maker of verses from fifteen to fifty; and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verses to his brother, in the *glyconick*

measure, written when he was seventeen, are remarkably easy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with such neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has such copiousness and splendour as shews that he was but at a very little distance from excellence.

His method of study was to impress the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one system with supplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, Independents,

pendents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and spent two years in study and devotion at the house of his father, who treated him with great tenderness; and had the happiness, indulged to few parents, of living to see his son eminent for literature and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartop five years, as domestick tutor to his son; and in that time particularly devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and being chosen assistant to Dr. Chauncey, preached the first time on the birth-day that compleated his twenty-fourth year; probably considering that as the day of a second nativity,



by which he entered on a new period of existence.

In about three years he succeeded Dr. Chauncey; but, soon after his entrance on his charge, he was seized by a dangerous illness, which sunk him to such weakness, that the congregation thought an assistant necessary, and appointed Mr. Price. His health then returned gradually, and he performed his duty, till (1712) he was seized by a fever of such violence and continuance, that, from the feebleness which it brought upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous state made the compassion of his friends necessary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Tho-

mas

mas Abney, who received him into his house; where, with a constancy of friendship and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-six years with all the kindness that friendship could prompt, and all the attention that respect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a state in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deserves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons' re-

presentation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewise to multitudes besides.

“ Our next observation shall be made  
“ upon that remarkably kind Provi-  
“ dence which brought the Doctor into  
“ Sir Thomas Abney’s family, and con-  
“ tinued him there till his death, a pe-  
“ riod of no less than thirty-six years.  
“ In the midst of his sacred labours for  
“ the glory of God, and good of his ge-  
“ neration, he is seized with a most vio-  
“ lent and threatening fever, which  
“ leaves him oppressed with great weak-  
“ nefs, and puts a stop at least to his  
“ publick services for four years. In this  
“ dif-

“ distressing season, doubly so to his ac-  
 “ tive and pious spirit, he is invited to  
 “ Sir Thomas Abney’s family, nor ever  
 “ removes from it till he had finished  
 “ his days. Here he enjoyed the un-  
 “ interrupted demonstrations of the  
 “ truest friendship. Here, without any  
 “ care of his own, he had every thing  
 “ which could contribute to the enjoy-  
 “ ment of life, and favour the unwea-  
 “ ried pursuit of his studies. Here he  
 “ dwelt in a family, which, for piety,  
 “ order, harmony, and every virtue,  
 “ was an house of God. Here he had  
 “ the privilege of a country recess, the  
 “ fragrant bower, the spreading lawn,  
 “ the flowery garden, and other advan-  
 “ tages, to sooth his mind and aid his  
 “ resto-

“ restoration to health ; to yield him,  
“ whenever he chose them, most grate-  
“ ful intervals from his laborious stu-  
“ dies, and enable him to return to  
“ them with redoubled vigour and de-  
“ light. Had it not been for this most  
“ happy event, he might, as to out-  
“ ward view, have feebly, it may be  
“ painfully, dragged on through many  
“ more years of languor, and inability  
“ for publick service, and even for pro-  
“ fitable study, or perhaps might have  
“ sunk into his grave under the over-  
“ whelming load of infirmities in the  
“ midst of his days ; and thus the  
“ church and world would have been  
“ deprived of those many excellent ser-  
“ mons and works, which he drew up  
“ and

“ and published during his long resi-  
 “ dence in this family. In a few years  
 “ after his coming hither, Sir Thomas  
 “ Abney dies; but his amiable consort  
 “ survives, who shews the Doctor the  
 “ same respect and friendship as before,  
 “ and most happily for him and great  
 “ numbers besides; for, as her riches  
 “ were great, her generosity and muni-  
 “ ficence were in full proportion; her  
 “ thread of life was drawn out to a  
 “ great age, even beyond that of the  
 “ Doctor’s; and thus this excellent  
 “ man, through her kindness, and that  
 “ of her daughter the present Mrs. Eli-  
 “ zabeth Abney, who in a like degree  
 “ esteemed and honoured him, enjoyed  
 “ all the benefits and felicities he expe-  
 “ rienced

“rienced at his first entrance into this  
“family, till his days were numbered and  
“finished, and, like a flock of corn in  
“its season, he ascended into the re-  
“gions of perfect and immortal life  
“and joy.”

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be considered that it comprises an account of six-and-thirty years, and those the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwise diversified than by successive publications. The series of his works I am not able to deduce; their number, and their variety, shew the intenseness of his industry, and the extent of his capacity.

He

He was one of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of stile. He shewed them, that zeal and purity might be expressed and enforced by polished diction.

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation, and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low stature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his discourses very efficacious.

I once



I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foster had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr. Hawkesworth, who told me, that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and such his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompose his cursory sermons; but having adjusted the heads, and sketched out some particulars, trusted for success to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to assist his eloquence by any gesticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correspondence with theological truth, he did not see how they could enforce it.

At the conclusion of weighty sentences he gave time, by a short pause, for the proper impression.

To stated and publick instruction he added familiar visits and personal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which conversation offered of diffusing and increasing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of resentment; but, by his established and habitual practice, he was gentle, modest, and inoffensive. His tendernefs appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue; and for children, he condescended to lay  
afide

afide the scholar, the philosopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and systems of instruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reason through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechism for children in their fourth year. A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curiosity excursive, and his industry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his subjects various. With his  
theolo-

theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire the meekness of his opposition, and the mildness of his censures. It was not only in his book but in his mind that *orthodoxy* was united with *charity*.

Of his philosophical pieces, his *Logic* has been received into the universities, and therefore wants no private recommendation : if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it must be considered that no man who undertakes merely to methodise or illustrate a system, pretends to be its author.

In his metaphysical disquisitions, it was observed by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *space* with that of *empty space*, and did

B not

not confider that though fpace might be without matter, yet matter, being extended, could not be without fpace.

Few books have been perufed by me with greater pleafure than his *Improvement of the Mind*, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduēt of the Underftanding*, but they are fo expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the higheft degree ufeful and pleafing. Whoever has the care of inftructing others, may be charged with deficiency in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatifes of Theology as diftinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever

ever

ever he took in hand was, by his incessant sollicitude for souls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works : under his direction it may be truly said, *Theologiæ Philosophia ancillatur*, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction ; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing, to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason is on a sudden compelled to pray.

It was therefore with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unsolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Divinity. Academical honours would

have more value, if they were always bestowed with equal judgement.

He continued many years to study and to preach, and to do good by his instruction and example; till at last the infirmities of age disabled him from the more laborious part of his ministerial functions, and, being no longer capable of publick duty, he offered to remit the salary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the resignation.

By degrees his weakness increased, and at last confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired Nov. 25, 1748, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Few

Few men have left behind such purity of character, or such monuments of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all ages, from those who are lisping their first lessons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor spiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the science of the stars.

His character, therefore, must be formed from the multiplicity and diversity of his attainments rather than from any single performance; for it would not be safe to claim for him the highest rank in any single denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled,



celled, if he had not divided his powers to different pursuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have stood high among the authors with whom he is now associated. For his judgement was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice discernment; his imagination, as the *Dacian Battle* proves, was vigorous and active, and the stores of knowledge were large by which his imagination was to be supplied. His ear was well-tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unsatisfactory. The paucity of its topicks enforces perpetual repetition, and the sanctity of the matter rejects the orna-

ments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a Man of Letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

His writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse; the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there that, to so much piety  
and

and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of spriteliness and vigour? But he is at least one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be safely pleased; and happy will be that reader whose mind is disposed by his verses, or his prose, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.



