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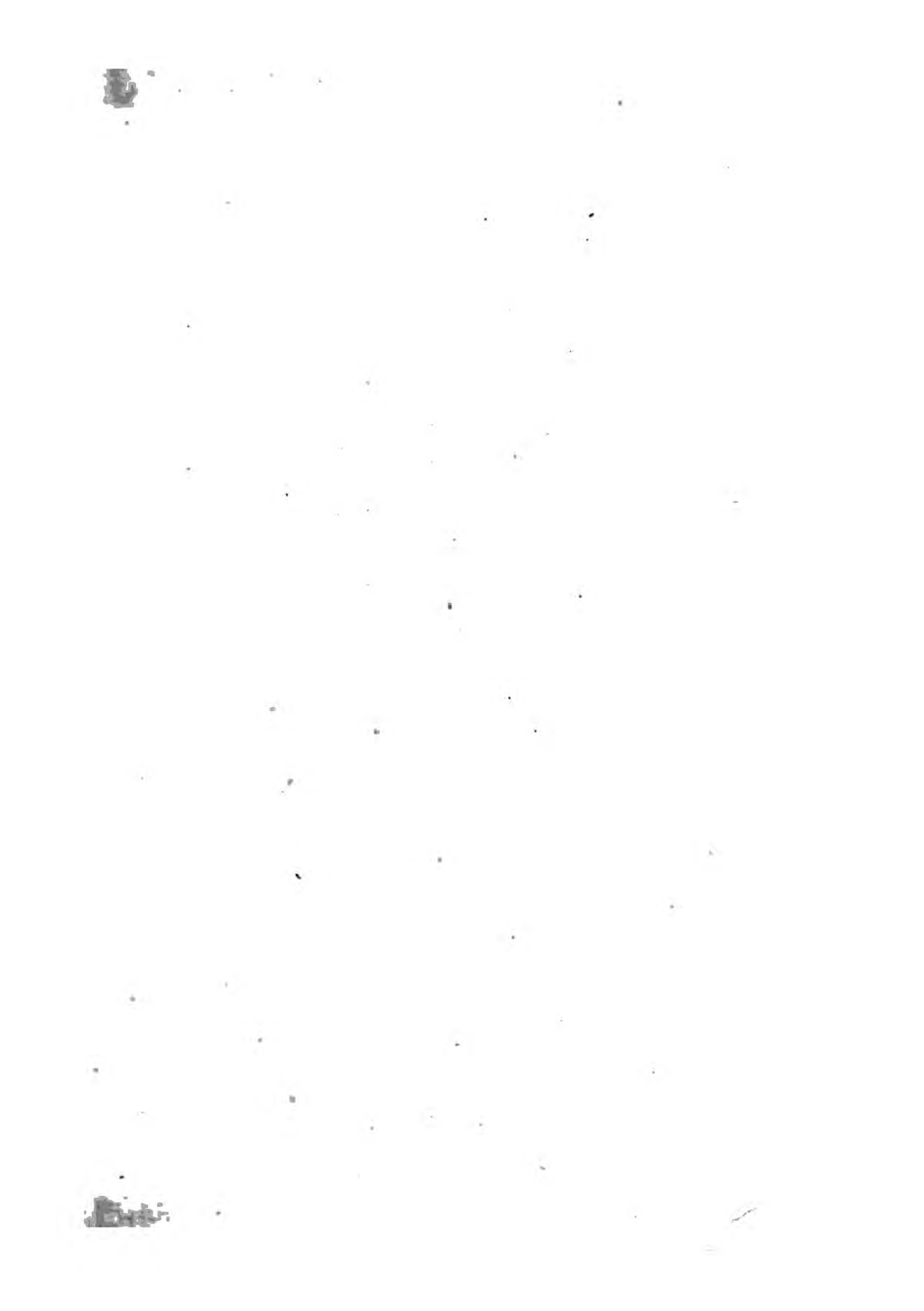


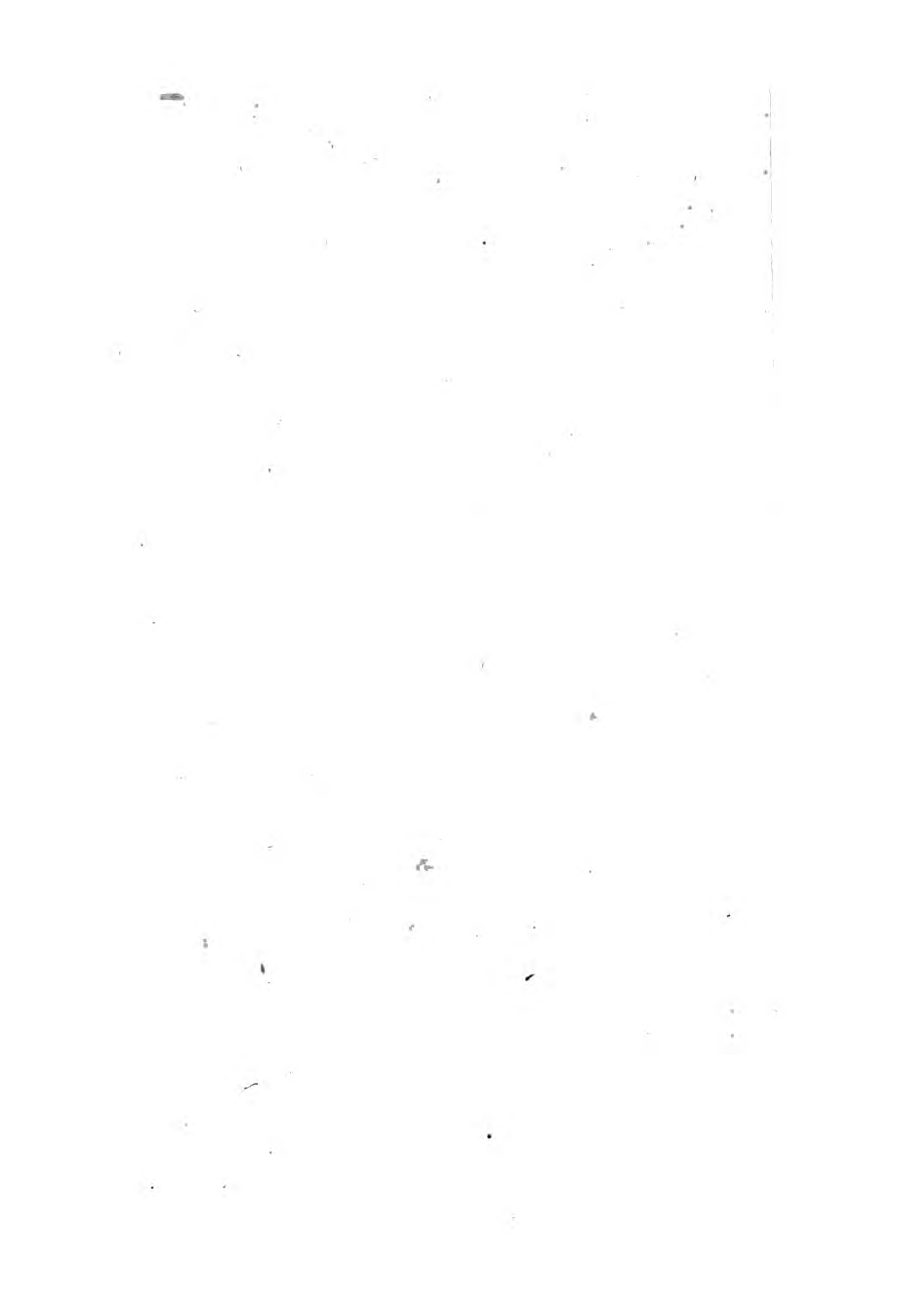
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THE  
WORKS

OF

Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

IN ELEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. IX.

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L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXXVII.





C O N T E N T S  
 OF THE  
 N I N T H V O L U M E.

---

THE ADVENTURER.

NUMB.	Page
34 Folly of extravagance. The story of MISARGYRUS -	1
41 Sequel to the story of MISARGYRUS - -	8
45 The difficulty of forming confederacies - -	14
50 On lying - - - - -	20
53 MISARGYRUS's account of his companions in the Fleet	26
58 Presumption of modern criticism censured. Ancient poetry necessarily obscure. Examples from <i>Horace</i>	32
62 MISARGYRUS's account of his companions concluded	39
69 Idle hope - - - - -	47
84 Folly of false pretences to importance. A journey in a stage-coach - - - - -	54
85 Study, composition, and converse, equally necessary to intellectual accomplishment - - - - -	61
92 Criticism on the Pastorals of <i>Virgil</i> - - - - -	68
95 Apology for apparent plagiarism. Sources of literary variety - - - - -	77
99 Projectors injudiciously censured and applauded -	83
102 Infelicities of retirement to men of business -	89
107 Different opinions equally plausible - - - - -	97
108 The uncertainty of human things - - - - -	103
111 The pleasures and advantages of industry - - - - -	109
115 The itch of writing universal - - - - -	116

## C O N T E N T S.

NUMB.		Page
119	The folly of creating artificial wants - -	124
120	The miseries of life - -	129
126	Solitude not eligible - -	135
131	Singularity censured - -	142
137	Writers not a usefefs generation - -	149
138	Their happinefs and infelicity - -	156

### PHILOLOGICAL TRACTS.

The Plan of an English Dictionary - -	164
Preface to the English Dictionary - -	193
Propofals for printing the Dramatick Works of <i>William Shakespeare</i> , printed in the year 1756 - -	230
Preface to <i>Shakespeare</i> , published in the year 1768 - -	239
General Observations on the Plays of <i>Shakespeare</i> - -	303
An Account of the <i>Harleian</i> Library - -	337
An Effay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces - -	350
Some Account of a Book called <i>The Life of Benvenuto Cellini</i> - -	360
A View of the Controverfy between <i>Monf. Croufaz</i> and <i>Mr. Warburton</i> , on the Subject of <i>Mr. Pope's</i> Effay on Man - -	364
Preliminary Discourfe to the London Chronicle, January 1, 1757 - -	369
Introduction to the World Displayed - -	374
The Preface to the Preceptor: containing a General Plan of Education - -	401
Preface to <i>Rolt's</i> Dictionary - -	422
Preface to the Translation of <i>Father Lobo's</i> Voyage to <i>Abiffinia</i> - -	431
An Effay on Epitaphs - -	436

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T H E  
A D V E N T U R E R.

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NUMB. 34. SATURDAY, *March 3,* 1753.

*Has toties optata exegit gloria pœnas.*

Juv.

Such fate pursues the votaries of praise.

*To the* A D V E N T U R E R.

S I R,

*Fleet-prison, Feb. 24.*

**T**O a benevolent disposition, every state of life will afford some opportunities of contributing to the welfare of mankind. Opulence and splendor are enabled to dispel the cloud of adversity, to dry up the tears of the widow and the orphan, and to increase the felicity of all around them: their example will animate virtue, and retard the progress of vice. And even indigence and obscurity, though without power to confer happiness, may at least prevent misery, and apprise those who are blinded by their passions that they are on the brink of irremediable calamity.

VOL. IX.

B

Pleased,



Pleased, therefore, with the thought of recovering others from that folly which has embittered my own days, I have presumed to address the *Adventurer* from the dreary mansions of wretchedness and despair, of which the gates are so wonderfully constructed, as to fly open for the reception of strangers, though they are impervious as a rock of adamant to such as are within them.:

— *Facilis descensus Averni;  
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis:  
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,  
Hoc opus hic labor est.* VIRG.

The gates of hell are open night and day;  
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way:  
But to return and view the cheerful skies;  
In this the task and mighty labour lies. DRYDEN.

Suffer me to acquaint you, Sir, that I have glittered at the ball, and sparkled in the circle; that I have had the happiness to be the unknown favourite of an unknown lady at the masquerade; have been the delight of tables of the first fashion, and the envy of my brother beaux; and to descend a little lower, it is, I believe, still remembered, that Messrs. *Velours* and *d'Espagne* stand indebted for a great part of their present influence at *Guildhall*, to the elegance of my shape, and the graceful freedom of my carriage.

— *Sed quæ præclara et prospera tanti,  
Ut rebus lætis par sit mensura malorum!* JUV.

See the wild purchase of the bold and vain,  
Where every bliss is bought with equal pain!

As I entered into the world very young, with an elegant person and a large estate, it was not long before I disentangled myself from the shackles of religion; for I was determined to the pursuit of pleasure, which according to my notions consisted in the unrestrained and unlimited gratifications of every passion and every appetite; and as this could not be obtained under the frowns of a perpetual dictator, I considered religion as my enemy; and proceeding to treat her with contempt and derision, was not a little delighted, that the unfashionableness of her appearance, and the unanimated uniformity of her motions, afforded frequent opportunities for the sallies of my imagination.

Conceiving now that I was sufficiently qualified to laugh away scruples, I imparted my remarks to those among my female favourites, whose virtue I intended to attack; for I was well assured, that pride would be able to make but a weak defence, when religion was subverted; nor was my success below my expectation: the love of pleasure is too strongly implanted in the female breast, to suffer them scrupulously to examine the validity of arguments designed to weaken restraint; all are easily led to believe, that whatever thwarts their inclination must be wrong: little more, therefore, was required, than by the addition of some circumstances, and the exaggeration of others, to make merriment supply the place of demonstration; nor was I so senseless as to offer arguments to such as could not attend to them, and with whom a repartee or catch would more effectually answer the same purpose. This being effected, there remained only “ the

“dread of the world:” but *Roxana* soared too high, to think the opinion of others worthy her notice; *Letitia* seemed to think of it only to declare, that “if all her hairs were worlds,” she should reckon them “well lost for love;” and *Pastorella* fondly conceived, that she could dwell for ever by the side of a bubbling fountain, content with her swain and fleecy care; without considering that stillness and solitude can afford satisfaction only to innocence.

It is not the desire of new acquisitions, but the glory of conquests, that fires the soldier’s breast; as indeed the town is seldom worth much, when it has suffered the devastations of a siege; so that though I did not openly declare the effects of my own prowess, which is forbidden by the laws of honour, it cannot be supposed that I was very solicitous to bury my reputation, or to hinder accidental discoveries. To have gained one victory, is an inducement to hazard a second engagement: and though the success of the general should be a reason for increasing the strength of the fortification, it becomes, with many, a pretence for an immediate surrender, under the notion that no power is able to withstand so formidable an adversary; while others brave the danger, and think it mean to surrender, and dastardly to fly. *Melissa*, indeed, knew better; and though she could not boast the apathy, steadiness, and inflexibility of a *Cato*, wanted not the more prudent virtue of *Scipio*, and gained the victory by declining the contest.

You must not, however, imagine, that I was, during this state of abandoned libertinism, so fully convinced

N<sup>o</sup> 34. THE ADVENTURER. §

convinced of the fitness of my own conduct, as to be free from uneasiness. I knew very well, that I might justly be deemed the pest of society, and that such proceedings must terminate in the destruction of my health and fortune; but to admit thoughts of this kind was to live upon the rack: I fled, therefore, to the regions of mirth and jollity, as they are called, and endeavoured with burgundy, and a continual rotation of company, to free myself from the pangs of reflection. From these orgies we frequently sallied forth in quest of adventures, to the no small terror and consternation of all the sober stragglers that came in our way: and though we never injured, like our illustrious progenitors, the *Mobocks*, either life or limbs; yet we have in the midst of *Covent-Garden* buried a taylor, who had been troublesome to some of our fine gentlemen, beneath a heap of cabbage-leaves and stalks, with this conceit,

*Satia te caule quem semper cupisti.*

Glut yourself with cabbage, of which you have always been greedy.

There can be no reason for mentioning the common exploits of breaking windows and bruising the watch; unless it be to tell you of the device of producing before the justice broken lanthorns, which have been paid for a hundred times: or their appearances with patches on their heads, under pretence of being cut by the sword that was never drawn: nor need I say any thing of the more formidable attack of sturdy chairmen, armed with poles; by a slight stroke of which, the pride of



*Ned Revel's* face was at once laid flat, and that effected in an instant, which its most mortal foe had for years assayed in vain. I shall pass over the accidents that attend attempts to scale windows, and endeavours to dislodge signs from their hooks: there are many "hair-breadth 'scapes," besides those in the "imminent deadly breach;" but the rake's life, though it be equally hazardous with that of the soldier, is neither accompanied with present honour nor with pleasing retrospect: such is, and such ought to be the difference, between the enemy and the preserver of his country.

Amidst such giddy and thoughtless extravagance, it will not seem strange, that I was often the dupe of coarse flattery. When *Monf. L'Allonge* assured me, that I thrust quart over arm better than any man in *England*, what could I less than present him with a sword that cost me thirty pieces? I was bound for a hundred pounds for *Tom Trippet*, because he had declared that he would dance a minuet with any man in the three kingdoms except myself. But I often parted with money against my inclination, either because I wanted the resolution to refuse, or dreaded the appellation of a niggardly fellow; and I may be truly said to have squandered my estate, without honour, without friends, and without pleasure. The last may, perhaps, appear strange to men unacquainted with the masquerade of life: I deceived others, and I endeavoured to deceive myself; and have worn the face of pleasantry and gaiety, while my heart suffered the most exquisite torture.

By the instigation and encouragement of my friends, I became at length ambitious of a seat in parliament;

parliament; and accordingly set out for the town of *Wallop* in the west, where my arrival was welcomed by a thousand throats, and I was in three days sure of a majority: but after drinking out one hundred and fifty hogsheds of wine, and bribing two-thirds of the corporation twice over, I had the mortification to find, that the borough had been before sold to Mr. *Courtly*.

In a life of this kind, my fortune, though considerable, was presently dissipated; and as the attraction grows more strong the nearer any body approaches the earth, when once a man begins to sink into poverty, he falls with velocity always increasing; every supply is purchased at a higher and higher price, and every office of kindness obtained with greater and greater difficulty. Having now acquainted you with my state of elevation, I shall, if you encourage the continuance of my correspondence, shew you by what steps I descended from a first floor in *Pall-Mall* to my present habitation.

I am, S I R,

Your humble servant,

MISARGYRUS.

NUMB. 41. TUESDAY, *March 27, 1753.*

— *Si mutabile pectus*  
*Est tibi, consiliis, non curribus, utere nostris,*  
*Dum potes, et solidis etiamnum sedibus adstas ;*  
*Dumque male optatos nondum premis inscius axes.* OVID.

— Th' attempt forfake,  
 And not my chariot but my counsel take ;  
 While yet securely on the earth you stand ;  
 Nor touch the horses with too rash a hand. ADDISON.

*To the* ADVENTURER.

S I R,

*Fleet, March 24.*

I NOW send you the sequel of my story ; which had not been so long delayed, if I could have brought myself to imagine, that any real impatience was felt for the fate of *Misargyrus* ; who has travelled no unbeaten track to misery, and consequently can present the reader only with such incidents as occur in daily life.

You have seen me, Sir, in the zenith of my glory ; not dispensing the kindly warmth of an all-cheering sun, but, like another Phaeton, scorching and blasting every thing round me. I shall proceed, therefore, to finish my career, and pass as rapidly as possible through the remaining vicissitudes of my life.

When I first began to be in want of money, I made no doubt of an immediate supply. The newspapers

papers were perpetually offering directions to men, who seemed to have no other business than to gather heaps of gold for those who place their supreme felicity in scattering it. I posted away, therefore, to one of these advertisers, who by his proposals seemed to deal in thousands; and was not a little chagrined to find, that this general benefactor would have nothing to do with any larger sum than thirty pounds, nor would venture that without a joint note from myself and a reputable housekeeper, or for a longer time than three months.

It was not yet so bad with me, as that I needed to solicit surety for thirty pounds: yet partly from the greediness that extravagance always produces, and partly from a desire of seeing the humour of a petty usurer, a character of which I had hitherto lived in ignorance, I condescended to listen to his terms. He proceeded to inform me of my great felicity in not falling into the hands of an extortioner; and assured me, that I should find him extremely moderate in his demands: he was not, indeed, certain, that he could furnish me with the whole sum, for people were at this particular time extremely pressing and importunate for money; yet as I had the appearance of a gentleman, he would try what he could do, and give me his answer in three days.

At the expiration of the time, I called upon him again; and was again informed of the great demand for money, and that "money was money now:" he then advised me to be punctual in my payment, as that might induce him to befriend me hereafter; and delivered me the money, deducting at the rate of  
five



five and thirty *per cent.* with another panegyric upon his own moderation.

I will not tire you with the various practices of usurious oppression; but cannot omit my transaction with *Squeeze on Tower-bill*, who finding me a young man of considerable expectations, employed an agent to persuade me to borrow five hundred pounds, to be refunded by an annual payment of twenty *per cent.* during the joint lives of his daughter *Nancy Squeeze* and myself. The negociator came prepared to enforce his proposal with all his art; but finding that I caught his offer with the eagerness of necessity, he grew cold and languid: "he had mentioned it out of kindness; he would try to serve me: Mr. *Squeeze* was an honest man, but extremely cautious." In three days he came to tell me, that his endeavours had been ineffectual, Mr. *Squeeze* having no good opinion of my life: but that there was one expedient remaining; Mrs. *Squeeze* could influence her husband, and her good-will might be gained by a compliment. I waited that afternoon on Mrs. *Squeeze*, and poured out before her the flatteries which usually gain access to rank and beauty: I did not then know, that there are places in which the only compliment is a bribe. Having yet credit with a jeweller, I afterwards procured a ring of thirty guineas, which I humbly presented, and was soon admitted to a treaty with Mr. *Squeeze*. He appeared peevish and backward, and my old friend whispered me, that he would never make a dry bargain: I, therefore, invited him to a tavern. Nine times we met on the affair; nine times

times I paid four pounds for the supper and claret; and nine guineas I gave the agent for good offices. I then obtained the money, paying ten *per cent.* advance; and at the tenth meeting gave another supper, and disbursed fifteen pounds for the writings.

Others, who stiled themselves brokers, would only trust their money upon goods: that I might, therefore, try every art of expensive folly, I took a house and furnished it. I amused myself with despoiling my moveables of their glossy appearance, for fear of alarming the lender with suspicions; and in this I succeeded so well, that he favoured me with one hundred and sixty pounds upon that which was rated at seven hundred. I then found that I was to maintain a guardian about me, to prevent the goods from being broken or removed. This was, indeed, an unexpected tax; but it was too late to recede; and I comforted myself, that I might prevent a creditor, of whom I had some apprehensions, from seizing, by having a prior execution always in the house.

By such means I had so embarrassed myself, that my whole attention was engaged in contriving excuses, and raising small sums to quiet such as words would no longer mollify. It cost me eighty pounds in presents to Mr. *Leech* the attorney, for his forbearance of one hundred, which he solicited me to take when I had no need. I was perpetually harassed with importunate demands, and insulted by wretches, who a few months before would not have dared to raise their eyes from the dust before me. I lived in continual terror, frightened by every noise at the door, and terrified at the approach of every step quicker than common. I never retired to rest, without

out feeling the justness of the Spanish proverb, "Let him who sleeps too much, borrow the pillow of a debtor;" my solicitude and vexation kept me long waking; and when I had closed my eyes, I was pursued or insulted by visionary bailiffs.

When I reflected upon the meanness of the shifts I had reduced myself to, I could not but curse the folly and extravagance that had overwhelmed me in a sea of troubles, from which it was highly improbable that I should ever emerge. I had some time lived in hopes of an estate, at the death of my uncle; but he disappointed me by marrying his housekeeper; and, catching an opportunity soon after of quarrelling with me, for settling twenty pounds a year upon a girl whom I had seduced, told me that he would take care to prevent his fortune from being squandered upon prostitutes.

Nothing now remained, but the chance of extricating myself by marriage; a scheme which, I flattered myself, nothing but my present distress would have made me think on with patience. I determined, therefore, to look out for a tender novice, with a large fortune at her own disposal; and accordingly fixed my eyes upon Miss *Biddy Simper*. I had now paid her six or seven visits; and so fully convinced her of my being a gentleman and a rake, that I made no doubt that both her person and fortune would be soon mine.

At this critical time, Miss *Gripe* called upon me, in a chariot bought with my money, and loaded with trinkets that I had in my days of affluence lavished on her. Those days were now over; and there was little hope that they would ever return. She was not  
able

able to withstand the temptation of ten pounds that *Talon* the bailiff offered her, but brought him into my apartment disguised in a livery; and taking my sword to the window, under pretence of admiring the workmanship, beckoned him to seize me.

Delay would have been expensive without use, as the debt was too considerable for payment or bail: I, therefore, suffered myself to be immediately conducted to jail.

*Vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci,  
Luctus & ultrices posuere cubilia curæ:  
Pallentesque habitant morbi, tristisque senectus,  
Et metus, et malefuada fames, et turpis egestas.* VIRG.

Just in the gate and in the jaws of hell,  
Revengeful cares, and sullen sorrows dwell;  
And pale diseases, and repining age;  
Want, fear, and famine's unresisted rage. DRYDEN.

Confinement of any kind is dreadful; a prison is sometimes able to shock those, who endure it in a good cause: let your imagination, therefore, acquaint you, with what I have not words to express, and conceive, if possible, the horrors of imprisonment attended with reproach and ignominy, of involuntary association with the refuse of mankind, with wretches who were before too abandoned for society, but being now freed from shame or fear, are hourly improving their vices by consorting with each other.

There are, however, a few, whom like myself imprisonment has rather mortified than hardened: with these only I converse; and of these you may perhaps hereafter receive some account from

Your humble servant, MISARGYRUS.

NUMB. 45. TUESDAY, *April 10*, 1753.

*Nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas  
Impatiens consortis erit.*

LUCAN.

No faith of partnership dominion owns;  
Still discord hovers o'er divided thrones.

**I**T is well known, that many things appear plausible in speculation, which can never be reduced to practice; and that of the numberless projects that have flattered mankind with theoretical speciousness, few have served any other purpose than to shew the ingenuity of their contrivers. A voyage to the moon, however romantic and absurd the scheme may now appear, since the properties of air have been better understood, seemed highly probable to many of the aspiring wits in the last century, who began to doat upon their glossy plumes, and fluttered with impatience for the hour of their departure:

——— *Percant vestigia mille*

*Ante fugam, absentemque ferit gravis ungula campum.*

Hills, vales, and floods appear already crost;

And, ere he starts, a thousand steps are lost.

POPE.

Among the fallacies which only experience can detect, there are some, of which scarcely experience itself can destroy the influence; some which, by a captivating shew of indubitable certainty, are perpetually gaining upon the human mind; and which, though



though every trial ends in disappointment, obtain new credit as the sense of miscarriage wears gradually away, persuade us to try again what we have tried already, and expose us by the same failure to double vexation.

Of this tempting, this delusive kind, is the expectation of great performances by confederated strength. The speculatist, when he has carefully observed how much may be performed by a single band, calculates by a very easy operation the force of thousands, and goes on accumulating power till resistance vanishes before it; then rejoices in the success of his new scheme, and wonders at the folly or idleness of former ages, who have lived in want of what might so readily be procured, and suffered themselves to be debarred from happiness by obstacles which one united effort would have so easily surmounted.

But this gigantic phantom of collective power vanishes at once into air and emptiness, at the first attempt to put it into action. The different apprehensions, the discordant passions, the jarring interests of men, will scarcely permit that many should unite in one undertaking.

Of a great and complicated design, some will never be brought to discern the end; and of the several means by which it may be accomplished, the choice will be a perpetual subject of debate, as every man is swayed in his determination by his own knowledge or convenience. In a long series of action, some will languish with fatigue, and some be drawn off by present gratifications; some will loiter because others labour, and some will cease to labour  
because

because others loiter: and if once they come within prospect of success and profit, some will be greedy and others envious; some will undertake more than they can perform, to enlarge their claims of advantage; some will perform less than they undertake, lest their labours should chiefly turn to the benefit of others.

The history of mankind informs us that a single power is very seldom broken by a confederacy. States of different interests, and aspects malevolent to each other, may be united for a time by common distress; and in the ardour of self-preservation fall unanimously upon an enemy, by whom they are all equally endangered. But if their first attack can be withstood, time will never fail to dissolve their union: success and miscarriage will be equally destructive: after the conquest of a province, they will quarrel in the division; after the loss of a battle, all will be endeavouring to secure themselves by abandoning the rest.

From the impossibility of confining numbers to the constant and uniform prosecution of a common interest, arises the difficulty of securing subjects against the encroachment of governors. Power is always gradually stealing away from the many to the few, because the few are more vigilant and consistent; it still contracts to a smaller number, till in time it centers in a single person.

Thus all the forms of government instituted among mankind, perpetually tend towards monarchy; and power, however diffused through the whole community, is by negligence or corruption,  
 commotion

commotion or distress, reposed at last in the chief magistrate.

“ There never appear,” says *Swift*, “ more than five or six men of genius in an age ; but if they were united, the world could not stand before them.” It is happy, therefore, for mankind, that of this union there is no probability. As men take in a wider compass of intellectual survey, they are more likely to chuse different objects of pursuit ; as they see more ways to the same end, they will be less easily persuaded to travel together ; as each is better qualified to form an independent scheme of private greatness, he will reject with greater obstinacy the project of another ; as each is more able to distinguish himself as the head of a party, he will less readily be made a follower or an associate.

The reigning philosophy informs us, that the vast bodies which constitute the universe, are regulated in their progress through the etherial spaces, by the perpetual agency of contrary forces ; by one of which they are restrained from deserting their orbits, and losing themselves in the immensity of heaven ; and held off by the other from rushing together, and clustering round their center with everlasting cohesion.

The same contrariety of impulse may be perhaps discovered in the motions of men : we are formed for society, not for combination ; we are equally unqualified to live in a close connection with our fellow-beings, and in total separation from them ; we are attracted towards each other by general sympathy, but kept back from contact by private interests.



Some philosophers have been foolish enough to imagine, that improvements might be made in the system of the universe, by a different arrangement of the orbs of heaven; and politicians, equally ignorant and equally presumptuous, may easily be led to suppose, that the happiness of our world would be promoted by a different tendency of the human mind. It appears, indeed, to a slight and superficial observer, that many things impracticable in our present state, might be easily effected, if mankind were better disposed to union and co-operation: but a little reflection will discover, that if confederacies were easily formed, they would lose their efficacy, since numbers would be opposed to numbers, and unanimity to unanimity; and instead of the present petty competitions of individuals or single families, multitudes would be supplanting multitudes, and thousands plotting against thousands.

There is no class of the human species, of which the union seems to have been more expected, than of the learned: the rest of the world have almost always agreed to shut scholars up together in colleges and cloisters; surely not without hope, that they would look for that happiness in concord, which they were debarred from finding in variety; and that such conjunctions of intellect would recompense the munificence of founders and patrons, by performances above the reach of any single mind.

But discord, who found means to roll her apple into the banqueting chamber of the goddesses, has had the address to scatter her laurels in the seminaries of learning. The friendship of students and of beauties is for the most part equally sincere, and equally durable:

durable : as both depend for happiness on the regard of others, on that of which the value arises merely from comparison, they are both exposed to perpetual jealousies, and both incessantly employed in schemes to intercept the praises of each other.

I am, however, far from intending to inculcate, that this confinement of the studious to studious companions, has been wholly without advantage to the public : neighbourhood, where it does not conciliate friendship, incites competition ; and he that would contentedly rest in a lower degree of excellence, where he had no rival to dread, will be urged by his impatience of inferiority to incessant endeavours after great attainments.

These stimulations of honest rivalry are, perhaps, the chief effects of academies and societies ; for whatever be the bulk of their joint labours, every single piece is always the production of an individual, that owes nothing to his colleagues but the contagion of diligence, a resolution to write, because the rest are writing, and the scorn of obscurity while the rest are illustrious.

NUMB. 50. SATURDAY, *April 28*, 1753.

*Quicumque turpi fraude semel innotuit,  
Etiam si vera dici, amittit fidem.*

PHÆD.

The wretch that often has deceiv'd,  
Though truth he speaks, is ne'er believ'd.

**W**HEN *Aristotle* was once asked, what a man could gain by uttering falsehoods; he replied, "Not to be credited when he shall tell the truth."

The character of a liar is at once so hateful and contemptible, that even of those who have lost their virtue it might be expected, that from the violation of truth they should be restrained by their pride. Almost every other vice that disgraces human nature, may be kept in countenance by applause and association: the corrupter of virgin innocence sees himself envied by the men, and at least not detested by the women: the drunkard may easily unite with beings, devoted like himself to noisy merriments or silent insensibility, who will celebrate his victories over the novices of intemperance, boast themselves the companions of his prowess, and tell with rapture of the multitudes whom unsuccessful emulation has hurried to the grave: even the robber and the cut-throat have their followers, who admire their address and intrepidity, their stratagems of rapine, and their fidelity to the gang.

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The liar, and only the liar, is invariably and universally despised, abandoned, and disowned: he has no domestic consolations, which he can oppose to the censure of mankind; he can retire to no fraternity, where his crimes may stand in the place of virtues; but is given up to the hisses of the multitude, without friend and without apologist. It is the peculiar condition of falsehood, to be equally detested by the good and bad: "The devils," says Sir *Thomas Brown*, "do not tell lies to one another; for truth is necessary to all societies: nor can the society of hell subsist without it."

It is natural to expect, that a crime thus generally detested should be generally avoided; at least, that none should expose himself to unabated and unpitied infamy, without an adequate temptation; and that to guilt so easily detected, and so severely punished, an adequate temptation would not readily be found.

Yet so it is, that in defiance of censure and contempt, truth is frequently violated; and scarcely the most vigilant and unremitted circumspection will secure him that mixes with mankind, from being hourly deceived by men of whom it can scarcely be imagined, that they mean any injury to him or profit to themselves; even where the subject of conversation could not have been expected to put the passions in motion, or to have excited either hope or fear, or zeal or malignity, sufficient to induce any man to put his reputation in hazard, however little he might value it, or to overpower the love of truth, however weak might be its influence.

The casuists have very diligently distinguished lies into their several classes, according to their various

degrees of malignity: but they have, I think, generally omitted that which is most common, and, perhaps, not least mischievous; which, since the moralists have not given it a name, I shall distinguish as the *lie of vanity*.

To vanity may justly be imputed most of the falsehoods, which every man perceives hourly playing upon his ear, and, perhaps, most of those that are propagated with success. To the lie of commerce, and the lie of malice, the motive is so apparent, that they are seldom negligently or implicitly received: suspicion is always watchful over the practices of interest; and whatever the hope of gain, or desire of mischief, can prompt one man to assert, another is by reasons equally cogent incited to refute. But vanity pleases herself with such slight gratifications, and looks forward to pleasure so remotely consequential, that her practices raise no alarm, and her stratagems are not easily discovered.

Vanity is, indeed, often suffered to pass unpursued by suspicion, because he that would watch her motions, can never be at rest; fraud and malice are bounded in their influence; some opportunity of time and place is necessary to their agency; but scarce any man is abstracted one moment from his vanity; and he, to whom truth affords no gratifications, is generally inclined to seek them in falsehoods.

It is remarked by Sir *Kenelm Digby*, “that every  
 “man has a desire to appear superior to others,  
 “though it were only in having seen what they have  
 “not seen.” Such an accidental advantage, since  
 it neither implies merit, nor confers dignity, one



would think should not be desired so much as to be counterfeited: yet even this vanity, trifling as it is, produces innumerable narratives, all equally false; but more or less credible in proportion to the skill or confidence of the relater. How many may a man of diffusive conversation count among his acquaintances, whose lives have been signalized by numberless escapes; who never cross the river but in a storm, or take a journey into the country without more adventures than beset the knights-errant of ancient times in pathless forests or enchanted castles! How many must he know, to whom portents and prodigies are of daily occurrence; and for whom nature is hourly working wonders invisible to every other eye, only to supply them with subjects of conversation!

Others there are that amuse themselves with the dissemination of falsehood, at greater hazard of detection and disgrace; men marked out by some lucky planet for universal confidence and friendship, who have been consulted in every difficulty, entrusted with every secret, and summoned to every transaction: it is the supreme felicity of these men, to stun all companies with noisy information; to still doubt, and overbear opposition, with certain knowledge or authentic intelligence. A liar of this kind, with a strong memory or brisk imagination, is often the oracle of an obscure club, and, till time discovers his impostures, dictates to his hearers with uncontrouled authority; for if a publick question be started, he was present at the debate; if a new fashion be mentioned, he was at court the first day of its appearance; if a new performance of literature draws the

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attention

attention of the publick, he has patronised the author, and seen his work in manuscript; if a criminal of eminence be condemned to die, he often predicted his fate, and endeavoured his reformation: and who that lives at a distance from the scene of action, will dare to contradict a man, who reports from his own eyes and ears, and to whom all persons and affairs are thus intimately known?

This kind of falsehood is generally successful for a time, because it is practised at first with timidity and caution: but the prosperity of the liar is of short duration; the reception of one story is always an incitement to the forgery of another less probable; and he goes on to triumph over tacit credulity, till pride or reason rises up against him, and his companions will no longer endure to see him wiser than themselves.

It is apparent, that the inventors of all these fictions intend some exaltation of themselves, and are led off by the pursuit of honour from their attendance upon truth: their narratives always imply some consequence in favour of their courage, their sagacity, or their activity, their familiarity with the learned, or their reception among the great; they are always bribed by the present pleasure of seeing themselves superior to those that surround them, and receiving the homage of silent attention and envious admiration.

But vanity is sometimes excited to fiction by less visible gratifications: the present age abounds with a race of liars who are content with the consciousness of falsehood, and whose pride is to deceive others without any gain or glory to themselves. Of this tribe it is the supreme pleasure to remark a lady in  
the

the playhouse or the park, and to publish, under the character of a man suddenly enamoured, an advertisement in the news of the next day, containing a minute description of her person and her dress. From this artifice, however, no other effect can be expected, than perturbations which the writer can never see, and conjectures of which he never can be informed: some mischief, however, he hopes he has done; and to have done mischief, is of some importance. He sets his invention to work again, and produces a narrative of a robbery or a murder, with all the circumstances of time and place accurately adjusted. This is a jest of greater effect and longer duration: if he fixes his scene at a proper distance, he may for several days keep a wife in terror for her husband, or a mother for her son; and please himself with reflecting, that by his abilities and address some addition is made to the miseries of life.

There is, I think, an ancient law of *Scotland*, by which *leasng-making* was capitally punished. I am, indeed, far from desiring to increase in this kingdom the number of executions; yet I cannot but think, that they who destroy the confidence of society, weaken the credit of intelligence, and interrupt the security of life; harass the delicate with shame, and perplex the timorous with alarms; might very properly be awakened to a sense of their crimes, by denunciations of a whipping-post or pillory: since many are so insensible of right and wrong, that they have no standard of action but the law; nor feel guilt, but as they dread punishment.



NUMB. 53. TUESDAY, *May 8*, 1753.*Quisque suos patimur Manas.*

VIRG.

Each has his lot, and bears the fate he drew.

S I R,

*Fleet, May 6.*

I N consequence of my engagements, I address you once more from the habitations of misery. In this place, from which business and pleasure are equally excluded, and in which our only employment and diversion is to hear the narratives of each other, I might much sooner have gathered materials for a letter, had I not hoped to have been reminded of my promise : but since I find myself placed in the regions of oblivion, where I am no less neglected by you than by the rest of mankind, I resolved no longer to wait for sollicitation, but stole early this evening from between gloomy fullness and riotous merriment, to give you an account of part of my companions.

One of the most eminent members of our club is Mr. *Edward Scamper*, a man of whose name the Olympic heroes would not have been ashamed. *Ned* was born to a small estate, which he determined to improve ; and therefore, as soon as he became of age, mortgaged part of his land to buy a mare and stallion, and bred horses for the course. He was at first very successful, and gained several of the king's plates, as he is now every day boasting, at the expence

pence of very little more than ten times their value. At last, however, he discovered, that victory brought him more honour than profit : resolving, therefore, to be rich as well as illustrious, he replenished his pockets by another mortgage, became on a sudden a daring better, and resolving not to trust a jockey with his fortune, rode his horse himself, distanced two of his competitors the first heat, and at last won the race, by forcing his horse on a descent to full speed at the hazard of his neck. His estate was thus repaired, and some friends that had no souls advised him to give over ; but *Ned* now knew the way to riches, and therefore without caution increased his expences. From this hour he talked and dreamed of nothing but a horse-race ; and rising soon to the summit of equestrian reputation, he was constantly expected on every course, divided all his time between lords and jockies, and, as the unexperienced regulated their bets by his example, gained a great deal of money by laying openly on one horse and secretly on the other. *Ned* was now so sure of growing rich, that he involved his estate in a third mortgage, borrowed money of all his friends, and risked his whole fortune upon *Bay-Lincoln*. He mounted with beating heart, started fair and won the first heat ; but in the second, as he was pushing against the foremost of his rivals, his girth broke, his shoulder was dislocated, and before he was dismissed by the surgeon, two bailiffs fastened upon him, and he saw *Newmarket* no more. His daily amusement for four years has been to blow the signal for starting, to make imaginary matches, to repeat the pedigree of

*Bay-*

*Bay-Lincoln*, and to form resolutions against trusting another groom with the choice of his girth.

The next in seniority is Mr. *Timothy Snug*, a man of deep contrivance and impenetrable secrecy. His father died with the reputation of more wealth than he possessed: *Tim*, therefore, entered the world with a reputed fortune of ten thousand pounds. Of this he very well knew that eight thousand was imaginary: but being a man of refined policy, and knowing how much honour is annexed to riches, he resolved never to detect his own poverty; but furnished his house with elegance, scattered his money with profusion, encouraged every scheme of costly pleasure, spoke of petty losses with negligence, and on the day before an execution entered his doors, had proclaimed at a publick table his resolution to be jolted no longer in a hackney-coach.

Another of my companions is the magnanimous *Jack Scatter*, the son of a country gentleman, who having no other care than to leave him rich, considered that literature could not be had without expence; masters would not teach for nothing; and when a book was bought and read, it would sell for little. *Jack* was, therefore, taught to read and write by the butler; and when this acquisition was made, was left to pass his days in the kitchen and the stable, where he heard no crime censured but covetousness and distrust of poor honest servants, and where all the praise was bestowed on good housekeeping and a free heart. At the death of his father, *Jack* set himself to retrieve the honour of his family: he abandoned his cellar to the butler, ordered his groom to provide

provide hay and corn at discretion, took his house-keeper's word for the expences of the kitchen, allowed all his servants to do their work by deputies, permitted his domesticks to keep his house open to their relations and acquaintance, and in ten years was conveyed hither, without having purchased by the loss of his patrimony either honour or pleasure, or obtained any other gratification than that of having corrupted the neighbouring villagers by luxury and idleness.

*Dick Serge* was a draper in *Cornbill*, and passed eight years in prosperous diligence, without any care but to keep his books, or any ambition but to be in time an alderman: but then, by some unaccountable revolution in his understanding, he became enamoured of wit and humour, despised the conversation of pedlars and stockjobbers, and rambled every night to the regions of gaiety, in quest of company suited to his taste. The wits at first flocked about him for sport, and afterwards for interest; some found their way into his books, and some into his pockets; the man of adventure was equipped from his shop for the pursuit of a fortune; and he had sometimes the honour to have his security accepted when his friends were in distress. Elated with these associations, he soon learned to neglect his shop; and having drawn his money out of the funds, to avoid the necessity of teizing men of honour for trifling debts, he has been forced at last to retire hither, till his friends can procure him a post at court.

Another that joins in the same mess is *Bob Cornice*, whose life has been spent in fitting up a house.  
About

About ten years ago *Bob* purchased the country habitation of a bankrupt: the mere shell of a building, *Bob* holds no great matter; the inside is the test of elegance. Of this house he was no sooner master than he summoned twenty workmen to his assistance, tore up the floors and laid them anew, stripped off the wainscot, drew the windows from their frames, altered the disposition of doors and fire-places, and cast the whole fabrick into a new form: his next care was to have his ceilings painted, his pannels gilt, and his chimney-pieces carved: every thing was executed by the ablest hands: *Bob's* business was to follow the workmen with a microscope, and call upon them to retouch their performances, and heighten excellence to perfection. The reputation of his house now brings round him a daily confluence of visitants, and every one tells him of some elegance which he has hitherto overlooked, some convenience not yet procured, or some new mode in ornament or furniture. *Bob*, who had no wish but to be admired, nor any guide but the fashion, thought every thing beautiful in proportion as it was new, and considered his work as unfinished, while any observer could suggest an addition; some alteration was therefore every day made, without any other motive than the charms of novelty. A traveller at last suggested to him the convenience of a grotto: *Bob* immediately ordered the mount of his garden to be excavated; and having laid out a large sum in shells and minerals, was busy in regulating the disposition of the colours and lustres, when two gentlemen, who had asked permission to see his gardens, presented him a writ, and led him off to less elegant apartments.

I know



I know not, Sir, whether among this fraternity of sorrow you will think any much to be pitied; nor indeed do many of them appear to solicit compassion, for they generally applaud their own conduct, and despise those whom want of taste or spirit suffers to grow rich. It were happy if the prisons of the kingdom were filled only with characters like these, men whom prosperity could not make useful, and whom ruin cannot make wise: but there are among us many who raise different sensations, many that owe their present misery to the seductions of treachery, the strokes of casualty, or the tenderness of pity; many whose sufferings disgrace society, and whose virtues would adorn it: of these, when familiarity shall have enabled me to recount their stories without horror, you may expect another narrative from,

S I R,

Your most humble servant,

MISARGYRUS.

NUMB. 58. SATURDAY, *May 25, 1753.*

*Damnant quod non intelligunt.*

CIC.

They condemn what they do not understand.

*EURIPIDES*, having presented *Socrates* with the writings of *Heracitus*, a philosopher famed for involution and obscurity, enquired afterwards his opinion of their merit. "What I understand," said *Socrates*, "I find to be excellent; and, therefore, believe that to be of equal value which I cannot understand."

The reflection of every man who reads this passage will suggest to him the difference between the practice of *Socrates*, and that of modern critics: *Socrates*, who had, by long observation upon himself and others, discovered the weakness of the strongest, and the dimness of the most enlightened intellect, was afraid to decide hastily in his own favour, or to conclude that an author had written without meaning, because he could not immediately catch his ideas; he knew that the faults of books are often more justly imputable to the reader, who sometimes wants attention, and sometimes penetration; whose understanding is often obstructed by prejudice, and often dissipated by remissness; who comes sometimes to a new study, unfurnished with knowledge previously necessary; and finds difficulties insuperable,



able, for want of ardour sufficient to encounter them.

Obscurity and clearness are relative terms: to some readers scarce any book is easy, to others not many are difficult: and surely they, whom neither any exuberant praise bestowed by others, nor any eminent conquests over stubborn problems, have entitled to exalt themselves above the common orders of mankind, might condescend to imitate the candour of *Socrates*; and where they find incontestible proofs of superior genius, be content to think that there is justness in the connection which they cannot trace, and cogency in the reasoning which they cannot comprehend.

This diffidence is never more reasonable, than in the perusal of the authors of antiquity; of those whose works have been the delight of ages, and transmitted as the great inheritance of mankind from one generation to another: surely, no man can, without the utmost arrogance, imagine, that he brings any superiority of understanding to the perusal of these books which have been preserved in the devastation of cities, and snatched up from the wreck of nations; which those who fled before barbarians have been careful to carry off in the hurry of migration, and of which barbarians have repented the destruction. If in books thus made venerable by the uniform attestation of successive ages, any passages shall appear unworthy of that praise which they have formerly received; let us not immediately determine, that they owed their reputation to dulness or bigotry; but suspect at least that our ancestors had some rea-

sons for their opinions, and that our ignorance of those reasons makes us differ from them.

It often happens, that an author's reputation is endangered in succeeding times, by that which raised the loudest applause among his cotemporaries: nothing is read with greater pleasure than allusions to recent facts, reigning opinions, or present controversies; but when facts are forgotten, and controversies extinguished, these favourite touches lose all their graces; and the author in his descent to posterity must be left to the mercy of chance, without any power of ascertaining the memory of those things, to which he owed his luckiest thoughts and his kindest reception.

On such occasions, every reader should remember the diffidence of *Socrates*, and repair by his candour the injuries of time; he should impute the seeming defects of his author to some chasm of intelligence, and suppose, that the sense which is now weak was once forcible, and the expression which is now dubious formerly determinate.

How much the mutilation of ancient history has taken away from the beauty of poetical performances, may be conjectured from the light which a lucky commentator sometimes effuses, by the recovery of an incident that had been long forgotten: thus, in the third book of *Horace*, *Juno's* denunciations against those that should presume to raise again the walls of *Troy*, could for many ages please only by splendid images and swelling language, of which no man discovered the use or propriety, till *Le Fevre*, by shewing on what occasion the Ode was written, changed wonder to rational delight. Many passages  
yet

yet undoubtedly remain in the same author, which an exacter knowledge of the incidents of his time would clear from objections. Among these I have always numbered the following lines :

*Aurum per medios ire satellites,  
Et perrumpere amat saxa, potentius  
Ictu fulmineo. Concidit Auguris  
Argivi domus ob lucrum  
Demersa excidio. Diffidit urbium  
Portas vir Macedo, et subruit æmulos  
Reges muneribus. Munera navium  
Sævos illaqueant duces.*

Stronger than thunder's winged force,  
All-powerful gold can spread its course,  
Thro' watchful guards its passage make,  
And loves through solid walls to break :  
From gold the overwhelming woes,  
That crush'd the Grecian augur rose :  
Philip with gold thro' cities broke,  
And rival monarchs felt his yoke ;  
Captains of ships to gold are slaves,  
Tho' fierce as their own winds and waves. FRANCIS.

The close of this passage, by which every reader is now disappointed and offended, was probably the delight of the *Roman* court : it cannot be imagined, that *Horace*, after having given to gold the force of thunder, and told of its power to storm cities and to conquer kings, would have concluded his account of its efficacy with its influence over naval commanders, had he not alluded to some fact then current in the mouths of men, and therefore more interesting for a time than the conquests of Philip. Of the like

kind may be reckoned another stanza in the same book :

——— *Jussa coram non sine conscio*  
*Surgit marito, seu vocat infitor*  
*Seu navis Hispanæ magister*  
*Dedecorum pretiosus emptor.*

The conscious husband bids her rise,  
 When some rich faëtor courts her charms,  
 Who calls the wanton to his arms,  
 And, prodigal of wealth and fame,  
 Profusely buys the costly shame.

FRANCIS.

He has little knowledge of *Horace* who imagines that the *faëtor*, or the *Spanish merchant*, are mentioned by chance: there was undoubtedly some popular story of an intrigue, which those names recalled to the memory of his reader.

The flame of his genius in other parts, though somewhat dimmed by time, is not totally eclipsed; his address and judgment yet appear, though much of the spirit and vigour of his sentiment is lost: this has happened to the twentieth Ode of the first book;

*Vile potabis modicis Sabinum*  
*Cantharis, Græcâ quod ego ipse testâ*  
*Conditum levi; datus in theatro*  
*Cùm tibi plausus,*  
*Chare Mæcenâ eques. Ut paterni*  
*Fluminis ripæ, simul et jocosa*  
*Redderet laudes tibi Vaticani*  
*Montis imago.*

A poet's

A poet's beverage humbly cheap,  
 (Should great Mæcenas be my guest)  
 The vintage of the Sabine grape,  
 But yet in sober cups, shall crown the feast :  
 'Twas rack'd into a Grecian cask,  
 Its rougher juice to melt away ;  
 I seal'd it too — a pleasing task !  
 With annual joy to mark the glorious day,  
 When in applause shouts thy name  
 Spread from the theatre around,  
 Floating on thy own Tiber's stream,  
 And Echo, playful nymph, return'd the sound.

FRANCIS.

We here easily remark the intertexture of a happy compliment with an humble invitation ; but certainly are less delighted than those, to whom the mention of the applause bestowed upon Mæcenas, gave occasion to recount the actions or words that produced it.

Two lines which have exercised the ingenuity of modern critics, may, I think, be reconciled to the judgment, by an easy supposition : *Horace* thus addresses Agrippa ;

*Scriberis Vario fortis, et hostium*  
*Victor, Mæonii carminis alite.*

Varius, a swan of Homer's wing,  
 Shall brave Agrippa's conquests sing.

That *Varius* should be called " A bird of *Homer's* " song," appears so harsh to modern ears, that an emendation of the text has been proposed : but surely the learning of the ancients had been long ago obliterated, had every man thought himself at



liberty to corrupt the lines which he did not understand. If we imagine that *Varius* had been by any of his cotemporaries celebrated under the appellation of *Musarum Ales*, the swan of the Muses, the language of *Horace* becomes graceful and familiar; and that such a compliment was at least possible, we know from the transformation feigned by *Horace* of himself.

The most elegant compliment that was paid to *Addison*, is of this obscure and perishable kind:

When panting Virtue her last efforts made,  
You brought your CLIO to the virgin's aid.

These lines must please as long as they are understood; but can be understood only by those that have observed *Addison's* signatures in the *Spectator*.

The nicety of these minute allusions I shall exemplify by another instance, which I take this occasion to mention, because, as I am told, the commentators have omitted it. *Tibullus* addresses *Cynthia* in this manner:

*Te spectem, suprema mihi cum venerit hora,  
Te teneam moriens deficiente manu.*

Before my closing eyes, dear *Cynthia*, stand,  
Held weakly by my fainting trembling hand.

To these lines *Ovid* thus refers in his elegy on the death of *Tibullus*;

*Cynthia decedens, felicius, inquit, amata  
Sum tibi; vixisti dum tuus ignis eram,  
Cui Nemesis, quid, ait, tibi sunt mea damna dolori?  
Me tenuit moriens deficiente manu.*

Bless

Blest was my reign, retiring Cynthia cry'd :  
 Not till he left my breast, Tibullus dy'd.  
 Forbear, said Nemesis, my loss to moan,  
 The fainting trembling hand was mine alone.

The beauty of this passage, which consists in the appropriation made by *Nemesis* of the line originally directed to *Cynthia*, had been wholly imperceptible to succeeding ages, had chance, which has destroyed so many greater volumes, deprived us likewise of the poems of *Tibullus*.

NUMB. 62. SATURDAY, *June 9, 1753.*

<i>O fortuna viris invida fortibus</i>	
<i>Quam non æqua bonis præmia dividis.</i>	SENECA.
Capricious Fortune ever joys,	}
With partial hand to deal the prize,	
To crush the brave and cheat the wise.	

*To the* ADVENTURER.

S I R,

*Fleet, June 6.*

**T**O the account of such of my companions as are imprisoned without being miserable, or are miserable without any claim to compassion; I promised to add the histories of those, whose virtue has made them unhappy, or whose misfortunes are at least without a crime. That this catalogue should



be very numerous, neither you nor your readers ought to expect; “rari quippe boni;” “the good are few.” Virtue is uncommon in all the classes of humanity; and I suppose it will scarcely be imagined more frequent in a prison than in other places.

Yet in these gloomy regions is to be found the tenderness, the generosity, the philanthropy of *Serenus*, who might have lived in competence and ease, if he could have looked without emotion on the miseries of another. *Serenus* was one of those exalted minds, whom knowledge and sagacity could not make suspicious; who poured out his soul in boundless intimacy, and thought community of possessions the law of friendship. The friend of *Serenus* was arrested for debt, and after many endeavours to soften his creditor, sent his wife to solicit that assistance which never was refused. The tears and importunity of female distress were more than was necessary to move the heart of *Serenus*; he hastened immediately away, and conferring a long time with his friend, found him confident that if the present pressure was taken off, he should soon be able to re-establish his affairs. *Serenus*, accustomed to believe, and afraid to aggravate distress, did not attempt to detect the fallacies of hope, nor reflect that every man overwhelmed with calamity believes, that if that was removed he shall immediately be happy: he, therefore, with little hesitation offered himself as surety.

In the first raptures of escape all was joy, gratitude, and confidence; the friend of *Serenus* displayed his

his prospects, and counted over the sums of which he should infallibly be master before the day of payment. *Serenus* in a short time began to find his danger, but could not prevail with himself to repent of beneficence; and therefore suffered himself still to be amused with projects which he durst not consider, for fear of finding them impracticable. The debtor, after he had tried every method of raising money which art or indigence could prompt, wanted either fidelity or resolution to surrender himself to prison, and left *Serenus* to take his place.

*Serenus* has often proposed to the creditor, to pay him whatever he shall appear to have lost by the flight of his friend; but however reasonable this proposal may be thought, avarice and brutality have been hitherto inexorable, and *Serenus* still continues to languish in prison.

In this place, however, where want makes almost every man selfish, or desperation gloomy, it is the good fortune of *Serenus* not to live without a friend: he passes most of his hours in the conversation of *Candidus*, a man whom the same virtuous ductility has with some difference of circumstances made equally unhappy. *Candidus*, when he was young, helpless, and ignorant, found a patron that educated, protected, and supported him: his patron being more vigilant for others than himself, left at his death an only son, destitute and friendless. *Candidus* was eager to repay the benefits he had received; and having maintained the youth for a few years at his own house, afterwards placed him with a merchant of eminence, and gave bonds to a great value as a security for his conduct.

The

The young man, removed too early from the only eye of which he dreaded the observation, and deprived of the only instruction which he heard with reverence, soon learned to consider virtue as restraint, and restraint as oppression; and to look with a longing eye at every expence to which he could not reach, and every pleasure which he could not partake: by degrees he deviated from his first regularity, and unhappily mingling among young men busy in dissipating the gains of their fathers industry, he forgot the precepts of *Candidus*, spent the evening in parties of pleasure, and the morning in expedients to support his riots. He was, however, dextrous and active in business; and his master, being secured against any consequences of dishonesty, was very little solicitous to inspect his manners, or to enquire how he passed those hours, which were not immediately devoted to the business of his profession: when he was informed of the young man's extravagance or debauchery, "Let his bondsman look to that," said he, "I have taken care of myself."

Thus the unhappy spendthrift proceeded from folly to folly, and from vice to vice, with the connivance if not the encouragement of his master; till in the heat of a nocturnal revel he committed such violences in the street as drew upon him a criminal prosecution. Guilty and unexperienced, he knew not what course to take; to confess his crime to *Candidus*, and solicit his interposition, was little less dreadful than to stand before the frown of a court of justice. Having, therefore, passed the day with anguish in his heart and distraction in his looks, he seized

seized at night a very large sum of money in the compting-house, and setting out he knew not whither, was heard of no more.

The consequence of his flight was the ruin of *Candidus*; ruin surely undeserved and irreproachable, and such as the laws of a just government ought either to prevent or repair: nothing is more inequitable than that one man should suffer for the crimes of another, for crimes which he neither prompted nor permitted, which he could neither foresee nor prevent. When we consider the weakness of human resolutions and the inconsistency of human conduct, it must appear absurd that one man shall engage for another, that he will not change his opinions or alter his conduct.

It is, I think, worthy of consideration, whether since no wager is binding without a possibility of loss on each side, it is not equally reasonable, that no contract should be valid without reciprocal stipulations: but in this case, and others of the same kind, what is stipulated on his side to whom the bond is given? he takes advantage of the security, neglects his affairs, omits his duty, suffers timorous wickedness to grow daring by degrees, permits appetite to call for new gratifications, and, perhaps, secretly longs for the time in which he shall have power to seize the forfeiture: and if virtue or gratitude should prove too strong for temptation, and a young man persist in honesty, however instigated by his passions, what can secure him at last against a false accusation? I for my part always shall suspect, that he who can by such methods secure his property, will go one step farther to increase it: nor can I think that  
man

man safely trusted with the means of mischief, who, by his desire to have them in his hands, gives an evident proof how much less he values his neighbour's happiness than his own.

Another of our companions is *Lentulus*, a man whose dignity of birth was very ill supported by his fortune. As some of the first offices in the kingdom were filled by his relations, he was early invited to court, and encouraged by caresses and promises to attendance and solicitation: a constant appearance in splendid company necessarily required magnificence of dress; and a frequent participation of fashionable amusements forced him into expence: but these measures were requisite to his success; since every body knows, that to be lost to fight is to be lost to remembrance, and that he who desires to fill a vacancy, must be always at hand, lest some man of greater vigilance should step in before him.

By this course of life his little fortune was every day made less: but he received so many distinctions in public, and was known to resort so familiarly to the houses of the great, that every man looked on his preferment as certain, and believed that its value would compensate for its slowness: he, therefore, found no difficulty in obtaining credit for all that his rank or his vanity made necessary; and as ready payment was not expected, the bills were proportionably enlarged, and the value of the hazard or delay were adjusted solely by the equity of the creditor. At length death deprived *Lentulus* of one of his patrons, and a revolution in the ministry of another; so that all his prospects vanished at once, and those that had before encouraged his expences, began to perceive



perceive that their money was in danger : there was now no other contention but who should first seize upon his person, and, by forcing immediate payment, deliver him up naked to the vengeance of the rest. In pursuance of this scheme, one of them invited him to a tavern, and procured him to be arrested at the door ; but *Lentulus*, instead of endeavouring secretly to pacify him by payment, gave notice to the rest, and offered to divide amongst them the remnant of his fortune : they feasted six hours at his expence, to deliberate on his proposal ; and at last determined, that, as he could not offer more than five shillings in the pound, it would be more prudent to keep him in prison, till he could procure from his relations the payment of his debts.

*Lentulus* is not the only man confined within these walls, on the same account: the like procedure, upon the like motives, is common among men whom yet the law allows to partake the use of fire and water with the compassionate and the just ; who frequent the assemblies of commerce in open day, and talk with detestation and contempt of highwaymen or housebreakers: but, surely, that man must be confessedly robbed, who is compelled, by whatever means, to pay the debts which he does not owe; nor can I look with equal hatred upon him, who, at the hazard of his life, holds out his pistol and demands my purse, as on him who plunders under shelter of the law, and, by detaining my son or my friend in prison, extorts from me the price of their liberty. No man can be more an enemy to society than he, by whose machinations our virtues are  
turned



turned to our disadvantage; he is less destructive to mankind that plunders cowardice, than he that preys upon compassion.

I believe, Mr. *Adventurer*, you will readily confess, that though not one of these, if tried before a commercial judicature, can be wholly acquitted from imprudence or temerity; yet that, in the eye of all who can consider virtue as distinct from wealth, the fault of two of them, at least, is outweighed by the merit; and that of the third is so much extenuated by the circumstances of his life, as not to deserve a perpetual prison: yet must these, with multitudes equally blameless, languish in confinement, till malevolence shall relent, or the law be changed.

I am, S I R,

Your humble servant,

MISARGYRUS.

NUMB. 69. TUESDAY, *July 3, 1753.*

*Ferè libenter homines id quod volunt credunt.* CÆSAR.

Men willingly believe what they wish to be true.

**T**ULLY has long ago observed, that no man, however weakened by long life, is so conscious of his own decrepitude, as not to imagine that he may yet hold his station in the world for another year.

Of the truth of this remark every day furnishes new confirmation: there is no time of life, in which men for the most part seem less to expect the stroke of death, than when every other eye sees it impending; or are more busy in providing for another year than when it is plain to all but themselves, that at another year they cannot arrive. Though every funeral that passes before their eyes evinces the deceitfulness of such expectations, since every man who is born to the grave thought himself equally certain of living at least to the next year; the survivor still continues to flatter himself, and is never at a loss for some reason why his life should be protracted, and the voracity of death continued to be pacified with some other prey.

But this is only one of the innumerable artifices practised in the universal conspiracy of mankind against themselves: every age and every condition indulges some darling fallacy; every man amuses  
5 himself

himself with projects which he knows to be improbable, and which, therefore, he resolves to pursue without daring to examine them. Whatever any man ardently desires, he very readily believes that he shall some time attain: he whose intemperance has overwhelmed him with diseases, while he languishes in the spring, expects vigour and recovery from the summer sun; and while he melts away in the summer, transfers his hopes to the frosts of winter: he that gazes upon elegance or pleasure, which want of money hinders him from imitating or partaking, comforts himself that the time of distress will soon be at an end, and that every day brings him nearer to a state of happiness; though he knows it has passed not only without acquisition of advantage, but perhaps without endeavours after it, in the formation of schemes that cannot be executed, and in the contemplation of prospects which cannot be approached.

Such is the general dream in which we all slumber out our time: every man thinks the day coming, in which he shall be gratified with all his wishes, in which he shall leave all those competitors behind, who are now rejoicing like himself in the expectation of victory; the day is always coming to the servile in which they shall be powerful, to the obscure in which they shall be eminent, and to the deformed in which they shall be beautiful.

If any of my readers has looked with so little attention on the world about him, as to imagine this representation exaggerated beyond probability, let him reflect a little upon his own life; let him consider what were his hopes and prospects ten years ago, and  
what

what additions he then expected to be made by ten years to his happiness: those years are now elapsed; have they made good the promise that was extorted from them, have they advanced his fortune, enlarged his knowledge, or reformed his conduct, to the degree that was once expected? I am afraid, every man that recollects his hopes, must confess his disappointment; and own that day has glided unprofitably after day, and that he is still at the same distance from the point of happiness.

With what consolations can those, who have thus miscarried in their chief design, elude the memory of their ill success? with what amusements can they pacify their discontent, after the loss of so large a portion of life? they can give themselves up again to the same delusions, they can form new schemes of airy gratifications, and fix another period of felicity; they can again resolve to trust the promise which they know will be broken, they can walk in a circle with their eyes shut, and persuade themselves to think that they go forward.

Of every great and complicated event, part depends upon causes out of our power, and part must be effected by vigour and perseverance. With regard to that which is stiled in common language the work of chance, men will always find reasons for confidence or distrust, according to their different tempers or inclinations; and he that has been long accustomed to please himself with possibilities of fortuitous happiness, will not easily or willingly be reclaimed from his mistake. But the effects of human industry and skill are more easily subjected to calculation: whatever can be completed in a year,

is divisible into parts, of which each may be performed in the compass of a day; he, therefore, that has passed the day without attention to the task assigned him, may be certain that the lapse of life has brought him no nearer to his object; for whatever idleness may expect from time, its produce will be only in proportion to the diligence with which it has been used. He that floats lazily down the stream, in pursuit of something borne along by the same current, will find himself indeed move forward; but unless he lays his hand to the oar, and increases his speed by his own labour, must be always at the same distance from that which he is following.

There have happened in every age some contingencies of unexpected and undeserved success, by which those who are determined to believe whatever favours their inclinations, have been encouraged to delight themselves with future advantages; they support confidence by considerations, of which the only proper use is to chase away despair: it is equally absurd to sit down in idleness because some have been enriched without labour, as to leap a precipice because some have fallen and escaped with life, or to put to sea in a storm, because some have been driven from a wreck upon the coast to which they are bound.

We are all ready to confess, that belief ought to be proportioned to evidence or probability: let any man, therefore, compare the number of those who have been thus favoured by fortune, and of those who have failed of their expectations, and he will easily determine, with what justness he has registered himself in the lucky catalogue.

But



But there is no need on these occasions for deep enquiries or laborious calculations; there is a far easier method of distinguishing the hopes of folly from those of reason, of finding the difference between prospects that exist before the eyes, and those that are only painted on a fond imagination. *Tom Drowsy* had accustomed himself to compute the profit of a darling project, till he had no longer any doubt of its success; it was at last matured by close consideration, all the measures were accurately adjusted, and he wanted only five hundred pounds to become master of a fortune that might be envied by a director of a trading company. *Tom* was generous and grateful, and was resolved to recompence this small assistance with an ample fortune: he, therefore, deliberated for a time, to whom amongst his friends he should declare his necessities; not that he suspected a refusal, but because he could not suddenly determine which of them would make the best use of riches, and was, therefore, most worthy of his favour. At last his choice was settled; and knowing that in order to borrow he must shew the probability of re-payment, he prepared for a minute and copious explanation of his project. But here the golden dream was at an end: he soon discovered the impossibility of imposing upon others the notions by which he had so long imposed upon himself; which way soever he turned his thoughts, impossibility and absurdity arose in opposition on every side; even credulity and prejudice were at last forced to give way, and he grew ashamed of crediting himself what shame would not suffer him to communicate to another.



To this test let every man bring his imaginations, before they have been too long predominant in his mind. Whatever is true will bear to be related, whatever is rational will endure to be explained; but when we delight to brood in secret over future happiness, and silently to employ our meditations upon schemes of which we are conscious that the bare mention would expose us to derision and contempt; we should then remember, that we are cheating ourselves by voluntary delusions; and giving up to the unreal mockeries of fancy, those hours in which solid advantages might be attained by sober thought and rational assiduity.

There is, indeed, so little certainty in human affairs, that the most cautious and severe examiner may be allowed to indulge some hopes which he cannot prove to be much favoured by probability; since after his utmost endeavours to ascertain events, he must often leave the issue in the hands of chance. And so scanty is our present allowance of happiness, that in many situations life could scarcely be supported, if hope were not allowed to relieve the present hour by pleasures borrowed from futurity; and re-animate the languor of dejection to new efforts, by pointing to distant regions of felicity, which yet no resolution or perseverance shall ever reach.

But these, like all other cordials, though they may invigorate in a small quantity, intoxicate in a greater; these pleasures, like the rest, are lawful only in certain circumstances, and to certain degrees; they may be useful in a due subserviency to nobler purposes, but become dangerous and destructive when once they gain the ascendant in the heart: to  
 soothe

soothe the mind to tranquillity by hope, even when that hope is likely to deceive us, may be sometimes useful; but to lull our faculties in a lethargy, is poor and despicable.

Vices and errors are differently modified, according to the state of the minds to which they are incident; to indulge hope beyond the warrant of reason, is the failure alike of mean and elevated understandings; but its foundation and its effects are totally different: the man of high courage and great abilities is apt to place too much confidence in himself, and to expect from a vigorous exertion of his powers more than spirit or diligence can attain; between him and his wish he sees obstacles indeed, but he expects to overleap or break them; his mistaken ardour hurries him forward; and though perhaps he misses his end, he nevertheless obtains some collateral good, and performs something useful to mankind and honourable to himself.

The drone of timidity presumes likewise to hope, but without ground and without consequence; the bliss with which he solaces his hours, he always expects from others, though very often he knows not from whom; he folds his arms about him, and sits in expectation of some revolution in the state that shall raise him to greatness, or some golden shower that shall load him with wealth; he dozes away the day in musing upon the morrow; and at the end of life is roused from his dream only to discover that the time of action is past, and that he can now shew his wisdom only by repentance.

NUMB. 84. SATURDAY, *August 25*, 1753.— *Tolle periculum,**Jam vaga proflicet frænis natura remotis.* HOR.But take the danger and the shame away,  
And vagrant nature bounds upon her prey. FRANCIS,*To the* ADVENTURER.

SIR,

IT has been observed, I think, by Sir *William Temple*, and after him by almost every other writer, that *England* affords a greater variety of characters than the rest of the world. This is ascribed to the liberty prevailing amongst us, which gives every man the privilege of being wise or foolish his own way, and preserves him from the necessity of hypocrisy or the servility of imitation.

That the position itself is true, I am not completely satisfied. To be nearly acquainted with the people of different countries can happen to very few; and in life, as in every thing else beheld at a distance, there appears an even uniformity: the petty discriminations which diversify the natural character, are not discoverable but by a close inspection; we, therefore, find them most at home, because there we have most opportunities of remarking them. Much less am I convinced, that this peculiar diversification, if it be real, is the consequence

quence of peculiar liberty; for where is the government to be found that superintends individuals with so much vigilance, as not to leave their private conduct without restraint? Can it enter into a reasonable mind to imagine, that men of every other nation are not equally masters of their own time or houses with ourselves, and equally at liberty to be parsimonious or profuse, frolick or sullen, abstinent or luxurious? Liberty is certainly necessary to the full play of predominant humours; but such liberty is to be found alike under the government of the many or the few, in monarchies or in commonwealths.

How readily the predominant passion snatches an interval of liberty, and how fast it expands itself when the weight of restraint is taken away, I had lately an opportunity to discover, as I took a journey into the country in a stage-coach; which, as every journey is a kind of adventure, may be very properly related to you, though I can display no such extraordinary assembly as *Cervantes* has collected at *Don Quixote's* inn.

In a stage-coach the passengers are for the most part wholly unknown to one another, and without expectation of ever meeting again when their journey is at an end; one should therefore imagine, that it was of little importance to any of them, what conjectures the rest should form concerning him. Yet so it is, that as all think themselves secure from detection, all assume that character of which they are most desirous, and on no occasion is the general ambition of superiority more apparently indulged,

On the day of our departure, in the twilight of the morning, I ascended the vehicle with three men and two women, my fellow-travellers. It was easy to observe the affected elevation of mien with which every one entered, and the supercilious civility with which they paid their compliments to each other. When the first ceremony was dispatched, we sat silent for a long time, all employed in collecting importance into our faces, and endeavouring to strike reverence and submission into our companions.

It is always observable that silence propagates itself, and that the longer talk has been suspended, the more difficult it is to find any thing to say. We began now to wish for conversation; but no one seemed inclined to descend from his dignity, or first propose a topick of discourse. At last a corpulent gentleman, who had equipped himself for this expedition with a scarlet surtout and a large hat with a broad lace, drew out his watch, looked on it in silence, and then held it dangling at his finger. This was, I suppose, understood by all the company as an invitation to ask the time of the day, but nobody appeared to heed his overture; and his desire to be talking so far overcame his resentment, that he let us know of his own accord that it was past five, and that in two hours we should be at breakfast.

His condescension was thrown away; we continued all obdurate; the ladies held up their heads; I amused myself with watching their behaviour; and of the other two, one seemed to employ himself in counting the trees as we drove by them, the other



other drew his hat over his eyes and counterfeited a slumber. The man of benevolence, to shew that he was not depressed by our neglect, hummed a tune and beat time upon his snuff-box.

Thus universally displeas'd with one another, and not much delighted with ourselves, we came at last to the little inn appointed for our repast; and all began at once to recompense themselves for the constraint of silence, by innumerable questions and orders to the people that attended us. At last, what every one had call'd for was got, or declar'd impossible to be got at that time, and we were persuad'd to sit round the same table; when the gentleman in the red surtout look'd again upon his watch, told us that we had half an hour to spare, but he was sorry to see so little merriment among us; that all fellow-travellers were for the time upon the level, and that it was always his way to make himself one of the company. "I remember," says he, "it was on just such a morning as this, that I and  
" my Lord *Mumble* and the Duke of *Tenterden*  
" were out upon a ramble: we call'd at a little  
" house as it might be this; and my landlady, I  
" warrant you, not suspecting to whom she was  
" talking, was so jocular and facetious, and made  
" so many merry answers to our questions, that we  
" were all ready to burst with laughter. At last the  
" good woman happening to overhear me whisper  
" the duke and call him by his title, was so surpris'd and confounded, that we could scarcely  
" get a word from her; and the duke never met  
" me from that day to this, but he talks of the  
" little



“ little house, and quarrels with me for terrifying  
 “ the landlady.”

He had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the veneration which this narrative must have procured him from the company, when one of the ladies having reached out for a plate on a distant part of the table, began to remark “ the inconveniences of travelling, and the difficulty which  
 “ they who never sat at home without a great number of attendants found in performing for themselves such offices as the road required; but that  
 “ people of quality often travelled in disguise, and  
 “ might be generally known from the vulgar by  
 “ their condescension to poor inn-keepers, and the  
 “ allowance which they made for any defect in  
 “ their entertainment; that for her part, while people were civil and meant well, it was never her  
 “ custom to find fault, for one was not to expect upon  
 “ a journey all that one enjoyed at one’s own house.”

A general emulation seemed now to be excited. One of the men, who had hitherto said nothing, called for the last news-paper; and having perused it a while with deep pensiveness, “ It is impossible,” says he, “ for any man to guess how to act with regard to the stocks: last week it was the general  
 “ opinion that they would fall; and I sold out  
 “ twenty thousand pounds in order to a purchase;  
 “ they have now risen unexpectedly; and I make  
 “ no doubt but at my return to *London* I shall risk  
 “ thirty thousand pounds among them again.”

A young man, who had hitherto distinguished himself only by the vivacity of his looks, and a frequent

frequent diversion of his eyes from one object to another, upon this closed his snuff-box, and told us, that “he had a hundred times talked with the  
 “chancellor and the judges on the subject of the  
 “stocks; that for his part he did not pretend to be  
 “well acquainted with the principles on which they  
 “were established, but had always heard them  
 “reckoned pernicious to trade, uncertain in their  
 “produce, and unsolid in their foundation; and  
 “that he had been advised by three judges, his  
 “most intimate friends, never to venture his money  
 “in the funds, but to put it out upon land-secu-  
 “rity, till he could light upon an estate in his own  
 “country.”

It might be expected, that upon these glimpses of latent dignity, we should all have begun to look round us with veneration; and have behaved like the princes of romance, when the enchantment that disguises them is dissolved, and they discover the dignity of each other: yet it happened, that none of these hints made much impression on the company; every one was apparently suspected of endeavouring to impose false appearances upon the rest; all continued their haughtiness in hopes to enforce their claims; and all grew every hour more fullen, because they found their representations of themselves without effect.

Thus we travelled on four days with malevolence perpetually increasing, and without any endeavour but to outvie each other in superciliousness and neglect; and when any two of us could separate ourselves for a moment, we vented our indignation at the sauciness of the rest.

At

At length the journey was at an end; and time and chance, that strip off all disguises, have discovered, that the intimate of lords and dukes is a nobleman's butler, who has furnished a shop with the money he has saved; the man who deals so largely in the funds, is a clerk of a broker in *'Change-alley*; the lady who so carefully concealed her quality, keeps a cook-shop behind the *Exchange*; and the young man, who is so happy in the friendship of the judges, engrosses and transcribes for bread in a garret of the *Temple*. Of one of the women only I could make no disadvantageous detection, because she had assumed no character, but accommodated herself to the scene before her, without any struggle for distinction or superiority.

I could not forbear to reflect on the folly of practising a fraud, which, as the event shewed, had been already practised too often to succeed, and by the success of which no advantage could have been obtained; of assuming a character, which was to end with the day; and of claiming upon false pretences honours which must perish with the breath that paid them.

But, Mr. *Adventurer*, let not those who laugh at me and my companions, think this folly confined to a stage-coach. Every man in the journey of life takes the same advantage of the ignorance of his fellow-travellers, disguises himself in counterfeited merit, and hears those praises with complacency which his conscience reproaches him for accepting. Every man deceives himself, while he thinks he is deceiving others; and forgets that the time is at hand when every illusion shall cease, when fictitious  
excellence

N<sup>o</sup> 85. THE ADVENTURER. 61

excellence shall be torn away, and *all* must be shown to *all* in their real estate.

I am, S I R,

Your humble servant,

VIATOR.

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NUMB. 85. TUESDAY, *August* 28, 1753.

*Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,  
Multa tulit fecitque puer.*

HOR.

The youth, who hopes th' Olympick prize to gain,  
All arts must try, and every toil sustain.

FRANCIS.

**I**T is observed by *Bacon*, that “reading makes a  
“full man, conversation a ready man, and  
“writing an exact man.”

As *Bacon* attained to degrees of knowledge scarcely ever reached by any other man, the directions which he gives for study have certainly a just claim to our regard; for who can teach an art with so great authority, as he that has practised it with undisputed success?

Under the protection of so great a name, I shall, therefore, venture to inculcate to my ingenious contemporaries, the necessity of reading, the fitness of consulting other understandings than their own, and of considering the sentiments and opinions of those who, however neglected in the present age, had in their own times, and many of them a long time

time afterwards, such reputation for knowledge and acuteness, as will scarcely ever be attained by those that despise them.

An opinion has of late been, I know not how, propagated among us, that libraries are filled only with useless lumber; that men of parts stand in need of no assistance; and that to spend life in poring upon books, is only to imbibe prejudices, to obstruct and embarrass the powers of nature, to cultivate memory at the expence of judgment, and to bury reason under a chaos of indigested learning.

Such is the talk of many who think themselves wise, and of some who are thought wise by others; of whom part probably believe their own tenets, and part may be justly suspected of endeavouring to shelter their ignorance in multitudes, and of wishing to destroy that reputation which they have no hopes to share. It will, I believe, be found invariably true, that learning was never decried by any learned man; and what credit can be given to those, who venture to condemn that which they do not know?

If reason has the power ascribed to it by its advocates, if so much is to be discovered by attention and meditation, it is hard to believe, that so many millions, equally participating of the bounties of nature with ourselves, have been for ages upon ages meditating in vain: if the wits of the present time expect the regard of posterity, which will then inherit the reason which is now thought superior to instruction, surely they may allow themselves to be instructed by the reason of former generations. When, therefore, an author declares, that he has been able to learn nothing from the writings of his prede-



predecessors, and such a declaration has been lately made, nothing but a degree of arrogance unpardonable in the greatest human understanding, can hinder him from perceiving that he is raising prejudices against his own performance; for with what hopes of success can he attempt that in which greater abilities have hitherto miscarried? or with what peculiar force does he suppose himself invigorated, that difficulties hitherto invincible should give way before him?

Of those whom Providence has qualified to make any additions to human knowledge, the number is extremely small; and what can be added by each single mind, even of this superior class, is very little: the greatest part of mankind must owe all their knowledge, and all must owe far the larger part of it, to the information of others. To understand the works of celebrated authors, to comprehend their systems, and retain their reasonings, is a task more than equal to common intellects; and he is by no means to be accounted useless or idle, who has stored his mind with acquired knowledge, and can detail it occasionally to others who have less leisure or weaker abilities.

*Persius* has justly observed, that knowledge is nothing to him who is not known by others to possess it: to the scholar himself it is nothing with respect either to honour or advantage, for the world cannot reward those qualities which are concealed from it; with respect to others it is nothing, because it affords no help to ignorance or error.

It is with justice, therefore, that in an accomplished character, *Horace* unites just sentiments with



the power of expressing them; and he that has once accumulated learning, is next to consider, how he shall most widely diffuse and most agreeably impart it.

A ready man is made by conversation. He that buries himself among his manuscripts "besprent," as *Pope* expresses it, "with learned dust," and wears out his days and nights in perpetual research and solitary meditation, is too apt to lose in his elocution what he adds to his wisdom; and when he comes into the world, to appear overloaded with his own notions, like a man armed with weapons which he cannot wield. He has no facility of inculcating his speculations, of adapting himself to the various degrees of intellect which the accidents of conversation will present; but will talk to most unintelligibly, and to all unpleasantly.

I was once present at the lectures of a profound philosopher, a man really skilled in the science which he professed, who having occasion to explain the terms *opacum* and *pellucidum*, told us, after some hesitation, that *opacum* was, as one might say, *opaque*, and that *pellucidum* signified *pellucid*. Such was the dexterity with which this learned reader facilitated to his auditors the intricacies of science; and so true is it, that a man may know what he cannot teach.

*Boerhaave* complains, that the writers who have treated of chemistry before him, are useless to the greater part of students, because they pre-suppose their readers to have such degrees of skill as are not often to be found. Into the same error are all men apt to fall, who have familiarized any subject to them-

themselves in solitude: they discourse, as if they thought every other man had been employed in the same inquiries; and expect that short hints and obscure illusions will produce in others, the same train of ideas which they excite in themselves.

Nor is this the only inconvenience which the man of study suffers from a recluse life. When he meets with an opinion that pleases him, he catches it up with eagerness; looks only after such arguments as tend to his confirmation; or spares himself the trouble of discussion, and adopts it with very little proof; indulges it long without suspicion, and in time unites it to the general body of his knowledge, and treasures it up among incontestible truths: but when he comes into the world among men who, arguing upon dissimilar principles, have been led to different conclusions, and being placed in various situations, view the same object on many sides; he finds his darling position attacked, and himself in no condition to defend it: having thought always in one train, he is in the state of a man who having fenced always with the same master, is perplexed and amazed by a new posture of his antagonist; he is entangled in unexpected difficulties, he is harassed by sudden objections, he is unprovided with solutions or replies, his surprize impedes his natural powers of reasoning, his thoughts are scattered and confounded, and he gratifies the pride of airy petulance with an easy victory.

It is difficult to imagine, with what obstinacy truths which one mind perceives almost by intuition, will be rejected by another; and how many artifices must be practised, to procure admission for

the most evident propositions into understandings frightened by their novelty, or hardened against them by accidental prejudice; it can scarcely be conceived, how frequently, in these extemporaneous controversies, the dull will be subtle, and the acute absurd; how often stupidity will elude the force of argument, by involving itself in its own gloom; and mistaken ingenuity will weave artful fallacies, which reason can scarcely find means to disentangle.

In these encounters the learning of the recluse usually fails him: nothing but long habit and frequent experiments can confer the power of changing a position into various forms, presenting it in different points of view, connecting it with known and granted truths, fortifying it with intelligible arguments, and illustrating it by apt similitudes; and he, therefore, that has collected his knowledge in solitude, must learn its application by mixing with mankind.

But while the various opportunities of conversation invite us to try every mode of argument, and every art of recommending our sentiments, we are frequently betrayed to the use of such as are not in themselves strictly defensible: a man heated in talk, and eager of victory, takes advantage of the mistakes or ignorance of his adversary, lays hold of concessions to which he knows he has no right, and urges proofs likely to prevail on his opponent, though he knows himself that they have no force: thus the severity of reason is relaxed, many topics are accumulated, but without just arrangement or distinction; we learn to satisfy ourselves with such

ratiocination as silences others; and seldom recal to a close examination, that discourse which has gratified our vanity with victory and applause.

Some caution, therefore, must be used, lest copiousness and facility be made less valuable by inaccuracy and confusion. To fix the thoughts by writing, and subject them to frequent examinations and reviews, is the best method of enabling the mind to detect its own sophisms, and keep it on guard against the fallacies which it practises on others: in conversation we naturally diffuse our thoughts, and in writing we contract them; method is the excellence of writing, and unconstraint the grace of conversation.

To read, write, and converse in due proportions, is, therefore, the business of a man of letters. For all these there is not often equal opportunity; excellence, therefore, is not often attainable; and most men fail in one or other of the ends proposed, and are full without readiness, or ready without exactness. Some deficiency must be forgiven all, because all are men; and more must be allowed to pass uncensured in the greater part of the world, because none can confer upon himself abilities, and few have the choice of situations proper for the improvement of those which nature has bestowed: it is, however, reasonable, to have *perfection* in our eye; that we may always advance towards it, though we know it never can be reached.

NUMB. 92. SATURDAY, *September 22*, 1753.

*Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti.*

HOR.

Bold be the critick, zealous to his trust,  
Like the firm judge inexorably just.

*To the* ADVENTURER.

S I R,

**I**N the papers of criticism which you have given to the publick, I have remarked a spirit of candour and love of truth, equally remote from bigotry and captiousness; a just distribution of praise amongst the ancients and the moderns; a sober deference to reputation long established, without a blind adoration of antiquity; and a willingness to favour later performances, without a light or puerile fondness for novelty.

I shall, therefore, venture to lay before you, such observations as have risen to my mind in the consideration of *Virgil's* pastorals, without any inquiry how far my sentiments deviate from established rules or common opinions.

If we survey the ten pastorals in a general view, it will be found that *Virgil* can derive from them very little claim to the praise of an inventor. To search into the antiquity of this kind of poetry, is not my present purpose; that it has long subsisted in the east, the *Sacred Writings* sufficiently inform

us;



us; and we may conjecture, with great probability, that it was sometimes the devotion, and sometimes the entertainment of the first generations of mankind. *Theocritus* united elegance with simplicity; and taught his shepherds to sing with so much ease and harmony, that his countrymen despairing to excel, forbore to imitate him; and the Greeks, however vain or ambitious, left him in quiet possession of the garlands which the wood-nymphs had bestowed upon him.

*Virgil*, however, taking advantage of another language, ventured to copy or to rival the *Sicilian bard*: he has written with greater splendor of diction, and elevation of sentiment: but as the magnificence of his performances was more, the simplicity was less; and, perhaps, where he excells *Theocritus*, he sometimes obtains his superiority by deviating from the pastoral character, and performing what *Theocritus* never attempted.

Yet, though I would willingly pay to *Theocritus* the honour which is always due to an original author, I am far from intending to depreciate *Virgil*; of whom *Horace* justly declares, that the rural muses have appropriated to him their elegance and sweetness, and who, as he copied *Theocritus* in his design, has resembled him likewise in his success; for, if we except *Calpurnius*, an obscure author of the lower ages, I know not that a single pastoral was written after him by any poet, till the revival of literature.

But though his general merit has been universally acknowledged, I am far from thinking all the productions of his rural *Tbalia* equally excellent: there

is, indeed, in all his pastorals a strain of versification which it is vain to seek in any other poet; but if we except the first and the tenth, they seem liable either wholly or in part to considerable objections.

The second, though we should forget the great charge against it, which I am afraid can never be refuted, might, I think, have perished, without any diminution of the praise of its author; for I know not that it contains one affecting sentiment or pleasing description, or one passage that strikes the imagination or awakens the passions.

The third contains a contest between two shepherds, begun with a quarrel of which some particulars might well be spared, carried on with sprightliness and elegance, and terminated at last in a reconciliation: but, surely, whether the invectives with which they attack each other be true or false, they are too much degraded from the dignity of pastoral innocence; and instead of rejoicing that they are both victorious, I should not have grieved could they have been both defeated.

The poem to *Pollio* is, indeed, of another kind: it is filled with images at once splendid and pleasing, and is elevated with grandeur of language worthy of the first of *Roman* poets; but I am not able to reconcile myself to the disproportion, between the performance and the occasion that produced it: that the golden age should return because *Pollio* had a son, appears so wild a fiction, that I am ready to suspect the poet of having written, for some other purpose, what he took this opportunity of producing to the publick.

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The fifth contains a celebration of *Daphnis*, which has stood to all succeeding ages as the model of pastoral elegies. To deny praise to a performance which so many thousands have laboured to imitate, would be to judge with too little deference for the opinion of mankind: yet whoever shall read it with impartiality, will find that most of the images are of the mythological kind, and, therefore, easily invented; and that there are few sentiments of rational praise or natural lamentation.

In the *Silenus* he again rises to the dignity of philosophick sentiments and heroic poetry. The address to *Varus* is eminently beautiful: but since the compliment paid to *Gallus* fixes the transaction to his own time, the fiction of *Silenus* seems injudicious; nor has any sufficient reason yet been found, to justify his choice of those fables that make the subject of the song.

The seventh exhibits another contest of the tuneful shepherds; and, surely, it is not without some reproach to his inventive power, that of ten pastorals *Virgil* has written two upon the same plan. One of the shepherds now gains an acknowledged victory, but without any apparent superiority; and the reader, when he sees the prize adjudged, is not able to discover how it was deserved.

Of the eighth pastoral, so little is properly the work of *Virgil*, that he has no claim to other praise or blame than that of a translator.

Of the ninth, it is scarce possible to discover the design or tendency: it is said, I know not upon what authority, to have been composed from frag-

ments of other poems; and except a few lines in which the author touches upon his own misfortunes, there is nothing that seems appropriated to any time or place, or of which any other use can be discovered than to fill up the poem,

The first and the tenth pastorals, whatever be determined of the rest, are sufficient to place their author above the reach of rivalry. The complaint of *Gallus* disappointed in his love, is full of such sentiments as disappointed love naturally produces; his wishes are wild, his resentment is tender, and his purposes are inconstant. In the genuine language of despair, he soothes himself a-while with the pity that shall be paid him after his death;

—— *Tamen cantabitis, Arcades, inquit,  
Montibus hæc vestris: soli cantare periti  
Arcades. O mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,  
Vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores!*

—— Yet, O Arcadian swains,  
Ye best artificers of soothing strains!  
Tune your soft reeds, and teach your rocks my woes,  
So shall my shade in sweeter rest repose.  
O that your birth and business had been mine;  
To feed the flock, and prune the spreading vine!

WARTON.

Discontented with his present condition, and desirous to be any thing but what he is, he wishes himself one of the shepherds. He then catches the idea of rural tranquillity; but soon discovers how much happier he should be in these happy regions, with *Lycoris* at his side;

*Hic*

*Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori :  
 Hic nemus ; hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.  
 Nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis ;  
 Tela inter media, atque adversos detinet hostes.  
 Tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere) tantum  
 Alpinas, ah dura, nives, & frigore Rheni  
 Me sine sola vides. Ah te ne frigora lædant !  
 Ah tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas !*

Here cooling fountains roll thro' flow'ry meads,  
 Here woods, Lycoris, lift their verdant heads ;  
 Here could I wear my careless life away,  
 And in thy arms insensibly decay.

Instead of that, me frantick love detains  
 'Mid foes, and dreadful darts, and bloody plains :  
 While you—and can my soul the tale believe,  
 Far from your country, lonely wand'ring leave  
 Me, me your lover, barbarous fugitive !  
 Seek the rough Alps where snows eternal shine,  
 And joyless borders of the frozen Rhine.  
 Ah ! may no cold e'er blast my dearest maid,  
 Nor pointed ice thy tender feet invade !

WARTON.

He then turns his thoughts on every side, in quest of something that may solace or amuse him : he proposes happiness to himself, first in one scene and then in another ; and at last finds that nothing will satisfy :

*Jam neque Hamadryades rursus, nec carmina nobis  
 Ipsa placent : ipsæ rursus concedite sylvæ.  
 Non illum nostri possunt mutare labores ;  
 Nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus,  
 Scithoniaeque nives hyemis subeamus aquosæ :  
 Nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,  
 Æthiopum versemus oves sub sidere Cancræ,  
 Omnia vincit amor ; et nos cedamus amori.*

But



But now again no more the woodland maids,  
 Nor pastoral songs delight—Farewell, ye shades—  
 No toils of ours the cruel god can change,  
 Tho' lost in frozen deserts we should range;  
 Tho' we should drink where chilling Hebrus flows,  
 Endure bleak winter's blasts, and Thracian snows;  
 Or on hot India's plains our flocks should feed,  
 Where the parch'd elm declines his sickening head;  
 Beneath fierce-glowing Cancer's fiery beams,  
 Far from cool breezes and refreshing streams,  
 Love over all maintains resistless sway,  
 And let us love's all-conquering power obey,

WARTON.

But notwithstanding the excellence of the tenth pastoral, I cannot forbear to give the preference to the first, which is equally natural and more diversified. The complaint of the shepherd, who saw his old companion at ease in the shade, while himself was driving his little flock he knew not whither, is such as, with variation of circumstances, misery always utters at the sight of prosperity:

*Nos patriæ fines, & dulcia linquimus arva;  
 Nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra,  
 Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida sylvas.*

We leave our country's bounds, our much lov'd plains;  
 We from our country fly, unhappy swains!  
 You, Tit'rus, in the groves at leisure laid,  
 Teach Amaryllis' name to every shade. WARTON.

His account of the difficulties of his journey, gives a very tender image of pastoral distress:

— *En ipse capellas*

*Protenus æger ago : hanc etiam vix, Tityre, duco :  
Hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellos,  
Spem gregis, ah ! silice in nuda connixa reliquit.*

And lo ! sad partner of the general care,  
Weary and faint I drive my goats afar !  
While scarcely this my leading hand sustains,  
Tir'd with the way, and recent from her pains ;  
For 'mid yon tangled hazels as we pass,  
On the bare flints her hapless twin she cast,  
The hopes and promise of my ruin'd fold !

WARTON,

The description of *Virgil's* happiness in his little farm, combines almost all the images of rural pleasure ; and he, therefore, that can read it with indifference, has no sense of pastoral poetry ;

*Fortunate senex, ergo tua rura manebunt,  
Et tibi magna satis ; quamvis lapis omnia nudus,  
Limosoque palus obducatur pascua junco,  
Non insueta gravis tentabunt pabula foetas,  
Nec mala vicini pecoris contagia lædent.  
Fortunate senex, his inter flumina nota,  
Et fontes sacros, frigus captabis opacum.  
Hinc tibi, quæ semper vicino ab limite sepes,  
Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicis,  
Sæpe levi somnum suadebit inire susurra.  
Hinc altâ sub rupe canet frondator ad auras ;  
Nec tamen interea rauca, tua cura, palumbes,  
Nec gemere aëria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.*

Happy old man ! then still thy farms restor'd,  
Enough for thee, shall bless thy frugal board.  
What tho' rough stones the naked soil o'erspread,  
Or marshy bulrush rear its wat'ry head,

No foreign food thy teeming ewes shall fear,  
No touch contagious spread its influence here.  
Happy old man! here 'mid th' accustom'd streams  
And sacred springs, you'll shun the scorching beams;  
While from yon willow-fence, thy pasture's bound,  
The bees that suck their flow'ry stores around,  
Shall sweetly mingle, with the whispering boughs,  
Their lulling murmurs, and invite repose:  
While from steep rocks the pruner's song is heard;  
Nor the soft-cooing dove, thy fav'rite bird,  
Mean while shall cease to breathe her melting strain,  
Nor turtles from th' aerial elm to plain. WARTON.

It may be observed, that these two poems were produced by events that really happened; and may, therefore, be of use to prove, that we can always feel more than we can imagine, and that the most artful fiction must give way to truth.

I am, S I R,

Your humble servant,

DUBIUS.

NUMB. 95. TUESDAY, *October 2, 1753.*— *Dulcique animos novitate tenebo.* OVID.

And with sweet novelty your soul detain.

**I**T is often charged upon writers, that with all their pretensions to genius and discoveries, they do little more than copy one another; and that compositions obtruded upon the world with the pomp of novelty, contain only tedious repetitions of common sentiments, or at best exhibit a transposition of known images, and give a new appearance to truth only by some slight difference of dress and decoration.

The allegation of resemblance between authors, is indisputably true; but the charge of plagiarism, which is raised upon it, is not to be allowed with equal readiness. A coincidence of sentiment may easily happen without any communication, since there are many occasions in which all reasonable men will nearly think alike. Writers of all ages have had the same sentiments, because they have in all ages had the same objects of speculation; the interests and passions, the virtues and vices of mankind, have been diversified in different times, only by unessential and casual varieties; and we must, therefore, expect in the works of all those who attempt to describe them, such a likeness as we find in  
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the pictures of the same person drawn in different periods of his life.

It is necessary, therefore, that before an author be charged with plagiarism, one of the most reproachful, though, perhaps, not the most atrocious of literary crimes, the subject on which he treats should be carefully considered. We do not wonder, that historians, relating the same facts, agree in their narration; or that authors, delivering the elements of science, advance the same theorems, and lay down the same definitions: yet it is not wholly without use to mankind, that books are multiplied, and that different authors lay out their labours on the same subject; for there will always be some reason why one should on particular occasions, or to particular persons, be preferable to another; some will be clear where others are obscure, some will please by their style and others by their method, some by their embellishments and others by their simplicity, some by closeness and others by diffusion.

The same indulgence is to be shewn to the writers of morality: right and wrong are immutable; and those, therefore, who teach us to distinguish them, if they all teach us right, must agree with one another. The relations of social life, and the duties resulting from them, must be the same at all times and in all nations: some petty differences may be, indeed, produced, by forms of government or arbitrary customs; but the general doctrine can receive no alteration.

Yet it is not to be desired, that morality should be considered as interdicted to all future writers:  
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men will always be tempted to deviate from their duty, and will, therefore, always want a monitor to recall them; and a new book often seizes the attention of the publick, without any other claim than that it is new. There is likewise in composition, as in other things, a perpetual vicissitude of fashion; and truth is recommended at one time to regard, by appearances which at another would expose it to neglect; the author, therefore, who has judgment to discern the taste of his contemporaries, and skill to gratify it, will have always an opportunity to deserve well of mankind, by conveying instruction to them in a grateful vehicle.

There are likewise many modes of composition, by which a moralist may deserve the name of an original writer: he may familiarise his system by dialogues after the manner of the ancients, or subtilize it into a series of syllogistic arguments: he may enforce his doctrine by seriousness and solemnity, or enliven it by sprightliness and gaiety; he may deliver his sentiments in naked precepts, or illustrate them by historical examples; he may detain the studious by the artful concatenation of a continued discourse, or relieve the busy by short strictures, and unconnected essays.

To excel in any of these forms of writing, will require a particular cultivation of the genius; whoever can attain to excellence, will be certain to engage a set of readers, whom no other method would have equally allured; and he that communicates truth with success, must be numbered among the first benefactors to mankind.

The same observation may be extended likewise to the passions: their influence is uniform, and their effects nearly the same in every human breast: a man loves and hates, desires and avoids, exactly like his neighbour; resentment and ambition, avarice and indolence, discover themselves by the same symptoms, in minds distant a thousand years from one another.

Nothing, therefore, can be more unjust, than to charge an author with plagiarism, merely because he assigns to every cause its natural effect; and makes his personages act, as others in like circumstances have always done. There are conceptions in which all men will agree, though each derives them from his own observation: whoever has been in love, will represent a lover impatient of every idea that interrupts his meditations on his mistress, retiring to shades and solitude, that he may muse without disturbance on his approaching happiness, or associating himself with some friend that flatters his passion, and talking away the hours of absence upon his darling subject. Whoever has been so unhappy as to have felt the miseries of long-continued hatred, will, without any assistance from ancient volumes, be able to relate how the passions are kept in perpetual agitation, by the recollection of injury and meditations of revenge; how the blood boils at the name of the enemy, and life is worn away in contrivances of mischief.

Every other passion is alike simple and limited, if it be considered only with regard to the breast which it inhabits; the anatomy of the mind, as that of

the body, must perpetually exhibit the same appearances; and though by the continued industry of successive inquirers, new movements will be from time to time discovered, they can affect only the minuter parts, and are commonly of more curiosity than importance.

It will now be natural to inquire, by what arts are the writers of the present and future ages to attract the notice and favour of mankind. They are to observe the alterations which time is always making in the modes of life, that they may gratify every generation with a picture of themselves. Thus love is uniform, but courtship is perpetually varying: the different arts of gallantry, which beauty has inspired, would of themselves be sufficient to fill a volume; sometimes balls and serenades, sometimes tournaments and adventures, have been employed to melt the hearts of ladies, who in another century have been sensible of scarce any other merit than that of riches, and listened only to jointures and pin-money. Thus the ambitious man has at all times been eager of wealth and power; but these hopes have been gratified in some countries by supplicating the people, and in others by flattering the prince: honour in some states has been only the reward of military achievements, in others it has been gained by noisy turbulence and popular clamours. Avarice has worn a different form, as she actuated the usurer of *Rome*, and the stock-jobber of *England*; and idleness itself, how little soever inclined to the trouble of invention, has been forced from time to time to change its amuse-

ments, and contrive different methods of wearing out the day.

Here then is the fund, from which those who study mankind may fill their compositions with an inexhaustible variety of images and allusions: and he must be confessed to look with little attention upon scenes thus perpetually changing, who cannot catch some of the figures before they are made vulgar by reiterated descriptions.

It has been discovered by Sir *Isaac Newton*, that the distinct and primogenial colours are only seven; but every eye can witness, that from various mixtures, in various proportions, infinite diversifications of tints may be produced. In like manner, the passions of the mind, which put the world in motion, and produce all the bustle and eagerness of the busy crowds that swarm upon the earth; the passions, from whence arise all the pleasures and pains that we see and hear of, if we analyse the mind of man, are very few; but those few agitated and combined, as external causes shall happen to operate, and modified by prevailing opinions and accidental caprices, make such frequent alterations on the surface of life, that the show, while we are busied in delineating it, vanishes from the view, and a new set of objects succeed, doomed to the same shortness of duration with the former: thus curiosity may always find employment, and the busy part of mankind will furnish the contemplative with the materials of speculation to the end of time.

The complaint, therefore, that all topicks are preoccupied, is nothing more than the murmur of  
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ignorance

Ignorance or idleness, by which some discourage others and some themselves: the mutability of mankind will always furnish writers with new images, and the luxuriance of fancy may always embellish them with new decorations.

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NUMB. 99. TUESDAY, *October 16, 1753.*

— *Magnis tamen excidit ausis.*

OVIN.

But in the glorious enterprize he dy'd.

ADDISON.

**I**T has always been the practice of mankind, to judge of actions by the event. The same attempts, conducted in the same manner, but terminated by different success, produce different judgments: they who attain their wishes, never want celebrators of their wisdom and their virtue; and they that miscarry, are quickly discovered to have been defective not only in mental but in moral qualities. The world will never be long without some good reason to hate the unhappy: their real faults are immediately detected; and if those are not sufficient to sink them into infamy, an additional weight of calumny will be superadded: he that fails in his endeavours after wealth or power, will not long retain either honesty or courage.

This species of injustice has so long prevailed in universal practice, that it seems likewise to have in-



fected speculation: so few minds are able to separate the ideas of greatness and prosperity, that even Sir *William Temple* has determined, “that he who can “deserve the name of a hero, must not only be virtuous but fortunate.”

By this unreasonable distribution of praise and blame, none have suffered oftner than projectors, whose rapidity of imagination and vastness of design raise such envy in their fellow-mortals, that every eye watches for their fall, and every heart exults at their distresses: yet even a projector may gain favour by success; and the tongue that was prepared to hiss, then endeavours to excel others in loudness of applause.

When *Coriolanus*, in *Shakespeare*, deserted to *Aufidius*, the *Volscian* servants at first insulted him, even while he stood under the protection of the household gods; but when they saw that the project took effect, and the stranger was seated at the head of the table, one of them very judiciously observes, “that he always thought there was more in him “than he could think.”

*Machiavel* has justly animadverted on the different notice taken by all succeeding times, of the two great projectors *Catiline* and *Cæsar*. Both formed the same project, and intended to raise themselves to power, by subverting the commonwealth: they pursued their design, perhaps, with equal abilities, and with equal virtue; but *Catiline* perished in the field, and *Cæsar* returned from *Pharsalia* with unlimited authority: and from that time, every monarch of the earth has thought himself honoured by a comparison with *Cæsar*; and *Catiline*

*line* has been never mentioned, but that his name might be applied to traitors and incendiaries.

In an age more remote, *Xerxes* projected the conquest of *Greece*, and brought down the power of *Asia* against it: but after the world had been filled with expectation and terror, his army was beaten, his fleet was destroyed, and *Xerxes* has been never mentioned without contempt.

A few years afterwards, *Greece* likewise had her turn of giving birth to a projector; who invading *Asia* with a small army, went forward in search of adventures, and by his escape from one danger, gained only more rashness to rush into another: he stormed city after city, over-ran kingdom after kingdom, fought battles only for barren victory, and invaded nations only that he might make his way through them to new invasions: but having been fortunate in the execution of his projects, he died with the name of *Alexander the Great*.

These are, indeed, events of ancient times; but human nature is always the same, and every age will afford us instances of publick censures influenced by events. The great business of the middle centuries, was the holy war; which undoubtedly was a noble project, and was for a long time prosecuted with a spirit equal to that with which it had been contrived: but the ardour of the *European* heroes only hurried them to destruction; for a long time they could not gain the territories for which they fought, and, when at last gained, they could not keep them: their expeditions, therefore, have been the scoff of idleness and ignorance, their understanding and their virtue have been equally vili-

fied, their conduct has been ridiculed, and their cause has been defamed.

When *Columbus* had engaged king *Ferdinand* in the discovery of the other hemisphere, the sailors, with whom he embarked in the expedition, had so little confidence in their commander, that after having been long at sea looking for coasts, which they expected never to find, they raised a general mutiny, and demanded to return. He found means to sooth them into a permission to continue the same course three days longer, and on the evening of the third day descried land. Had the impatience of his crew denied him a few hours of the time requested, what had been his fate but to have come back with the infamy of a vain projector, who had betrayed the king's credulity to useless expences, and risked his life in seeking countries that had no existence? how would those that had rejected his proposals, have triumphed in their acuteness? and when would his name have been mentioned, but with the makers of potable gold and malleable glass?

The last royal projectors with whom the world has been troubled, were *Charles* of *Sweden* and the *Czar* of *Muscovy*. *Charles*, if any judgment may be formed of his designs by his measures and his enquiries, had purposed first to dethrone the *Czar*, then to lead his army through pathless desarts into *China*, thence to make his way by the sword through the whole circuit of *Asia*, and by the conquest of *Turkey* to unite *Sweden* with his new dominions: but this mighty project was crushed at *Pultowa*; and *Charles* has since been considered as a madman by those

those powers, who sent their ambassadors to solicit his friendship, and their generals “to learn under “him the art of war.”

The *Czar* found employment sufficient in his own dominions, and amused himself in digging canals, and building cities; murdering his subjects with insufferable fatigues, and transplanting nations from one corner of his dominions to another, without regretting the thousands that perished on the way: but he attained his end, he made his people formidable, and is numbered by fame among the demi-gods.

I am far from intending to vindicate the sanguinary projects of heroes and conquerors, and would wish rather to diminish the reputation of their success, than the infamy of their miscarriages: for I cannot conceive, why he that has burnt cities, wasted nations, and filled the world with horror and desolation, should be more kindly regarded by mankind, than he that died in the rudiments of wickedness; why he that accomplished mischief should be glorious, and he that only endeavoured it should be criminal. I would wish *Cæsar* and *Catiline*, *Xerxes* and *Alexander*, *Charles* and *Peter*, huddled together in obscurity or detestation.

But there is another species of projectors, to whom I would willingly conciliate mankind; whose ends are generally laudable, and whose labours are innocent; who are searching out new powers of nature, or contriving new works of art; but who are yet persecuted with incessant obloquy, and whom the universal contempt with which they are treated, often debars from that success which their

industry would obtain, if it were permitted to act without opposition.

They who find themselves inclined to censure new undertakings, only because they are new, should consider, that the folly of projection is very seldom the folly of a fool; it is commonly the ebullition of a capacious mind, crowded with variety of knowledge, and heated with intenseness of thought; it proceeds often from the consciousness of uncommon powers, from the confidence of those, who having already done much, are easily persuaded that they can do more. When *Rowley* had completed the orrery, he attempted the perpetual motion; when *Boyle* had exhausted the secrets of vulgar chemistry, he turned his thoughts to the work of transmutation.

A projector generally unites those qualities which have the fairest claim to veneration, extent of knowledge, and greatness of design: it was said of *Catiline*, “immoderata, incredibilia, nimis alta semper cupiebat.” Projectors of all kinds agree in their intellects, though they differ in their morals; they all fail by attempting things beyond their power, by despising vulgar attainments, and aspiring to performances, to which, perhaps, nature has not proportioned the force of man: when they fail, therefore, they fail not by idleness or timidity, but by rash adventure and fruitless diligence.

That the attempts of such men will often miscarry, we may reasonably expect; yet from such men, and such only, are we to hope for the cultivation of those parts of nature which lie yet waste, and the invention of those arts which are yet  
wanting



wanting to the felicity of life. If they are, therefore, universally discouraged, art and discovery can make no advances. Whatever is attempted without previous certainty of success, may be considered as a project, and amongst narrow minds may, therefore, expose its author to censure and contempt; and if the liberty of laughing be once indulged, every man will laugh at what he does not understand, every project will be considered as madness, and every great or new design will be censured as a project. Men, unaccustomed to reason and researches, think every enterprize impracticable, which is extended beyond common effects, or comprises many intermediate operations. Many that presume to laugh at projectors, would consider a flight through the air in a winged chariot, and the movement of a mighty engine by the steam of water, as equally the dreams of mechanick lunacy; and would hear, with equal negligence, of the union of the *Tbames* and *Severn* by a canal, and the scheme of *Albuquerque*, the viceroy of the *Indies*, who in the rage of hostility had contrived to make *Egypt* a barren desert, by turning the *Nile* into the *Red Sea*.

Those who have attempted much, have seldom failed to perform more than those who never deviate from the common roads of action: many valuable preparations of chemistry are supposed to have risen from unsuccessful enquiries after the grand elixir: it is, therefore, just to encourage those who endeavour to enlarge the power of art, since they often succeed beyond expectation; and when they fail, may sometimes benefit the world even by their miscarriages.

NUMB. 102. SATURDAY, *October 27, 1753.*

— *Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te  
Conatus non pœniteat votique peracti?*

JUV.

What in the conduct of our life appears  
So well design'd, so luckily begun,  
But, when we have our wish, we wish undone, DRYDEN,

*To the ADVENTURER.*

S I R,

I HAVE been for many years a trader in *London*. My beginning was narrow, and my stock small; I was, therefore, a long time brow-beaten and despised by those, who having more money thought they had more merit than myself. I did not, however, suffer my resentment to instigate me to any mean arts of supplantation, nor my eagerness of riches to betray me to any indirect methods of gain; I pursued my business with incessant assiduity, supported by the hope of being one day richer than those who contemned me; and had, upon every annual review of my books, the satisfaction of finding my fortune increased beyond my expectation.

In a few years my industry and probity were fully recompens'd, my wealth was really great, and my reputation for wealth still greater. I had large warehouses crowded with goods, and considerable sums in the publick funds; I was caressed upon the  
*Exchange*

*Exchange* by the most eminent merchants; became the oracle of the common council; was solicited to engage in all commercial undertakings; was flattered with the hopes of becoming in a short time one of the directors of a wealthy company; and, to complete my mercantile honours, enjoyed the expensive happiness of being sheriff.

Riches, you know, easily produce riches: when I had arrived to this degree of wealth, I had no longer any obstruction or opposition to fear; new acquisitions were hourly brought within my reach, and I continued for some years longer to heap thousands upon thousands.

At last I resolved to complete the circle of a citizen's prosperity by the purchase of an estate in the country, and to close my life in retirement. From the hour that this design entered my imagination, I found the fatigues of my employment every day more oppressive, and persuaded myself that I was no longer equal to perpetual attention, and that my health would soon be destroyed by the torment and distraction of extensive business. I could imagine to myself no happiness, but in vacant jollity, and uninterrupted leisure; nor entertain my friends with any other topic, than the vexation and uncertainty of trade, and the happiness of rural privacy.

But notwithstanding these declarations, I could not at once reconcile myself to the thoughts of ceasing to get money; and though I was every day enquiring for a purchase, I found some reason for rejecting all that were offered me; and, indeed, had accumulated so many beauties and conveniences in my idea of the spot, where I was finally to be  
happy,

happy, that, perhaps, the world might have been travelled over, without discovery of a place which would not have been defective in some particular.

Thus I went on still talking of retirement, and still refusing to retire; my friends began to laugh at my delays, and I grew ashamed to trifle longer with my own inclinations; an estate was at length purchased, I transferred my stock to a prudent young man who had married my daughter, went down into the country, and commenced lord of a spacious manor.

Here for some time I found happiness equal to my expectation. I reformed the old house according to the advice of the best architects, I threw down the walls of the garden, and inclosed it with pallisades, planted long avenues of trees, filled a greenhouse with exotick plants, dug a new canal, and threw the earth into the old moat.

The fame of these expensive improvements brought in all the country to see the shew. I entertained my visitors with great liberality, led them round my gardens, shewed them my apartments, laid before them plans for new decorations, and was gratified by the wonder of some and the envy of others.

I was envied; but how little can one man judge of the condition of another? The time was now coming, in which affluence and splendor could no longer make me pleased with myself. I had built till the imagination of the architect was exhausted; I had added one convenience to another, till I knew not what more to wish or to design; I had laid out my gardens, planted my park, and completed my  
water-

water-works; and what now remained to be done? what, but to look up to turrets, of which when they were once raised I had no farther use, to range over apartments where time was tarnishing the furniture, to stand by the cascade of which I scarcely now perceived the sound, and to watch the growth of woods that must give their shade to a distant generation.

In this gloomy inactivity, is every day begun and ended: the happiness that I have been so long procuring is now at an end, because it has been procured; I wander from room to room till I am weary of myself; I ride out to a neighbouring hill in the centre of my estate, from whence all my lands lie in prospect round me; I see nothing that I have not seen before, and return home disappointed, though I knew that I had nothing to expect.

In my happy days of business I had been accustomed to rise early in the morning; and remember the time when I grieved that the night came so soon upon me, and obliged me for a few hours to shut out affluence and prosperity. I now seldom see the rising sun, but to "tell him," with the fallen angel, "how I hate his beams." I awake from sleep as to languor or imprisonment, and have no employment for the first hour but to consider by what art I shall rid myself of the second. I protract the breakfast as long as I can, because when it is ended I have no call for my attention, till I can with some degree of decency grow impatient for my dinner. If I could dine all my life, I should be happy; I eat not because I am hungry, but because I am idle: but, alas! the time quickly comes when I can eat no longer;

5

and



and so ill does my constitution second my inclination, that I cannot bear strong liquors: seven hours must then be endured before I shall sup; but supper comes at last, the more welcome as it is in a short time succeeded by sleep.

Such, Mr. *Adventurer*, is the happiness, the hope of which seduced me from the duties and pleasures of a mercantile life. I shall be told by those who read my narrative, that there are many means of innocent amusement, and many schemes of useful employment, which I do not appear ever to have known; and that nature and art have provided pleasures, by which, without the drudgery of settled business, the active may be engaged, the solitary footed, and the social entertained.

These arts, Sir, I have tried. When first I took possession of my estate, in conformity to the taste of my neighbours, I bought guns and nets, filled my kennel with dogs and my stable with horses; but a little experience shewed me, that these instruments of rural felicity would afford me few gratifications. I never shot but to miss the mark, and, to confess the truth, was afraid of the fire of my own gun. I could discover no musick in the cry of the dogs, nor could divest myself of pity for the animal whose peaceful and inoffensive life was sacrificed to our sport. I was not, indeed, always at leisure to reflect upon her danger; for my horse, who had been bred to the chace, did not always regard my choice either of speed or way, but leaped hedges and ditches at his own discretion, and hurried me along with the dogs, to the great diversion of my brother sportsmen. His eagerness of pursuit once incited  
him

him to swim a river; and I had leisure to resolve in the water, that I would never hazard my life again for the destruction of a hare.

I then ordered books to be procured, and by the direction of the vicar had in a few weeks a closet elegantly furnished. You will, perhaps, be surprised when I shall tell you, that when once I had ranged them according to their sizes, and piled them up in regular gradations, I had received all the pleasure which they could give me. I am not able to excite in myself any curiosity after events which have been long passed, and in which I can, therefore, have no interest: I am utterly unconcerned to know whether *Tully* or *Demosthenes* excelled in oratory, whether *Hannibal* lost *Italy* by his own negligence or the corruption of his countrymen. I have no skill in controversial learning, nor can conceive why so many volumes should have been written upon questions, which I have lived so long and so happily without understanding. I once resolved to go through the volumes relating to the office of justice of the peace, but found them so crabbed and intricate, that in less than a month I desisted in despair, and resolved to supply my deficiencies by paying a competent salary to a skilful clerk.

I am naturally inclined to hospitality, and for some time kept up a constant intercourse of visits with the neighbouring gentlemen: but though they are easily brought about me by better wine than they can find at any other house, I am not much relieved by their conversation; they have no skill in commerce or the stocks, and I have no knowledge  
of

of the history of families or the factions of the country; so that when the first civilities are over, they usually talk to one another, and I am left alone in the midst of the company. Though I cannot drink myself, I am obliged to encourage the circulation of the glass; their mirth grows more turbulent and obstreperous; and before their merriment is at an end, I am sick with disgust, and, perhaps, reproached with my sobriety, or by some sly insinuations insulted as a cit.

Such, Mr. *Adventurer*, is the life to which I am condemned by a foolish endeavour to be happy by imitation; such is the happiness to which I pleased myself with approaching, and which I considered as the chief end of my cares and my labours. I toiled year after year with cheerfulness, in expectation of the happy hour in which I might be idle; the privilege of idleness is attained, but has not brought with it the blessing of tranquillity.

I am,

Yours, &c.

MERCATOR.

NUMB. 107. TUESDAY, *November* 13, 1753.

— *Sub judice lis est.*

HOR.

And of their vain disputings find no end.

FRANCIS.

**I**T has been sometimes asked by those, who find the appearance of wisdom more easily attained by questions than solutions, how it comes to pass, that the world is divided by such difference of opinion; and why men, equally reasonable, and equally lovers of truth, do not always think in the same manner?

With regard to simple propositions, where the terms are understood, and the whole subject is comprehended at once, there is such an uniformity of sentiment among all human beings, that, for many ages, a very numerous set of notions were supposed to be innate, or necessarily co-existent with the faculty of reason: it being imagined, that universal agreement could proceed only from the invariable dictates of the universal parent.

In questions diffuse and compounded, this similarity of determination is no longer to be expected. At our first sally into the intellectual world, we all march together along one straight and open road; but as we proceed further, and wider prospects open to our view, every eye fixes upon a different scene; we divide into various paths, and, as we move forward, are still at a greater distance from each other.

As a question becomes more complicated and involved, and extends to a greater number of relations, disagreement of opinion will always be multiplied; not because we are irrational, but because we are finite beings, furnished with different kinds of knowledge, exerting different degrees of attention, one discovering consequences which escape another, none taking in the whole concatenation of causes and effects, and most comprehending but a very small part, each comparing what he observes with a different criterion, and each referring it to a different purpose.

Where, then, is the wonder, that they who see only a small part, should judge erroneously of the whole? or that they, who see different and dissimilar parts, should judge differently from each other?

Whatever has various respects, must have various appearances of good and evil, beauty or deformity; thus, the gardener tears up as a weed, the plant which the physician gathers as a medicine; and “ a general,” says Sir *Kenelm Digby*, “ will look with pleasure over a plain, as a fit place on which the fate of empires might be decided in battle, which the farmer will despise as bleak and barren, neither fruitful of pasturage, nor fit for tillage.”

Two men examining the same question proceed commonly like the physician and gardener in selecting herbs, or the farmer and hero looking on the plain; they bring minds impressed with different notions, and direct their inquiries to different ends; they form, therefore, contrary conclusions, and each wonders at the other's absurdity.

We



We have less reason to be surpris'd or offended when we find others differ from us in opinion, because we very often differ from ourselves. How often we alter our minds; we do not always remark; because the change is sometimes made imperceptibly and gradually, and the last conviction effaces all memory of the former: yet every man, accustomed from time to time to take a survey of his own notions, will by a slight retrospection be able to discover, that his mind has suffered many revolutions; that the same things have in the several parts of his life been condemned and approved, pursued and shunned: and that on many occasions, even when his practice has been steady, his mind has been wavering, and he has persisted in a scheme of action, rather because he feared the censure of inconstancy, than because he was always pleas'd with his own choice.

Of the different faces shewn by the same objects as they are viewed on opposite sides, and of the different inclinations which they must constantly raise in him that contemplates them, a more striking example cannot easily be found than two *Greek* epigrammatists will afford us in their accounts of human life, which I shall lay before the reader in *English* prose.

*Posidippus*, a comick poet, utters this complaint:  
 " Through which of the paths of life is it eligible  
 " to pass? In publick assemblies are debates and  
 " troublesome affairs: domestic privacies are  
 " haunted with anxieties; in the country is labour;  
 " on the sea is terror: in a foreign land, he that has  
 " money must live in fear, he that wants it must  
 " pine in distress; are you married? you are  
 H 2 " troubled

“troubled with suspicions; are you single? you  
 “languish in solitude; children occasion toil, and  
 “a childless life is a state of destitution; the time  
 “of youth is a time of folly, and gray hairs are  
 “loaded with infirmity. This choice only, there-  
 “fore, can be made, either never to receive being,  
 “or immediately to lose it.”

Such and so gloomy is the prospect, which *Posi-*  
*dippus* has laid before us. But we are not to ac-  
 quiesce too hastily in his determination against the  
 value of existence: for *Metrodorus*, a philosopher of  
*Athens*, has shewn, that life has pleasures as well as  
 pains; and having exhibited the present state of man  
 in brighter colours, draws, with equal appearance of  
 reason, a contrary conclusion.

“You may pass well through any of the paths of  
 “life. In publick assemblies are honours and tran-  
 “actions of wisdom; in domestick privacy, is still-  
 “ness and quiet; in the country are the beauties of  
 “nature; on the sea is the hope of gain; in a  
 “foreign land, he that is rich is honoured, he that  
 “is poor may keep his poverty secret; are you mar-  
 “ried? you have a cheerful house; are you single?  
 “you are unincumbered; children are objects of  
 “affection, to be without children is to be without  
 “care; the time of youth is the time of vigour, and  
 “gray hairs are made venerable by piety. It will,  
 “therefore, never be a wise man’s choice, either not  
 “to obtain existence, or to lose it; for every state  
 “of life has its felicity.”

In these epigrams are included most of the  
 questions which have engaged the speculations of  
 the enquirers after happiness; and though they will  
 not

not much assist our determinations, they may, perhaps, equally promote our quiet, by shewing that no absolute determination ever can be formed.

Whether a publick station, or private life be desirable, has always been debated. We see here both the allurements and discouragements of civil employments: on one side there is trouble, on the other honour; the management of affairs is vexatious and difficult, but it is the only duty in which wisdom can be conspicuously displayed: it must then still be left to every man to choose either ease or glory; nor can any general precept be given, since no man can be happy by the prescription of another.

Thus, what is said of children by *Posidippus*, "that they are occasions of fatigue," and by *Metrodorus*, "that they are objects of affection," is equally certain; but whether they will give most pain or pleasure, must depend on their future conduct and dispositions, on many causes over which the parent can have little influence: there is, therefore, room for all the caprices of imagination, and desire must be proportioned to the hope or fear that shall happen to predominate.

Such is the uncertainty in which we are always likely to remain with regard to questions, wherein we have most interest, and which every day affords us fresh opportunity to examine: we may examine, indeed, but we never can decide, because our faculties are unequal to the subject: we see a little, and form an opinion; we see more, and change it.

This inconstancy and unsteadiness, to which we must so often find ourselves liable, ought certainly to teach us moderation and forbearance towards

those who cannot accommodate themselves to our sentiments: if they are deceived, we have no right to attribute their mistake to obstinacy or negligence, because we likewise have been mistaken; we may, perhaps, again change our own opinion; and what excuse shall we be able to find for aversion and malignity conceived against him, whom we shall then find to have committed no fault, and who offended us only by refusing to follow us into error?

It may likewise contribute to soften that resentment which pride naturally raises against opposition, if we consider, that he who differs from us, does not always contradict us; he has one view of an object, and we have another; each describes what he sees with equal fidelity, and each regulates his steps by his own eyes: one man, with *Posidippus*, looks on celibacy as a state of gloomy solitude, without a partner in joy or a comforter in sorrow; the other considers it, with *Metrodorus*, as a state free from incumbrances, in which a man is at liberty to choose his own gratifications, to remove from place to place in quest of pleasure, and to think of nothing but merriment and diversion: full of these notions one hastens to choose a wife, and the other laughs at his rashness, or pities his ignorance; yet it is possible that each is right, but that each is right only for himself.

Life is not the object of science: we see a little, very little; and what is beyond we only can conjecture. If we enquire of those who have gone before us, we receive small satisfaction; some have travelled life without observation, and some willingly mislead us. The only thought, therefore, on which we can

repose with comfort, is that which presents to us the care of Providence, whose eye takes in the whole of things, and under whose direction all involuntary errors will terminate in happiness.

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NUMB. 108. SATURDAY, *November 17, 1753.*

*Nobis, cum simul occidit brevis lux,  
Nox est perpetuo una dormienda.*

CATULLUS.

When once the short-liv'd mortal dies,  
A night eternal seals his eyes.

ADDISON,

**I**T may have been observed by every reader, that there are certain topicks which never are exhausted. Of some images and sentiments the mind of man may be said to be enamoured; it meets them, however often they occur, with the same ardour which a lover feels at the sight of his mistress, and parts from them with the same regret when they can no longer be enjoyed.

Of this kind are many descriptions which the poets have transcribed from each other, and their successors will probably copy to the end of time; which will continue to engage, or, as the *French* term it, to flatter the imagination, as long as human nature shall remain the same.

When a poet mentions the spring, we know that the zephyrs are about to whisper, that the groves are to recover their verdure, the linnets to warble forth their notes of love, and the flocks and herds



to frisk over vales painted with flowers: yet, who is there so insensible of the beauties of nature, so little delighted with the renovation of the world, as not to feel his heart bound at the mention of the spring?

When night overshadows a romantick scene, all is stillness, silence, and quiet; the poets of the grove cease their melody, the moon towers over the world in gentle majesty, men forget their labours and their cares, and every passion and pursuit is for a while suspended. All this we know already, yet we hear it repeated without weariness; because such is generally the life of man, that he is pleased to think on the time when he shall pause from a sense of his condition.

When a poetical grove invites us to its covert, we know that we shall find what we have already seen, a limpid brook murmuring over pebbles, a bank diversified with flowers, a green arch that excludes the sun, and a natural grot shaded with myrtles; yet who can forbear to enter the pleasing gloom, to enjoy coolness and privacy, and gratify himself once more by scenes with which nature has formed him to be delighted?

Many moral sentiments likewise are so adapted to our state, that we find approbation whenever they solicit it, and are seldom read without exciting a gentle emotion in the mind: such is the comparison of the life of man with the duration of a flower, a thought which, perhaps, every nation has heard warbled in its own language, from the inspired poets of the *Hebrews* to our own times: yet this comparison must always please, because every heart feels its

its justness, and every hour confirms it by example.

Such, likewise, is the precept that directs us to use the present hour, and refer nothing to a distant time, which we are uncertain whether we shall reach: this every moralist may venture to inculcate, because it will always be approved, and because it is always forgotten.

This rule is, indeed, every day enforced, by arguments more powerful than the dissertations of moralists: we see men pleasing themselves with future happiness, fixing a certain hour for the completion of their wishes, and perishing some at a greater and some at a less distance from the happy time; all complaining of their disappointments, and lamenting that they had suffered the years which Heaven allowed them, to pass without improvement, and deferred the principal purpose of their lives to the time when life itself was to forsake them.

It is not only uncertain, whether, through all the casualties and dangers which beset the life of man, we shall be able to reach the time appointed for happiness or wisdom; but it is likely, that whatever now hinders us from doing that which our reason and conscience declare necessary to be done, will equally obstruct us in times to come. It is easy for the imagination, operating on things not yet existing, to please itself with scenes of unmingled felicity, or plan out courses of uniform virtue: but good and evil are in real life inseparably united; habits grow stronger by indulgence; and reason loses her dignity, in proportion as she has oftener yielded to temptation: "he that cannot live well  
"to-day,"

“to-day,” says *Martial*, “will be less qualified to  
“live well to-morrow.”

Of the uncertainty of every human good, every human being seems to be convinced; yet this uncertainty is voluntarily increased by unnecessary delay, whether we respect external causes, or consider the nature of our own minds. He that now feels a desire to do right, and wishes to regulate his life according to his reason, is not sure that, at any future time assignable, he shall be able to rekindle the same ardour; he that has now an opportunity offered him of breaking loose from vice and folly, cannot know, but that he shall hereafter be more entangled, and struggle for freedom without obtaining it.

We are so unwilling to believe any thing to our own disadvantage, that we will always imagine the perspicacity of our judgment and the strength of our resolution more likely to increase than to grow less by time; and, therefore, conclude, that the will to pursue laudable purposes, will be always seconded by the power.

But however we may be deceived in calculating the strength of our faculties, we cannot doubt the uncertainty of that life in which they must be employed: we see every day the unexpected death of our friends and our enemies, we see new graves hourly opened for men older and younger than ourselves, for the cautious and the careless, the dissolute and the temperate, for men who like us were providing to enjoy or improve hours now irreversibly cut off; we see all this, and yet, instead of living, let year glide after year in preparations to live.

Men

Men are so frequently cut off in the midst of their projections, that sudden death causes little emotion in them that behold it, unless it be impressed upon the attention by uncommon circumstances. I, like every other man, have outlived multitudes, have seen ambition sink in its triumphs, and beauty perish in its bloom; but have been seldom so much affected as by the fate of *Euryalus*, whom I lately lost as I began to love him.

*Euryalus* had for some time flourished in a lucrative profession; but having suffered his imagination to be fired by an unextinguishable curiosity, he grew weary of the same dull round of life, resolved to harass himself no longer with the drudgery of getting money, but to quit his business and his profit, and enjoy for a few years the pleasures of travel. His friends heard him proclaim his resolution without suspecting that he intended to pursue it; but he was constant to his purpose, and with great expedition closed his accounts and sold his moveables, passed a few days in bidding farewell to his companions, and with all the eagerness of romantick chivalry crossed the sea in search of happiness. Whatever place was renowned in ancient or modern history, whatever region art or nature had distinguished, he determined to visit; full of design and hope he landed on the continent; his friends expected accounts from him of the new scenes that opened in his progress, but were informed in a few days that *Euryalus* was dead.

Such was the end of *Euryalus*. He is entered that state, whence none ever shall return; and can now only benefit his friends, by remaining in their memories

mories a permanent and efficacious instance of the blindness of desire, and the uncertainty of all terrestrial good. But, perhaps, every man has like me lost an *Euryalus*, has known a friend die with happiness in his grasp; and yet every man continues to think himself secure of life, and defers to some future time of leisure what he knows it will be fatal to have finally omitted.

It is, indeed, with this as with other frailties inherent in our nature; the desire of deferring to another time, what cannot be done without endurance of some pain, or forbearance of some pleasure, will, perhaps, never be totally overcome or suppressed; there will always be something that we shall wish to have finished, and be nevertheless unwilling to begin: but against this unwillingness it is our duty to struggle, and every conquest over our passions will make way for an easier conquest; custom is equally forcible to bad and good; nature will always be at variance with reason, but will rebel more feebly as she is oftener subdued.

The common neglect of the present hour is more shameful and criminal, as no man is betrayed to it by error, but admits it by negligence. Of the instability of life, the weakest understanding never thinks wrong, though the strongest often omits to think justly: reason and experience are always ready to inform us of our real state; but we refuse to listen to their suggestions, because we feel our hearts unwilling to obey them: but, surely, nothing is more unworthy of a reasonable being, than to shut his eyes, when he sees the road which he is commanded to travel, that he may deviate with fewer reproaches



N<sup>o</sup> III. THE ADVENTURER. 109

from himself; nor could any motive to tenderness, except the consciousness that we have all been guilty of the same fault, dispose us to pity those who thus consign themselves to voluntary ruin.

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NUMB. III. TUESDAY, *November 27, 1753.*

— *Quæ non fecimus ipsi,  
Vix ea nostra voco.*

OVID.

The deeds of long descended ancestors  
Are but by grace of imputation ours.

DRYDEN.

THE evils inseparably annexed to the present condition of man, are so numerous and afflictive, that it has been, from age to age, the task of some to bewail, and of others to solace them; and he, therefore, will be in danger of seeing a common enemy, who shall attempt to depreciate the few pleasures and felicities which nature has allowed us.

Yet I will confess, that I have sometimes employed my thoughts in examining the pretensions that are made to happiness, by the splendid and envied condition of life; and have not thought the hour unprofitably spent, when I have detected the imposture of counterfeit advantages, and found disquiet lurking under false appearances of gaiety and greatness.

It

It is asserted by a tragic poet, that “est miser nemo nisi comparatus,” “no man is miserable, but as he is compared with others happier than himself:” this position is not strictly and philosophically true. He might have said, with rigorous propriety, that no man is happy but as he is compared with the miserable; for such is the state of this world; that we find in it absolute misery, but happiness only comparative; we may incur as much pain as we can possibly endure, though we can never obtain as much happiness as we might possibly enjoy.

Yet it is certain likewise, that many of our miseries are merely comparative: we are often made unhappy, not by the presence of any real evil, but by the absence of some fictitious good; of something which is not required by any real want of nature, which has not in itself any power of gratification, and which neither reason nor fancy would have prompted us to wish, did we not see it in the possession of others.

For a mind diseased with vain longings after unattainable advantages, no medicine can be prescribed, but an impartial enquiry into the real worth of that which is so ardently desired. It is well known, how much the mind, as well as the eye, is deceived by distance; and, perhaps, it will be found, that of many imagined blessings it may be doubted, whether he that wants or possesses them has more reason to be satisfied with his lot.

The dignity of high birth and long extraction, no man, to whom nature has denied it, can confer upon himself; and, therefore, it deserves to be considered,  
whether

whether the want of that which can never be gained, may not easily be endured. It is true, that if we consider the triumph and delight with which most of those recount their ancestors who have ancestors to recount, and the artifices by which some who have risen to unexpected fortune endeavour to insert themselves into an honourable stem, we shall be inclined to fancy that wisdom or virtue may be had by inheritance, or that all the excellencies of a line of progenitors are accumulated on their descendant. Reason, indeed, will soon inform us, that our estimation of birth is arbitrary and capricious, and that dead ancestors can have no influence but upon imagination: let it then be examined, whether one dream may not operate in the place of another; whether he that owes nothing to forefathers, may not receive equal pleasure from the consciousness of owing all to himself; whether he may not, with a little meditation, find it more honourable to found than to continue a family, and to gain dignity than transmit it; whether, if he receives no dignity from the virtues of his family, he does not likewise escape the danger of being disgraced by their crimes; and whether he that brings a new name into the world, has not the convenience of playing the game of life without a stake, and opportunity of winning much though he has nothing to lose.

There is another opinion concerning happiness, which approaches much more nearly to universality, but which may, perhaps, with equal reason be disputed. The pretensions to ancestral honours many of the sons of earth easily see to be ill-grounded; but all agree to celebrate the advantage of hereditary riches,

riches, and to consider those as the minions of fortune, who are wealthy from their cradles, whose estate is “*res non parata labore sed relicta;*” “the acquisition of another, not of themselves;” and whom a father’s industry has dispensed from a laborious attention to arts or commerce, and left at liberty to dispose of life as fancy shall direct them.

If every man were wise and virtuous, capable to discern the best use of time, and resolute to practise it; it might be granted, I think, without hesitation, that total liberty would be a blessing; and that it would be desirable to be left at large to the exercise of religious and social duties, without the interruption of importunate avocations.

But since felicity is relative, and that which is the means of happiness to one man may be to another the cause of misery, we are to consider, what state is best adapted to human nature in its present degeneracy and frailty. And, surely, to far the greater number it is highly expedient, that they should by some settled scheme of duties be rescued from the tyranny of caprice, that they should be driven on by necessity through the paths of life with their attention confined to a stated task, that they may be less at leisure to deviate into mischief at the call of folly.

When we observe the lives of those whom an ample inheritance has let loose to their own direction, what do we discover that can excite our envy? Their time seems not to pass with much applause from others, or satisfaction to themselves; many squander their exuberance of fortune in luxury and debauchery, and have no other use of money than to inflame their passions, and riot in a wide range of licen-

licentiousness; others, less criminal indeed, but, surely, not much to be praised, lie down to sleep, and rise up to trifle, are employed every morning in finding expedients to rid themselves of the day, chase pleasure through all the places of publick resort, fly from *London* to *Bath* and from *Bath* to *London*, without any other reason for changing place, but that they go in quest of company as idle and as vagrant as themselves, always endeavouring to raise some new desire that they may have something to pursue, to rekindle some hope which they know will be disappointed, changing one amusement for another which a few months will make equally insipid, or sinking into languor and disease for want of something to actuate their bodies or exhilarate their minds.

Whoever has frequented those places, where idlers assemble to escape from solitude, knows that this is generally the state of the wealthy; and from this state it is no great hardship to be debarred. No man can be happy in total idleness: he that should be condemned to lie torpid and motionless, “would fly for recreation,” says *South*, “to the mines and the gallies;” and it is well, when nature or fortune find employment for those, who would not have known how to procure it for themselves.

He, whose mind is engaged by the acquisition or improvement of a fortune, not only escapes the insipidity of indifference, and the tediousness of inactivity, but gains enjoyments wholly unknown to those, who live lazily on the toil of others; for life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to



another, forming new wishes, and seeing them gratified. He that labours in any great or laudable undertaking, has his fatigues first supported by hope, and afterwards rewarded by joy; he is always moving to a certain end, and when he has attained it, an end more distant invites him to a new pursuit.

It does not, indeed, always happen, that diligence is fortunate; the wisest schemes are broken by unexpected accidents; the most constant perseverance sometimes toils through life without a recompence; but labour, though unsuccessful, is more eligible than idleness; he that prosecutes a lawful purpose by lawful means, acts always with the approbation of his own reason; he is animated through the course of his endeavours by an expectation which, though not certain, he knows to be just; and is at last comforted in his disappointment, by the consciousness that he has not failed by his own fault.

That kind of life is most happy which affords us most opportunities of gaining our own esteem; and what can any man infer in his own favour from a condition to which, however prosperous, he contributed nothing, and which the vilest and weakest of the species would have obtained by the same right, had he happened to be the son of the same father.

To strive with difficulties, and to conquer them, is the highest human felicity; the next, is to strive, and deserve to conquer: but he whose life has passed without a contest, and who can boast neither success nor merit, can survey himself only as a useless filler

of

of existence ; and if he is content with his own character, must owe his satisfaction to insensibility.

Thus it appears that the satirist advised rightly, when he directed us to resign ourselves to the hands of Heaven, and to leave to superior powers the determination of our lot :

*Permittes ipsis expendere Numinibus, quid  
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris :  
Carior est illis homo quam sibi.*

Intrust thy fortune to the pow'rs above :  
Leave them to manage for thee, and to grant  
What their unerring wisdom sees thee want.  
In goodness as in greatness they excel :  
Ah ! that we lov'd ourselves but half so well.

DRYDEN.

What state of life admits most happiness, is uncertain ; but that uncertainty ought to repress the petulance of comparison, and silence the murmurs of discontent.

NUMB. 115. TUESDAY, *December 11, 1753.**Scribimus indoſi doſique.*

HOR.

All dare to write, who can or cannot read.

**T**HEY who have attentively conſidered the history of mankind, know that every age has its peculiar character. At one time, no deſire is felt but for military honours; every ſummer affords battles and ſieges, and the world is filled with ravage, bloodſhed, and deſtroyation: this ſanguinary fury at length ſubſides, and nations are divided into factions, by controverſies about points that will never be decided. Men then grow weary of debate and altercation, and apply themſelves to the arts of profit; trading companies are formed, manufactures improved, and navigation extended; and nothing is any longer thought on, but the increaſe and preſervation of property, the artifices of getting money, and the pleaſures of ſpending it.

The preſent age, if we conſider chiefly the ſtate of our own country, may be ſtiled with great propriety *The age of Authors*; for, perhaps, there never was a time, in which men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profeſſion and employment, were poſſeſſing with ardour ſo general to the preſent. The province of writing was formerly left to

those, who by study, or appearance of study, were supposed to have gained knowledge unattainable by the busy part of mankind; but in these enlightened days, every man is qualified to instruct every other man; and he that beats the anvil, or guides the plough, not content with supplying corporal necessities, amuses himself in the hours of leisure with providing intellectual pleasures for his countrymen.

It may be observed, that of this, as of other evils, complaints have been made by every generation: but though it may, perhaps, be true, that at all times more have been willing than have been able to write, yet there is no reason for believing, that the dogmatical legions of the present race were ever equalled in number by any former period; for so widely is spread the itch of literary praise, that almost every man is an author, either in act or in purpose; has either bestowed his favours on the publick, or withholds them, that they may be more seasonably offered, or made more worthy of acceptance.

In former times, the pen, like the sword, was considered as consigned by nature to the hands of men; the ladies contented themselves with private virtues and domestick excellence; and a female writer, like a female warrior, was considered as a kind of excentric being, that deviated, however illustriously, from her due sphere of motion, and was, therefore, rather to be gazed at with wonder, than countenanced by imitation. But as the times past are said to have been a nation of Amazons, who drew the

bow and wielded the battle-axe, formed encampments and wasted nations; the revolution of years has now produced a generation of Amazons of the pen, who with the spirit of their predecessors have set masculine tyranny at defiance, asserted their claim to the regions of science, and seem resolved to contest the usurpations of virility.

Some, indeed, there are of both sexes, who are authors only in desire, but have not yet attained the power of executing their intentions; whose performances have not arrived at bulk sufficient to form a volume, or who have not the confidence, however impatient of nameless obscurity, to solicit openly the assistance of the printer. Among these are the innumerable correspondents of publick papers, who are always offering assistance which no man will receive, and suggesting hints that are never taken, and who complain loudly of the perverseness and arrogance of authors, lament their insensibility of their own interest, and fill the coffee-houses with dark stories of performances by eminent hands, which have been offered and rejected.

To what cause this universal eagerness of writing can be properly ascribed, I have not yet been able to discover. It is said, that every art is propagated in proportion to the rewards conferred upon it; a position from which a stranger would naturally infer, that literature was now blessed with patronage far transcending the candour or munificence of the Augustine age, that the road to greatness was open to none but authors, and that by writing alone riches and honour were to be obtained.



But since it is true, that writers, like other competitors, are very little disposed to favour one another, it is not to be expected, that at a time, when every man writes, any man will patronize; and, accordingly, there is not one that I can recollect at present, who professes the least regard for the votaries of science, invites the addresses of learned men, or seems to hope for reputation from any pen but his own.

The cause, therefore, of this epidemical conspiracy for the destruction of paper, must remain a secret: nor can I discover, whether we owe it to the influences of the constellations, or the intemperature of seasons: whether the long continuance of the wind at any single point, or intoxicating vapours exhaled from the earth, have turned our nobles and our peasants, our soldiers and traders, our men and women, all into wits, philosophers, and writers.

It is, indeed, of more importance to search out the cure than the cause of this intellectual malady; and he would deserve well of his country, who, instead of amusing himself with conjectural speculations, should find means of persuading the peer to inspect his steward's accounts, or repair the rural mansion of his ancestors, who could replace the tradesman behind his counter, and send back the farmer to the mattock and the flail.

General irregularities are known in time to remedy themselves. By the constitution of ancient *Ægypt*, the priesthood was continually increasing, till at length there was no people beside themselves; the

establishment was then dissolved, and the number of priests was reduced and limited. Thus among us, writers will, perhaps, be multiplied, till no readers will be found, and then the ambition of writing must necessarily cease.

But as it will be long before the cure is thus gradually effected, and the evil should be stopped, if it be possible, before it rises to so great a height, I could wish that both sexes would fix their thoughts upon some salutary considerations, which might repress their ardour for that reputation which not one of many thousands is fated to obtain.

Let it be deeply impressed and frequently recollected, that he who has not obtained the proper qualifications of an author, can have no excuse for the arrogance of writing, but the power of imparting to mankind something necessary to be known. A man uneducated or unlettered may sometimes start a useful thought, or make a lucky discovery, or obtain by chance some secret of nature, or some intelligence of facts, of which the most enlightened mind may be ignorant, and which it is better to reveal, though by a rude and unskilful communication, than to lose for ever by suppressing it.

But few will be justified by this plea; for of the innumerable books and pamphlets that have overflowed the nation, scarce one has made any addition to real knowledge, or contained more than a transposition of common sentiments and a repetition of common phrases.

It will be naturally inquired, when the man who feels an inclination to write, may venture to suppose himself

himself properly qualified; and, since every man is inclined to think well of his own intellect, by what test he may try his abilities, without hazarding the contempt or resentment of the publick.

The first qualification of a writer, is a perfect knowledge of the subject which he undertakes to treat; since we cannot teach what we do not know, nor can properly undertake to instruct others while we are ourselves in want of instruction. The next requisite is, that he be master of the language in which he delivers his sentiments; if he treats of science and demonstration, that he has attained a style clear, pure, nervous, and expressive; if his topics be probable and perswasory, that he be able to recommend them by the superaddition of elegance and imagery, to display the colours of varied diction, and pour forth the musick of modulated periods.

If it be again inquired, upon what principles any man shall conclude that he wants these powers, it may be readily answered, that no end is attained but by the proper means; he only can rationally presume that he understands a subject, who has read and compared the writers that have hitherto discussed it, familiarized their arguments to himself by long meditation, consulted the foundations of different systems, and separated truth from error by a rigorous examination.

In like manner, he only has a right to suppose that he can express his thoughts, whatever they are, with perspicuity or elegance, who has carefully perused the best authors, accurately noted their diversities of style, diligently selected the best modes  
of

of diction, and familiarized them by long habits of attentive practice.

No man is a rhetorician or philosopher by chance. He who knows that he undertakes to write on questions which he has never studied, may without hesitation determine, that he is about to waste his own time and that of his reader, and expose himself to the derision of those whom he aspires to instruct: he that without forming his style by the study of the best models, hastens to obtrude his compositions on the publick, may be certain, that whatever hope or flattery may suggest, he shall shock the learned ear with barbarisms, and contribute, wherever his work shall be received, to the depravation of taste and the corruption of language.

NUMB. 119. TUESDAY, *December 25, 1753.*

*Latiùs regnes, avidum domando  
Spiritus, quàm si Lybiam remotis  
Gadibus jungas, et uterque Pænus  
Serviat uni.*

HOR.

By virtue's precepts to controul  
The thirsty cravings of the soul,  
Is over wider realms to reign  
Unenvied monarch, than if Spain  
You could to distant Lybia join,  
And both the Carthages were thine.

FRANCIS.

WHEN *Socrates* was asked, "which of  
" mortal men was to be accounted nearest to  
" the gods in happiness?" he answered, "that man,  
" who is in want of the fewest things."

In this answer, *Socrates* left it to be guessed by his auditors, whether, by the exemption from want which was to constitute happiness, he meant amplitude of possessions or contraction of desire. And, indeed, there is so little difference between them, that *Alexander* the Great confessed the inhabitant of a tub the next man to the master of the world; and left a declaration to future ages, that if he was not *Alexander* he should wish to be *Diogenes*.

These two states, however, though they resemble each other in their consequence, differ widely with respect to the facility with which they may be attained. To make great acquisitions can happen to  
very



very few; and in the uncertainty of human affairs, to many it will be incident to labour without reward, and to lose what they already possess by endeavours to make it more; some will always want abilities, and others opportunities to accumulate wealth. It is therefore happy, that nature has allowed us a more certain and easy road to plenty; every man may grow rich by contracting his wishes, and by quiet acquiescence in what has been given him supply the absence of more.

Yet so far is almost every man from emulating the happiness of the gods, by any other means than grasping at their power; that it seems to be the great business of life to create wants as fast as they are satisfied. It has been long observed by moralists, that every man squanders or loses a great part of that life, of which every man knows and deplors the shortness: and it may be remarked with equal justice, that though every man laments his own insufficiency to his happiness, and knows himself a necessitous and precarious being, incessantly soliciting the assistance of others, and feeling wants which his own art or strength cannot supply; yet there is no man, who does not, by the superaddition of unnatural cares, render himself still more dependent; who does not create an artificial poverty, and suffer himself to feel pain for the want of that, of which, when it is gained, he can have no enjoyment.

It must, indeed, be allowed, that as we lose part of our time because it steals away silent and invisible, and many an hour is passed before we recollect that it is passing; so unnatural desires insinuate themselves unobserved into the mind, and we do not perceive that

that they are gaining upon us, till the pain which they give us awakens us to notice. No man is sufficiently vigilant to take account of every minute of his life, or to watch every motion of his heart. Much of our time likewise is sacrificed to custom; we trifle, because we see others trifle: in the same manner we catch from example the contagion of desire; we see all about us busied in pursuit of imaginary good, and begin to bustle in the same chace, lest greater activity should triumph over us.

It is true, that to man, as a member of society, many things become necessary, which, perhaps, in a state of nature are superfluous; and that many things, not absolutely necessary, are yet so useful and convenient, that they cannot easily be spared. I will make yet a more ample and liberal concession. In opulent states and regular governments, the temptations to wealth and rank, and to the distinctions that follow them, are such as no force of understanding finds it easy to resist.

If, therefore, I saw the quiet of life disturbed only by endeavours after wealth and honour; by solicitude, which the world, whether justly or not, considered as important; I should scarcely have had courage to inculcate any precepts of moderation and forbearance. He that is engaged in a pursuit, in which all mankind profess to be his rivals, is supported by the authority of all mankind in the prosecution of his design, and will, therefore, scarcely stop to hear the lectures of a solitary philosopher. Nor am I certain, that the accumulation of honest gain ought to be hindered, or the ambition of just honours always to be repressed. Whatever can enable

able the possessor to confer any benefit upon others, may be desired upon virtuous principles; and we ought not too rashly to accuse any man of intending to confine the influence of his acquisitions to himself.

But if we look round upon mankind, whom shall we find among those that fortune permits to form their own manners, that is not tormenting himself with a wish for something, of which all the pleasure and all the benefit will cease at the moment of attainment? One man is beggaring his posterity to build a house, which when finished he never will inhabit; another is levelling mountains to open a prospect, which, when he has once enjoyed it, he can enjoy no more; another is painting cielings, carving wainscot, and filling his apartments with costly furniture, only that some neighbouring house may not be richer or finer than his own.

That splendor and elegance are not desirable, I am not so abstracted from life as to inculcate; but if we inquire closely into the reason for which they are esteemed, we shall find them valued principally as evidences of wealth. Nothing, therefore, can shew greater depravity of understanding, than to delight in the shew when the reality is wanting; or voluntarily to become poor, that strangers may for a time imagine us to be rich.

But there are yet minuter objects and more trifling anxieties. Men may be found, who are kept from sleep by the want of a shell particularly variegated! who are wasting their lives, in stratagems to obtain a book in a language which they do not understand; who pine with envy at the flowers of another man's  
parterre;

parterre; who hover like vultures round the owner of a fossil, in hopes to plunder his cabinet at his death; and who would not much regret to see a street in flames, if a box of medals might be scattered in the tumult.

He that imagines me to speak of these fages in terms exaggerated and hyperbolic, has conversed but little with the race of virtuosos. A slight acquaintance with their studies, and a few visits to their assemblies, would inform him, that nothing is so worthless, but that prejudice and caprice can give it value; nor any thing of so little use, but that by indulging an idle competition or unreasonable pride, a man may make it to himself one of the necessaries of life.

Desires like these, I may surely, without incurring the censure of moroseness, advise every man to repel when they invade his mind; or if he admits them, never to allow them any greater influence, than is necessary to give petty employments the power of pleasing, and diversify the day with slight amusements.

An ardent wish, whatever be its object, will always be able to interrupt tranquillity. What we believe ourselves to want, torments us not in proportion to its real value, but according to the estimation by which we have rated it in our own minds: in some diseases, the patient has been observed to long for food, which scarce any extremity of hunger would in health have compelled him to swallow; but while his organs were thus depraved the craving was irresistible, nor could any rest be obtained till it was appeased by compliance. Of the same nature are the

the irregular appetites of the mind; though they are often excited by trifles, they are equally disquieting with real wants: the *Roman*, who wept at the death of his lamprey, felt the same degree of sorrow that extorts tears on other occasions.

Inordinate desires, of whatever kind, ought to be repressed upon yet a higher consideration; they must be considered as enemies not only to happiness but to virtue. There are men among those commonly reckoned the learned and the wise, who spare no stratagems to remove a competitor at an auction, who will sink the price of a rarity at the expence of truth, and whom it is not safe to trust alone in a library or cabinet. These are faults, which the fraternity seem to look upon as jocular mischiefs, or to think excused by the violence of the temptation: but I shall always fear that he, who accustoms himself to fraud in little things, wants only opportunity to practise it in greater; “he that has hardened himself by killing a sheep,” says *Pythagoras*, “will with less reluctance shed the blood of a man.”

To prize every thing according to its *real* use, ought to be the aim of a rational being. There are few things which can much conduce to happiness, and, therefore, few things to be ardently desired. He that looks upon the business and bustle of the world, with the philosophy with which *Socrates* surveyed the fair at *Athens*, will turn away at last with his exclamation, “How many things are here which I do not want!”



NUMB. 120. SATURDAY, December 29, 1753.

— *Ultima semper*

*Expectanda dies homini, dicique beatus*

*Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet.*

OVID.

But no frail man, however great or high,

Can be concluded blest before he die.

ADDISON.

**T**HE numerous miseries of human life have ex-  
torted in all ages an universal complaint. The  
wisest of men terminated all his experiments in  
search of happiness, by the mournful confession,  
that “all is vanity;” and the antient patriarchs  
lamented, that “the days of their pilgrimage were  
“few and evil.”

There is, indeed, no topick on which it is more  
superfluous to accumulate authorities, nor any asser-  
tion of which our own eyes will more easily discover,  
or our sensations more frequently impress the truth,  
than, that misery is the lot of man, that our present  
state is a state of danger and infelicity.

When we take the most distant prospect of life,  
what does it present us but a chaos of unhappiness,  
a confused and tumultuous scene of labour and  
contest, disappointment and defeat? If we view past  
ages in the reflection of history, what do they offer to  
our meditation but crimes and calamities? One year is  
distinguished by a famine, another by an earthquake;

kingdoms are made desolate, sometimes by wars, and sometimes by pestilence; the peace of the world is interrupted at one time by the caprices of a tyrant, at another by the rage of a conqueror. The memory is stored only with vicissitudes of evil; and the happiness, such as it is, of one part of mankind, is found to arise commonly from sanguinary success, from victories which confer upon them the power, not so much of improving life by any new enjoyment, as of inflicting misery on others, and gratifying their own pride by comparative greatness.

But by him that examines life with a more close attention, the happiness of the world will be found still less than it appears. In some intervals of publick prosperity, or to use terms more proper, in some intermissions of calamity, a general diffusion of happiness may seem to overspread a people; all is triumph and exultation, jollity and plenty; there are no publick fears and dangers, and “no complainings in the streets.” But the condition of individuals is very little mended by this general calm: pain and malice and discontent still continue their havock; the silent depredation goes incessantly forward; and the grave continues to be filled by the victims of sorrow.

He that enters a gay assembly, beholds the cheerfulness displayed in every countenance, and finds all sitting vacant and disengaged, with no other attention than to give or to receive pleasure; would naturally imagine, that he had reached at last the metropolis of felicity, the place sacred to gladness of heart,

heart, from whence all fear and anxiety were irreversibly excluded. Such, indeed, we may often find to be the opinion of those, who from a lower station look up to the pomp and gaiety which they cannot reach: but who is there of those who frequent these luxurious assemblies, that will not confess his own uneasiness, or cannot recount the vexations and distresses that prey upon the lives of his gay companions?

The world, in its best state, is nothing more than a larger assembly of beings, combining to counterfeit happiness which they do not feel, employing every art and contrivance to embellish life, and to hide their real condition from the eyes of one another.

The species of happiness most obvious to the observation of others, is that which depends upon the goods of fortune; yet even this is often fictitious. There is in the world more poverty than is generally imagined; not only because many whose possessions are large have desires still larger, and many measure their wants by the gratifications which others enjoy; but great numbers are pressed by real necessities which it is their chief ambition to conceal, and are forced to purchase the appearance of competence and cheerfulness at the expence of many comforts and conveniencies of life.

Many, however, are confessedly rich, and many more are sufficiently removed from all danger of real poverty: but it has been long ago remarked, that money cannot purchase quiet; the highest of mankind can promise themselves no exemption from

that discord or fufpicion, by which the fweetnefs of domeftick retirement is destroyed; and muft always be even more expofed, in the fame degree as they are elevated above others, to the treachery of dependents, the calumny of defamers, and the violence of opponents.

Affliction is infeparable from our prefent ftate; it adheres to all the inhabitants of this world in different proportions indeed, but with an allotment which feems very little regulated by our own conduct. It has been the boaft of fome swelling moralifts, that every man's fortune was in his own power, that prudence fupplied the place of all other divinities, and that happinefs is the unfailing confequence of virtue. But, furely, the quiver of Omnipotence is ftored with arrows, againft which the fhield of human virtue, however adamantine it has been boafted, is held up in vain: we do not always fuffer by our crimes; we are not always protected by our innocence.

A good man is by no means exempt from the danger of fuffering by the crimes of others; even his goodnefs may raife him enemies of implacable malice and reftlefs perfeverance: the good man has never been warranted by Heaven from the treachery of friends, the difobedience of children, or the difhonefty of a wife; he may fee his cares made ufelefs by profufion, his inftructions defeated by perversenefs, and his kindnefs rejected by ingratitude; he may languifh under the infamy of falfe accusations, or perifh reproachfully by an unjuft fentence.

A good

A good man is subject, like other mortals, to all the influences of natural evil; his harvest is not spared by the tempest, nor his cattle by the murrain; his house flames like others in a conflagration; nor have his ships any peculiar power of resisting hurricanes: his mind, however elevated, inhabits a body subject to innumerable casualties, of which he must always share the dangers and the pains; he bears about him the seeds of disease, and may linger away a great part of his life under the tortures of the gout or stone; at one time groaning with insufferable anguish, at another dissolved in listlessness and languor.

From this general and indiscriminate distribution of misery, the moralists have always derived one of their strongest moral arguments for a future state; for since the common events of the present life happen alike to the good and bad, it follows from the justice of the Supreme Being, that there must be another state of existence, in which a just retribution shall be made, and every man shall be happy and miserable according to his works.

The miseries of life may, perhaps, afford some proof of a future state, compared as well with the mercy as the justice of God. It is scarcely to be imagined, that Infinite Benevolence would create a being capable of enjoying so much more than is here to be enjoyed, and qualified by nature to prolong pain by remembrance, and anticipate it by terror, if he was not designed for something nobler and better than a state, in which



many of his faculties can serve only for his torment; in which he is to be importuned by desires that never can be satisfied, to feel many evils which he had no power to avoid, and to fear many which he shall never feel: there will surely come a time, when every capacity of happiness shall be filled, and none shall be wretched but by his own fault.

In the mean time, it is by affliction chiefly that the heart of man is purified, and that the thoughts are fixed upon a better state. Prosperity, allayed and imperfect as it is, has power to intoxicate the imagination, to fix the mind upon the present scene, to produce confidence and elation, and to make him who enjoys affluence and honours forget the hand by which they were bestowed. It is seldom that we are otherwise, than by affliction, awakened to a sense of our own imbecillity, or taught to know how little all our acquisitions can conduce to safety or to quiet; and how justly we may ascribe to the superintendance of a higher Power, those blessings which in the wantonness of success we considered as the attainments of our policy or courage.

Nothing confers so much ability to resist the temptations that perpetually surround us, as an habitual consideration of the shortness of life, and the uncertainty of those pleasures that solicit our pursuit; and this consideration can be inculcated only by affliction. "O Death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that lives at ease in his possessions!" If our present state were  
one

one continued succession of delights, or one uniform flow of calmness and tranquillity, we should never willingly think upon its end; death would then surely surprise us as “ a thief in the “ night;” and our task of duty would remain unfinished, till “ the night came when no man can “ work.”

While affliction thus prepares us for felicity, we may console ourselves under its pressures, by remembering, that they are no particular marks of divine displeasure; since all the distresses of persecution have been suffered by those, “ of whom the world “ was not worthy;” and the Redeemer of Mankind himself was “ a man of sorrows and acquainted “ with grief.”

NUMB. 126. SATURDAY, *January* 19, 1754.

——— *Steriles nec legit arenas*  
*Ut caneret paucis, merfitque hoc pulvere verum.* LUCAN.

Canst thou believe the vast eternal Mind  
 Was e'er to Syrts and Lybian sands confin'd?  
 That he would chuse this waste, this barren ground,  
 To teach the thin inhabitants around,  
 And leave his truth in wilds and deserts drown'd? }

**T**HERE has always prevailed among that part of mankind that addict their minds to speculation, a propensity to talk much of the delights of retirement; and some of the most pleas-

ing compositions produced in every age contain descriptions of the peace and happiness of a country life.

I know not whether those who thus ambitiously repeat the praises of solitude, have always considered, how much they depreciate mankind by declaring, that whatever is excellent or desirable is to be obtained by departing from them; that the assistance which we may derive from one another, is not equivalent to the evils which we have to fear; that the kindness of a few is overbalanced by the malice of many; and that the protection of society is too dearly purchased, by encountering its dangers and enduring its oppressions.

These specious representations of solitary happiness, however opprobrious to human nature, have so far spread their influence over the world, that almost every man delights his imagination with the hopes of obtaining some time an opportunity of retreat. Many, indeed, who enjoy retreat only in imagination, content themselves with believing, that another year will transport them to rural tranquillity, and die while they talk of doing what, if they had lived longer, they would never have done. But many likewise there are, either of greater resolution or more credulity, who in earnest try the state which they have been taught to think thus secure from cares and dangers; and retire to privacy, either that they may improve their happiness, increase their knowledge, or exalt their virtue.

The greater part of the admirers of solitude, as of all other classes of mankind, have no higher or

remoter view, than the present gratification of their passions. Of these some, haughty and impetuous, fly from society only because they cannot bear to repay to others the regard which themselves exact; and think no state of life eligible, but that which places them out of the reach of censure or controul, and affords them opportunities of living in a perpetual compliance with their own inclinations, without the necessity of regulating their actions by any other man's convenience or opinion.

There are others of minds more delicate and tender, easily offended by every deviation from rectitude, soon disgusted by ignorance or impertinence, and always expecting from the conversation of mankind more elegance, purity, and truth, than the mingled mass of life will easily afford. Such men are in haste to retire from grossness, falsehood, and brutality; and hope to find in private habitations at least a negative felicity, an exemption from the shocks and perturbations with which publick scenes are continually distressing them.

To neither of these votaries will solitude afford that content, which she has been taught so lavishly to promise. The man of arrogance will quickly discover, that by escaping from his opponents he has lost his flatterers, that greatness is nothing where it is not seen, and power nothing where it cannot be felt: and he, whose faculties are employed in too close an observation of failings and defects, will find his condition very little mended by transferring his attention from others to himself; he will probably soon come back in quest of new objects, and be  
glad

glad to keep his captiousness employed on any character rather than his own.

Others are seduced into solitude merely by the authority of great names, and expect to find those charms in tranquillity which have allured statesmen and conquerors to the shades: these likewise are apt to wonder at their disappointment, for want of considering, that those whom they aspire to imitate carried with them to their country seats minds full fraught with subjects of reflection, the consciousness of great merit, the memory of illustrious actions, the knowledge of important events, and the seeds of mighty designs to be ripened by future meditation. Solitude was to such men a release from fatigue, and an opportunity of usefulness. But what can retirement confer upon him, who having done nothing can receive no support from his own importance, who having known nothing can find no entertainment in reviewing the past, and who intending nothing can form no hopes from prospects of the future: he can, surely, take no wiser course than that of losing himself again in the crowd, and filling the vacuities of his mind with the news of the day.

Others consider solitude as the parent of philosophy, and retire in expectation of greater intimacies with science, as *Numa* repaired to the groves when he conferred with *Egeria*. These men have not always reason to repent. Some studies require a continued prosecution of the same train of thought, such as is too often interrupted by the petty avocations of common life: sometimes, likewise, it



is necessary, that a multiplicity of objects be at once present to the mind; and every thing, therefore, must be kept at a distance, which may perplex the memory, or dissipate the attention.

But though learning may be conferred by solitude, its application must be attained by general converse. He has learned to no purpose, that is not able to teach; and he will always teach unsuccessfully, who cannot recommend his sentiments by his diction or address.

Even the acquisition of knowledge is often much facilitated by the advantages of society: he that never compares his notions with those of others, readily acquiesces in his first thoughts, and very seldom discovers the objections which may be raised against his opinions; he, therefore, often thinks himself in possession of truth, when he is only fondling an error long since exploded. He that has neither companions nor rivals in his studies, will always applaud his own progress, and think highly of his performances, because he knows not that others have equalled or excelled him. And I am afraid it may be added, that the student who withdraws himself from the world, will soon feel that ardour extinguished which praise or emulation had enkindled, and take the advantage of secrecy to sleep, rather than to labour.

There remains yet another set of recluses, whose intention intitles them to higher respect, and whose motives deserve a more serious consideration. These retire from the world, not merely to bask in ease or gratify curiosity; but that being disengaged from common cares, they may employ more time in  
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the duties of religion: that they may regulate their actions with stricter vigilance, and purify their thoughts by more frequent meditation.

To men thus elevated above the mists of mortality, I am far from presuming myself qualified to give directions. On him that appears "to pass through things temporary," with no other care than "not to lose finally the things eternal," I look with such veneration as inclines me to approve his conduct in the whole, without a minute examination of its parts; yet I could never forbear to wish, that while vice is every day multiplying seducements, and stalking forth with more hardened effrontery, virtue would not withdraw the influence of her presence, or forbear to assert her natural dignity by open and undaunted perseverance in the right, Piety practised in solitude, like the flower that blooms in the desert, may give its fragrance to the winds of Heaven, and delight those unbodied spirits that survey the works of God and the actions of men; but it bestows no assistance upon earthly beings, and however free from taints of impurity, yet wants the sacred splendor of beneficence.

Our Maker, who, though he gave us such varieties of temper and such difference of powers, yet designed us all for happiness, undoubtedly intended, that we should obtain that happiness by different means. Some are unable to resist the temptations of importunity, or the impetuosity of their own passions incited by the force of present temptations: of these it is undoubtedly the duty to fly from enemies which they cannot conquer, and to cultivate, in the calm of solitude, that virtue which is too tender to endure

ture the tempests of publick life. But there are others, whose passions grow more strong and irregular in privacy; and who cannot maintain an uniform tenor of virtue, but by exposing their manners to the publick eye, and assisting the admonitions of conscience with the fear of infamy: for such it is dangerous to exclude all witnesses of their conduct, till they have formed strong habits of virtue, and weakened their passions by frequent victories. But there is a higher order of men so inspired with ardour, and so fortified with resolution, that the world passes before them without influence or regard: these ought to consider themselves as appointed the guardians of mankind: they are placed in an evil world, to exhibit publick examples of good life; and may be said, when they withdraw to solitude, to desert the station which Providence assigned them.

NUMB. 131. TUESDAY, *February 5, 1754.*— *Misce**Ergo aliquid nostris de moribus.*

JUVENAL.

And mingle something of our times to please.

DRYDEN JUN.

**F**ONTENELLE, in his panegyrick on Sir *Isaac Newton*, closes a long enumeration of that great philosopher's virtues and attainments, with an observation, that "he was not distinguished from other men, by any singularity either natural or affected."

It is an eminent instance of *Newton's* superiority to the rest of mankind, that he was able to separate knowledge from those weaknesses by which knowledge is generally disgraced; that he was able to excel in science and wisdom, without purchasing them by the neglect of little things; and that he stood alone, merely because he had left the rest of mankind behind him, not because he deviated from the beaten track.

Whoever, after the example of *Plutarch*, should compare the lives of illustrious men, might set this part of *Newton's* character to view with great advantage, by opposing it to that of *Bacon*, perhaps the only man of later ages, who has any pretensions to dispute with him the palm of genius or science.

*Bacon,*

*Bacon*, after he had added to a long and careful contemplation of almost every other object of knowledge a curious inspection into common life, and, after having surveyed nature as a philosopher, had examined "men's business and bosoms" as a statesman; yet failed so much in the conduct of domestick affairs, that, in the most lucrative post to which a great and wealthy kingdom could advance him, he felt all the miseries of distressful poverty, and committed all the crimes to which poverty incites. Such were at once his negligence and rapacity, that, as it is said, he would gain by unworthy practices that money, which, when so acquired, his servants might steal from one end of the table, while he sat studious and abstracted at the other.

As scarcely any man has reached the excellence, very few have sunk to the weakness of *Bacon*: but almost all the studious tribe, as they obtain any participation of his knowledge, feel likewise some contagion of his defects; and obstruct the veneration which learning would procure, by follies greater or less to which only learning could betray them.

It has been formerly remarked by *The Guardian*, that the world punishes with too great severity the error of those, who imagine that the ignorance of little things may be compensated by the knowledge of great; for so it is, that as more can detect petty failings than can distinguish or esteem great qualifications, and as mankind is in general more easily disposed to censure than to admiration, contempt is often incurred by slight mistakes, which real virtue or usefulness cannot counterbalance.

Yet



Yet such mistakes and inadvertencies, it is not easy for a man deeply immersed in study to avoid; no man can become qualified for the common intercourses of life, by private meditation; the manners of the world are not a regular system, planned by philosophers upon settled principles, in which every cause has a congruous effect, and one part has a just reference to another. Of the fashions prevalent in every country, a few have arisen, perhaps, from particular temperatures of the climate; a few more from the constitution of the government; but the greater part have grown up by chance; been started by caprice, been contrived by affectation, or borrowed without any just motives of choice from other countries.

Of all these, the savage that hunts his prey upon the mountains, and the sage that speculates in his closet, must necessarily live in equal ignorance; yet by the observation of these trifles it is, that the ranks of mankind are kept in order, that the address of one to another is regulated, and the general business of the world carried on with facility and method.

These things, therefore, though small in themselves, become great by their frequency; and he very much mistakes his own interest, who, to the unavoidable unskilfulness of abstraction and retirement, adds a voluntary neglect of common forms, and increases the disadvantages of a studious course of life by an arrogant contempt of those practices, by which others endeavour to gain favour and multiply friendships.

A real and interior disdain of fashion and ceremony, is, indeed, not very often to be found: much  
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the greater part of those who pretend to laugh at foppery and formality, secretly wish to have possessed those qualifications which they pretend to despise; and because they find it difficult to wash away the tincture which they have so deeply imbibed, endeavour to harden themselves in a fullen approbation of their own colour. Neutrality is a state, into which the busy passions of man cannot easily subside; and he who is in danger of the pangs of envy, is generally forced to recreate his imagination with an effort of comfort.

Some, however, may be found, who, supported by the consciousness of great abilities, and elevated by a long course of reputation and applause, voluntarily consign themselves to singularity, affect to cross the roads of life because they know that they shall not be jostled, and indulge a boundless gratification of will because they perceive that they shall be quietly obeyed. Men of this kind are generally known by the name of *Humourists*, an appellation by which he that has obtained it, and can be contented to keep it, is set free at once from the shackles of fashion; and can go in or out, sit or stand, be talkative or silent, gloomy or merry, advance absurdities or oppose demonstration, without any other reprehension from mankind, than that it is his way, that he is an odd fellow, and must be let alone.

This seems to many, an easy passport through the various factions of mankind; and those on whom it is bestowed, appear too frequently to consider the patience with which their caprices are suffered as an undoubted evidence of their own importance, of a genius to which submission is universally paid, and

whose irregularities are only considered as consequences of its vigour. These peculiarities, however, are always found to spot a character, though they may not totally obscure it; and he who expects from mankind, that they should give up established customs in compliance with his single will, and exacts that deference which he does not pay, may be endured, but can never be approved.

Singularity is, I think, in its own nature universally and invariably displeasing. In whatever respect a man differs from others, he must be considered by them as either worse or better: by being better, it is well known that a man gains admiration oftener than love, since all approbation of his practice must necessarily condemn him that gives it; and though a man often pleases by inferiority, there are few who desire to give such pleasure. Yet the truth is, that singularity is almost always regarded as a brand of slight reproach; and where it is associated with acknowledged merit, serves as an abatement or an allay of excellence, by which weak eyes are reconciled to its lustre, and by which, though kindness is not gained, at least envy is averted.

But let no man be in haste to conclude his own merit so great or conspicuous, as to require or justify singularity: it is as hazardous for a moderate understanding to usurp the prerogatives of genius, as for a common form to play over the airs of uncontested beauty. The pride of men will not patiently endure to see one, whose understanding or attainments are but level with their own, break the rules by which they have consented to be bound, or forsake the direction which they submissively follow. All viola-  
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tion of established practice implies in its own nature a rejection of the common opinion, a defiance of common censure, and an appeal from general laws to private judgment: he, therefore, who differs from others without apparent advantage, ought not to be angry if his arrogance is punished with ridicule; if those, whose example he superciliously overlooks, point him out to derision, and hoot him back again into the common road.

The pride of singularity is often exerted in little things, where right and wrong are indeterminable, and where, therefore, vanity is without excuse. But there are occasions on which it is noble to dare to stand alone. To be pious among infidels, to be disinterested in a time of general venality, to lead a life of virtue and reason in the midst of sensualists, is a proof of a mind intent on nobler things than the praise or blame of men, of a soul fixed in the contemplation of the highest good, and superior to the tyranny of custom and example.

In moral and religious questions only, a wise man will hold no consultations with fashion, because these duties are constant and immutable, and depend not on the notions of men, but the commands of Heaven; yet even of these, the external mode is to be in some measure regulated by the prevailing taste of the age in which we live; for he is certainly no friend to virtue, who neglects to give it any lawful attraction, or suffers it to deceive the eye or alienate the affections for want of innocent compliance with fashionable decorations.

It is yet remembered of the learned and pious *Nelson*, that he was remarkably elegant in his man-

ners, and splendid in his dress. He knew, that the eminence of his character drew many eyes upon him; and he was careful not to drive the young or the gay away from religion, by representing it as an enemy to any distinction or enjoyment in which human nature may innocently delight.

In this censure of singularity, I have, therefore, no intention to subject reason or conscience to custom or example. To comply with the notions and practices of mankind, is in some degree the duty of a social being; because by compliance only he can please, and by pleasing only he can become useful: but as the end is not to be lost for the sake of the means, we are not to give up virtue to complaisance; for the end of complaisance is only to gain the kindness of our fellow-beings, whose kindness is desirable only as instrumental to happiness, and happiness must be always lost by departure from virtue.



NUMB. 137. TUESDAY, *February 26, 1754.*

Τι δ' ἔπειτα·

PYTH.

What have I been doing ?

**A**S man is a being very sparingly furnished with the power of prescience, he can provide for the future only by considering the past; and as futurity is all in which he has any real interest, he ought very diligently to use the only means by which he can be enabled to enjoy it, and frequently to revolve the experiments which he has hitherto made upon life, that he may gain wisdom from his mistakes, and caution from his miscarriages.

Though I do not so exactly conform to the precepts of *Pythagoras*, as to practise every night this solemn recollection, yet I am not so lost in dissipation as wholly to omit it; nor can I forbear sometimes to enquire of myself, in what employment my life has passed away. Much of my time has sunk into nothing, and left no trace by which it can be distinguished; and of this I now only know, that it was once in my power, and might once have been improved.

Of other parts of life memory can give some account; at some hours I have been gay, and at others serious; I have sometimes mingled in conversation, and sometimes meditated in solitude; one day has

been spent in consulting the ancient sages, and another in writing *Adventurers*.

At the conclusion of any undertaking, it is usual to compute the loss and profit. As I shall soon cease to write *Adventurers*, I could not forbear lately to consider what has been the consequence of my labours; and whether I am to reckon the hours laid out in these compositions, as applied to a good and laudable purpose, or suffered to fume away in useless evaporations.

That I have intended well, I have the attestation of my own heart: but good intentions may be frustrated, when they are executed without suitable skill, or directed to an end unattainable in itself.

Some there are, who leave writers very little room for self-congratulation; some who affirm, that books have no influence upon the publick, that no age was ever made better by its authors, and that to call upon mankind to correct their manners, is like *Xerxes*, to scourge the wind, or shackle the torrent.

This opinion they pretend to support by unfailling experience. The world is full of fraud and corruption, rapine or malignity; interest is the ruling motive of mankind, and every one is endeavouring to increase his own stores of happiness by perpetual accumulation, without reflecting upon the numbers whom his superfluity condemns to want: in this state of things a book of morality is published, in which charity and benevolence are strongly enforced; and it is proved beyond opposition, that men are happy in proportion as they are virtuous, and rich as they are liberal. The book is applauded, and the au-  
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that is preferred; he imagines his applause deserved, and receives less pleasure from the acquisition of reward than the consciousness of merit. Let us look again upon mankind: interest is still the ruling motive, and the world is yet full of fraud and corruption, malevolence and rapine.

The difficulty of confuting this assertion arises merely from its generality and comprehension: to overthrow it by a detail of distinct facts, requires a wider survey of the world than human eyes can take; the progress of reformation is gradual and silent, as the extension of evening shadows; we know that they were short at noon, and are long at sun-set, but our senses were not able to discern their increase: we know of every civil nation, that it was once savage, and how was it reclaimed but by a precept and admonition?

Mankind are universally corrupt, but corrupt in different degrees; as they are universally ignorant, yet with greater or less irradiations of knowledge. How has knowledge or virtue been increased and preserved in one place beyond another, but by diligent inculcation and rational enforcement?

Books of morality are daily written, yet its influence is still little in the world; so the ground is annually ploughed, and yet multitudes are in want of bread. But, surely, neither the labours of the moralist nor of the husbandman are vain: let them for a while neglect their tasks, and their usefulness will be known; the wickedness that is now frequent would become universal, the bread that is now scarce would wholly fail.

The power, indeed, of every individual is small, and the consequence of his endeavours imperceptible in a general prospect of the world. Providence has given no man ability to do much, that something might be left for every man to do. The business of life is carried on by a general co-operation; in which the part of any single man can be no more distinguished, than the effect of a particular drop when the meadows are floated by a summer shower: yet every drop increases the inundation, and every hand adds to the happiness or misery of mankind.

That a writer, however zealous or eloquent, seldom works a visible effect upon cities or nations, will readily be granted. The book which is read most, is read by few, compared with those that read it not; and of those few, the greater part peruse it with dispositions that very little favour their own improvement.

It is difficult to enumerate the several motives which procure to books the honour of perusal: spite, vanity, and curiosity, hope and fear, love and hatred, every passion which incites to any other action, serves at one time or other to stimulate a reader.

Some are fond to take a celebrated volume into their hands, because they hope to distinguish their penetration, by finding faults which have escaped the publick; others eagerly buy it in the first bloom of reputation, that they may join the chorus of praise, and not lag, as *Falstaff* terms it, in "the rearward of the fashion."

Some read for style, and some for argument: one has little care about the sentiment, he observes only  
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how it is expressed; another regards not the conclusion, but is diligent to mark how it is inferred: they read for other purposes than the attainment of practical knowledge; and are no more likely to grow wise by an examination of a treatise of moral prudence, than an architect to inflame his devotion by considering attentively the proportions of a temple.

Some read that they may embellish their conversation, or shine in dispute; some that they may not be detected in ignorance, or want the reputation of literary accomplishments: but the most general and prevalent reason of study is the impossibility of finding another amusement equally cheap or constant, equally dependent on the hour or the weather. He that wants money to follow the chase of pleasure through her yearly circuit, and is left at home when the gay world rolls to *Bath* or *Tunbridge*; he whose gout compels him to hear from his chamber the rattle of chariots transporting happier beings to plays and assemblies, will be forced to seek in books a refuge from himself.

The author is not wholly useless, who provides innocent amusements for minds like these. There are in the present state of things so many more instigations to evil, than incitements to good, that he who keeps me in a neutral state, may be justly considered as a benefactor to life.

But, perhaps, it seldom happens, that study terminates in mere pastime. Books have always a secret influence on the understanding; we cannot at pleasure obliterate ideas: he that reads books of science,  
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though without any fixed desire of improvement, will grow more knowing; he that entertains himself with moral or religious treatises, will imperceptibly advance in goodness; the ideas which are often offered to the mind, will at last find a lucky moment when it is disposed to receive them.

It is, therefore, urged without reason, as a discouragement to writers, that there are already books sufficient in the world; that all the topics of persuasion have been discussed, and every important question clearly stated and justly decided; and that, therefore, there is no room to hope, that pigmies should conquer where heroes have been defeated, or that the petty copiers of the present time should advance the great work of reformation, which their predecessors were forced to leave unfinished.

Whatever be the present extent of human knowledge, it is not only finite, and therefore in its own nature capable of increase; but so narrow, that almost every understanding may, by a diligent application of its powers, hope to enlarge it. It is, however, not necessary, that a man should forbear to write, till he has discovered some truth unknown before; he may be sufficiently useful, by only diversifying the surface of knowledge, and luring the mind by a new appearance to a second view of those beauties which it had passed over inattentively before. Every writer may find intellects correspondent to his own, to whom his expressions are familiar, and his thoughts congenial; and, perhaps, truth is often more successfully propagated by men of moderate abilities, who, adopting the opinions of  
others,

others, have no care but to explain them clearly, than by subtile speculatists and curious searchers, who exact from their readers powers equal to their own, and if their fabricks of science be strong, take no care to render them accessible.

For my part, I do not regret the hours which I have laid out in these little compositions. That the world has grown apparently better, since the publication of the *Adventurer*, I have not observed; but am willing to think, that many have been affected by single sentiments, of which it is their business to renew the impression; that many have caught hints of truth, which it is now their duty to pursue; and that those who have received no improvement, have wanted not opportunity but intention to improve.

NUMB. 138. SATURDAY, *March 2*, 1754.

*Quid purè tranquillet? bonos, an dulce lucellum,  
An secretum iter, et fallentis femina vitæ?* HOR.

Whether the tranquil mind and pure,  
Honours or wealth our bliss insure;  
Or down through life unknown to stray,  
Where lonely leads the silent way. FRANCIS.

HAVING considered the importance of authors to the welfare of the publick, I am led by a natural train of thought, to reflect on their condition with regard to themselves; and to enquire what degree of happiness or vexation is annexed to the difficult and laborious employment of providing instruction or entertainment for mankind.

In estimating the pain or pleasure of any particular state, every man, indeed, draws his decisions from his own breast, and cannot with certainty determine, whether other minds are affected by the same causes in the same manner. Yet by this criterion we must be content to judge, because no other can be obtained; and, indeed, we have no reason to think it very fallacious, for excepting here and there an anomalous mind, which either does not feel like others, or dissembles its sensibility, we find men unanimously concur in attributing happiness or misery to particular conditions, as they agree in acknowledging the cold of winter and the heat of autumn.

If we apply to authors themselves for an account of their state, it will appear very little to deserve envy; for they have in all ages been addicted to complaint. The neglect of learning, the ingratitude of the present age, and the absurd preference by which ignorance and dullness often obtain favour and rewards, have been from age to age topicks of invective; and few have left their names to posterity, without some appeal to future candour from the perverseness and malice of their own times.

I have, nevertheless, been often inclined to doubt, whether authors, however querulous, are in reality more miserable than their fellow mortals. The present life is to all a state of infelicity; every man, like an author, believes himself to merit more than he obtains, and solaces the present with the prospect of the future; others, indeed, suffer those disappointments in silence, of which the writer complains, to shew how well he has learnt the art of lamentation.

There is at least one gleam of felicity, of which few writers have missed the enjoyment: he whose hopes have so far overpowered his fears, as that he has resolved to stand forth a candidate for fame, seldom fails to amuse himself, before his appearance, with pleasing scenes of affluence or honour; while his fortune is yet under the regulation of fancy, he easily models it to his wish, suffers no thoughts of criticks or rivals to intrude upon his mind, but counts over the bounties of patronage, or listens to the voice of praise.

Some there are, that talk very luxuriously of the second period of an author's happiness, and tell of  
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the tumultuous raptures of invention, when the mind riots in imagery, and the choice stands suspended between different sentiments.

These pleasures, I believe, may sometimes be indulged to those, who come to a subject of disquisitions with minds full of ideas, and with fancies so vigorous, as easily to excite, select, and arrange them. To write is, indeed, no unpleasing employment, when one sentiment readily produces another, and both ideas and expressions present themselves at the first summons: but such happiness, the greatest genius does not always obtain; and common writers know it only to such a degree, as to credit its possibility. Composition is, for the most part, an effort of slow diligence and steady perseverance, to which the mind is dragged by necessity or resolution, and from which the attention is every moment starting to more delightful amusements.

It frequently happens, that a design which, when considered at a distance, gave flattering hopes of facility, mocks us in the execution with unexpected difficulties; the mind which, while it considered it in the gross, imagined itself amply furnished with materials, finds sometimes an unexpected barrenness and vacuity, and wonders whether all those ideas are vanished, which a little before seemed struggling for emission.

Sometimes many thoughts present themselves; but so confused and unconnected, that they are not without difficulty reduced to method, or concatenated, in a regular and dependent series: the mind falls at once into a labyrinth, of which neither the beginning nor end can be discovered, and toils and struggles without progress or extrication.

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It is asserted by *Horace*, that “ if matter be once got together, words will be found with very little difficulty ;” a position which, though sufficiently plausible to be inserted in poetical precepts, is by no means strictly and philosophically true. If words were naturally and necessarily consequential to sentiments, it would always follow, that he who has most knowledge must have most eloquence, and that every man would clearly express what he fully understood : yet we find, that to think, and discourse, are often the qualities of different persons : and many books might surely be produced, where just and noble sentiments are degraded and obscured by unsuitable diction.

Words, therefore, as well as things, claim the care of an author. Indeed of many authors, and those not useless or contemptible, words are almost the only care : many make it their study, not so much to strike out new sentiments, as to recommend those which are already known to more favourable notice by fairer decorations ; but every man, whether he copies or invents, whether he delivers his own thoughts or those of another, has often found himself deficient in the power of expression, big with ideas which he could not utter, obliged to ransack his memory for terms adequate to his conceptions, and at last unable to impress upon his reader the image existing in his own mind.

It is one of the common distresses of a writer, to be within a word of a happy period, to want only a single epithet to give amplification its full force, to require only a correspondent term in order to finish a paragraph with elegance, and make one of its

members answer to the other: but these deficiencies cannot always be supplied; and after a long study and vexation, the passage is turned anew, and the web unwoven that was so nearly finished.

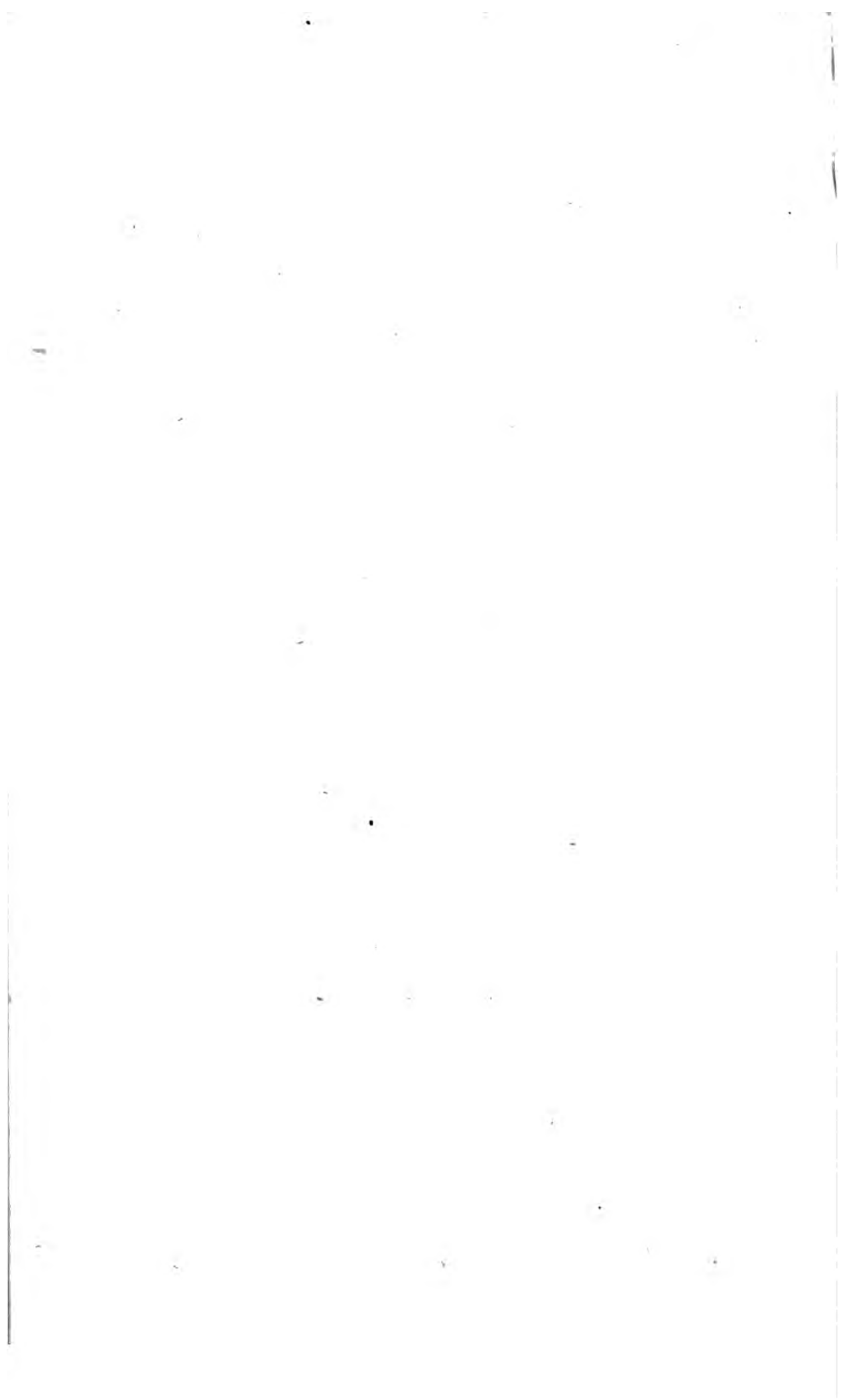
But when thoughts and words are collected and adjusted, and the whole composition at last concluded, it seldom gratifies the author, when he comes coolly and deliberately to review it, with the hopes which had been excited in the fury of the performance: novelty always captivates the mind; as our thoughts rise fresh upon us, we readily believe them just and original, which, when the pleasure of production is over, we find to be mean and common, or borrowed from the works of others, and supplied by memory rather than invention.

But though it should happen that the writer finds no such faults in his performance, he is still to remember, that he looks upon it with partial eyes: and when he considers, how much men who could judge of others with great exactness, have often failed of judging of themselves, he will be afraid of deciding too hastily in his own favour, or of allowing himself to contemplate with too much complacence, treasure that has not yet been brought to the test, nor passed the only trial that can stamp its value.

From the publick, and only from the publick, is he to await a confirmation of his claim, and a final justification of self-esteem; but the publick is not easily persuaded to favour an author. If mankind were left to judge for themselves, it is reasonable to imagine, that of such writings, at least, as describe the movements of the human passions, and of which every man carries the archetype within him, a just  
opinion

opinion would be formed; but whoever has remarked the fate of books, must have found it governed by other causes, than general consent arising from general conviction. If a new performance happens not to fall into the hands of some, who have courage to tell, and authority to propagate their opinion, it often remains long in obscurity, and perishes unknown and unexamined. A few, a very few, commonly constitute the taste of the time; the judgment which they have once pronounced, some are too lazy to discuss, and some too timorous to contradict: it may however be, I think, observed, that their power is greater to depress than exalt, as mankind are more credulous of censure than of praise.

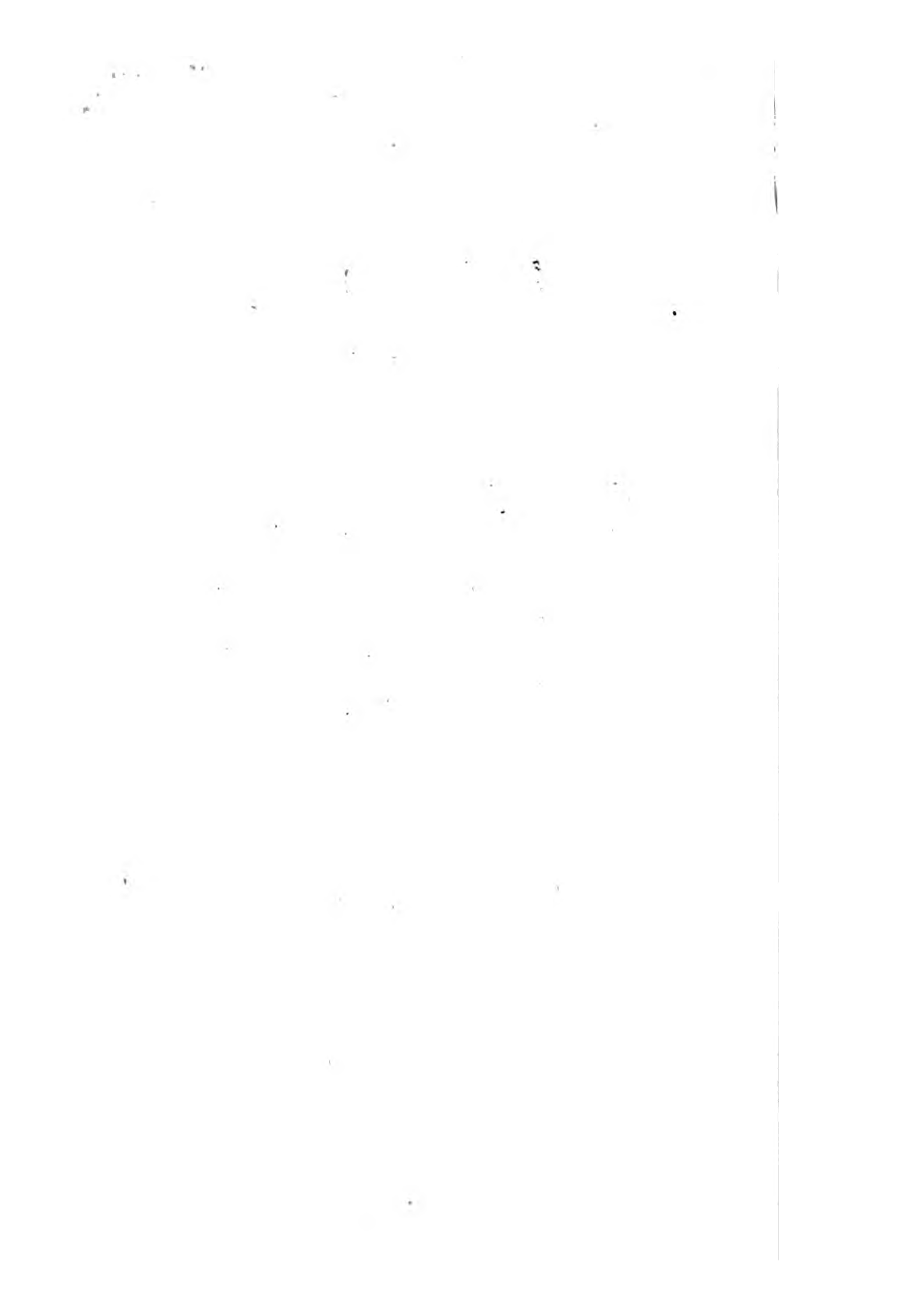
This perversion of the publick judgment is not to be rashly numbered amongst the miseries of an author; since it commonly serves, after miscarriage, to reconcile him to himself. Because the world has sometimes passed an unjust sentence, he readily concludes the sentence unjust by which his performance is condemned; because some have been exalted above their merits by partiality, he is sure to ascribe the success of a rival, not to the merit of his work, but the zeal of his patrons. Upon the whole, as the author seems to share all the common miseries of life, he appears to partake likewise of its lenitives and abatements.



PHILOLOGICAL  
TRACTS.

M 2





THE  
P L A N  
OF AN  
ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

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To the Right Honourable PHILIP DORMER, Earl  
of CHESTERFIELD, one of his Majesty's Principal  
Secretaries of State.

My LORD,

WHEN first I undertook to write an *English*  
Dictionary, I had no expectation of any  
higher patronage than that of the proprietors of the  
copy, nor prospect of any other advantage than the  
price of my labour. I knew that the work in which  
I engaged is generally considered as drudgery for the  
blind, as the proper toil of artless industry; a task  
that requires neither the light of learning, nor the  
activity of genius, but may be successfully performed  
without any higher quality than that of bearing  
burthens with dull patience, and beating the track  
of the alphabet with sluggish resolution.

Whether this opinion, so long transmitted, and so widely propagated, had its beginning from truth and nature, or from accident and prejudice; whether it be decreed by the authority of reason, or the tyranny of ignorance, that of all the candidates for literary praise, the unhappy lexicographer holds the lowest place, neither vanity nor interest incited me to enquire. It appeared that the province allotted me was, of all the regions of learning, generally confessed to be the least delightful, that it was believed to produce neither fruits nor flowers; and that, after a long and laborious cultivation, not even the barren laurel had been found upon it.

Yet on this province, my Lord, I entered, with the pleasing hope, that, as it was low, it likewise would be safe. I was drawn forward with the prospect of employment, which, though not splendid, would be useful; and which, though it could not make my life envied, would keep it innocent; which would awaken no passion, engage me in no contention, nor throw in my way any temptation to disturb the quiet of others by censure, or my own by flattery.

I had read indeed of times, in which princes and statesmen thought it part of their honour to promote the improvement of their native tongues; and in which dictionaries were written under the protection of greatness. To the patrons of such undertakings I willingly paid the homage of believing that they, who were thus solicitous for the perpetuity of their language, had reason to expect that their actions would be celebrated by posterity, and that  
the

the eloquence which they promoted would be employed in their praise. But I consider such acts of beneficence as prodigies, recorded rather to raise wonder than expectation; and content with the terms that I had stipulated, had not suffered my imagination to flatter me with any other encouragement, when I found that my design had been thought by your Lordship of importance sufficient to attract your favour.

How far this unexpected distinction can be rated among the happy incidents of life, I am not yet able to determine. Its first effect has been to make me anxious, lest it should fix the attention of the publick too much upon me, and, as it once happened to an epick poet of *France*, by raising the reputation of the attempt, obstruct the reception of the work. I imagine what the world will expect from a scheme, prosecuted under your Lordship's influence; and I know that expectation, when her wings are once expanded, easily reaches heights which performance never will attain; and when she has mounted the summit of perfection, derides her follower, who dies in the pursuit.

Not therefore to raise expectation, but to repress it, I here lay before your Lordship the Plan of my undertaking, that more may not be demanded than I intend; and that, before it is too far advanced to be thrown into a new method, I may be advertised of its defects or superfluities. Such informations I may justly hope, from the emulation with which those, who desire the praise of elegance or discernment, must contend in the promotion of a design

that you, my Lord; have not thought unworthy to share your attention with treaties and with wars.

In the first attempt to methodise my ideas I found a difficulty, which extended itself to the whole work. It was not easy to determine by what rule of distinction the words of this Dictionary were to be chosen. The chief intent of it is to preserve the purity, and ascertain the meaning of our *English* idiom; and this seems to require nothing more than that our language be considered, so far as it is our own; that the words and phrases used in the general intercourse of life, or found in the works of those whom we commonly stile polite writers, be selected, without including the terms of particular professions; since, with the arts to which they relate, they are generally derived from other nations, and are very often the same in all the languages of this part of the world. This is, perhaps, the exact and pure idea of a grammatical dictionary; but in lexicography, as in other arts, naked science is too delicate for the purposes of life. The value of a work must be estimated by its use: it is not enough that a dictionary delights the critic, unless, at the same time, it instructs the learner; as it is to little purpose that an engine amuses the philosopher by the subtilty of its mechanism, if it requires so much knowledge in its application as to be of no advantage to the common workman.

The title which I prefix to my work has long conveyed a very miscellaneous idea, and they that take a dictionary into their hands, have been accustomed to expect from it a solution of almost every difficulty.



difficulty. If foreign words therefore were rejected, it could be little regarded, except by criticks, or those who aspire to criticism; and however it might enlighten those that write, would be all darkness to them that only read. The unlearned much oftener consult their dictionaries for the meaning of words, than for their structures or formations; and the words that most want explanation, are generally terms of art; which, therefore, experience has taught my predecessors to spread with a kind of pompous luxuriance over their productions.

The academicians of *France*, indeed, rejected terms of science in their first essay, but found afterwards a necessity of relaxing the rigour of their determination; and, though they would not naturalize them at once by a single act, permitted them by degrees to settle themselves among the natives, with little opposition; and it would surely be no proof of judgment to imitate them in an error which they have now retracted, and deprive the book of its chief use, by scrupulous distinctions.

Of such words, however, all are not equally to be considered as parts of our language; for some of them are naturalized and incorporated, but others still continue aliens, and are rather auxiliaries than subjects. This naturalization is produced either by an admission into common speech, in some metaphorical signification, which is the acquisition of a kind of property among us; as we say, the *zenith* of advancement, the *meridian* of life, the *cynosure* \* of neighbouring eyes; or it is the consequence of

\* Milton.

long intermixture and frequent use, by which the ear is accustomed to the sound of words, till their original is forgotten, as in *equator*, *satellites*; or of the change of a foreign into an *English* termination, and a conformity to the laws of the speech into which they are adopted; as in *category*, *cachexy*, *peripneumony*.

Of those which still continue in the state of aliens, and have made no approaches towards assimilation, some seem necessary to be retained; because the purchasers of the Dictionary will expect to find them. Such are many words in the common law, as *capias*, *habeas corpus*, *præmunire*, *nisi prius*: such are some terms of controversial divinity, as *hypostasis*; and of physick, as the names of diseases; and in general, all terms which can be found in books not written professedly upon particular arts, or can be supposed necessary to those who do not regularly study them. Thus, when a reader not skilled in physick happens in *Milton* upon this line,

—— pining atrophy,  
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,

he will, with equal expectation, look into his dictionary for the word *marasmus*, as for *atrophy*, or *pestilence*; and will have reason to complain if he does not find it.

It seems necessary to the completion of a dictionary designed not merely for criticks, but for popular use, that it should comprise, in some degree, the peculiar words of every profession; that the terms of war and navigation should be inserted, so far as they can be required by readers of travels, and of

history; and those of law, merchandise, and mechanical trades, so far as they can be supposed useful in the occurrences of common life.

But there ought, however, to be some distinction made between the different classes of words; and therefore it will be proper to print those which are incorporated into the language in the usual character, and those which are still to be considered as foreign, in the *italick* letter.

Another question may arise with regard to appellatives, or the names of species. It seems of no great use to set down the words *horse, dog, cat, willow, alder, daisy, rose*, and a thousand others, of which it will be hard to give an explanation, not more obscure than the word itself. Yet it is to be considered, that, if the names of animals be inserted, we must admit those which are more known, as well as those with which we are, by accident, less acquainted; and if they are all rejected, how will the reader be relieved from difficulties produced by allusions to the crocodile, the chameleon, the ichneumon, and the hyæna? If no plants are to be mentioned, the most pleasing part of nature will be excluded, and many beautiful epithets be unexplained. If only those which are less known are to be mentioned, who shall fix the limits of the reader's learning? The importance of such explications appears from the mistakes which the want of them has occasioned. Had *Shakespeare* had a dictionary of this kind, he had not made the *woodbine* entwine the *honey-suckle*; nor would *Milton*, with such assistance, have disposed so improperly of his *ellops* and his *scorpion*.

Besides,

Besides, as such words, like others, require that their accents should be settled, their sounds ascertained, and their etymologies deduced, they cannot be properly omitted in the dictionary. And though the explanations of some may be censured as trivial, because they are almost universally understood; and those of others as unnecessary, because they will seldom occur; yet it seems not proper to omit them, since it is rather to be wished that many readers should find more than they expect, than that one should miss what he might hope to find.

When all the words are selected and arranged, the first part of the work to be considered is the orthography, which was long vague and uncertain; which at last, when its fluctuation ceased, was in many cases settled but by accident; and in which, according to your Lordship's observation, there is still great uncertainty among the best criticks: nor is it easy to state a rule by which we may decide between custom and reason, or between the equi-ponderant authorities of writers alike eminent for judgment and accuracy.

The great orthographical contest has long subsisted between etymology and pronunciation. It has been demanded, on one hand, that men should write as they speak; but, as it has been shewn that this conformity never was attained in any language, and that it is not more easy to persuade men to agree exactly in speaking than in writing, it may be asked with equal propriety, why men do not rather speak as they write. In *France*, where this controversy was at its greatest height, neither party, however ardent, durst adhere steadily to their own rule; the

etymologist was often forced to spell with the people; and the advocate for the authority of pronunciation found it sometimes deviating so capriciously from the received use of writing, that he was constrained to comply with the rule of his adversaries, lest he should lose the end by the means, and be left alone by following the crowd.

When a question of orthography is dubious, that practice has, in my opinion, a claim to preference which preserves the greatest number of radical letters, or seems most to comply with the general custom of our language. But the chief rule which I propose to follow is, to make no innovation, without a reason sufficient to balance the inconvenience of change; and such reasons I do not expect often to find. All change is of itself an evil, which ought not to be hazarded but for evident advantage; and as inconstancy is in every case a mark of weakness, it will add nothing to the reputation of our tongue. There are, indeed, some who despise the inconveniences of confusion, who seem to take pleasure in departing from custom, and to think alteration desirable for its own sake; and the reformation of our orthography, which these writers have attempted, should not pass without its due honours, but that I suppose they hold a singularity its own reward, or may dread the fascination of lavish praise.

The present usage of spelling, where the present usage can be distinguished, will therefore, in this work, be generally followed; yet there will be often occasion to observe, that it is in itself inaccurate, and tolerated rather than chosen; particularly when, by a change of one letter, or more, the meaning of  
a word



a word is obscured; as in *farrier*, or *ferrier*, as it was formerly written, from *ferrum*, or *fer*; in *gibberish*, for *gebrish*, the jargon of *Geber* and his chymical followers, understood by none but their own tribe. It will be likewise sometimes proper to trace back the orthography of different ages, and shew by what gradations the word departed from its original.

Closely connected with orthography is pronunciation, the stability of which is of great importance to the duration of a language, because the first change will naturally begin by corruptions in the living speech. The want of certain rules for the pronunciation of former ages, has made us wholly ignorant of the metrical art of our ancient poets; and since those who study their sentiments regret the loss of their numbers, it is surely time to provide that the harmony of the moderns may be more permanent.

A new pronunciation will make almost a new speech; and therefore, since one great end of this undertaking is to fix the *English* language, care will be taken to determine the accentuation of all polysyllables by proper authorities, as it is one of those capricious phænomena which cannot be easily reduced to rules. Thus there is no antecedent reason for difference or accent in the words *dolorous* and *sonorous*; yet of the one *Milton* gives the sound in this line:

He pass'd o'er many a region *dolorous*;

and that of the other in this,

*Sonorous* metal blowing martial sounds.

It

It may likewise be proper to remark metrical licences, such as contractions, *generous, gen'rous; reverend, rev'rend*; and coalitions, as *region, question*.

But it is still more necessary to fix the pronunciation of monosyllables, by placing with them words of correspondent sound, that one may guard the other against the danger of that variation, which, to some of the most common, has already happened; so that the words *wound* and *wind*, as they are now frequently pronounced, will not rhyme to *sound* and *mind*. It is to be remarked, that many words written alike are differently pronounced, as *flow*, and *brow*; which may be thus registered, *flow, woe, brow, now*; or of which the exemplification may be generally given by a distich: thus the words *tear*, or lacerate, and *tear*, the water of the eye, have the same letters, but may be distinguished thus, *tear, dare; tear, peer*.

Some words have two sounds, which may be equally admitted, as being equally defensible by authority. Thus *great* is differently used.

For *Swift* and him despis'd the farce of state,  
The sober follies of the wise and *great*. POPE.

As if misfortune made the throne her seat,  
And none could be unhappy but the *great*. ROWE.

The care of such minute particulars may be censured as trifling; but these particulars have not been thought unworthy of attention in more polished languages.

The accuracy of the *French*, in stating the sounds of their letters, is well known; and, among the  
*Italians,*

*Italians, Crescembeni* has not thought it unnecessary to inform his countrymen of the words which, in compliance with different rhymes, are allowed to be differently spelt, and of which the number is now so fixed, that no modern poet is suffered to encrease it.

When the orthography and pronunciation are adjusted, the etymology or derivation is next to be considered, and the words are to be distinguished according to their different classes, whether simple, as *day, light*, or compound, as *day-light*; whether primitive, as, to *act*, or derivative, as *action, actionable, active, activity*. This will much facilitate the attainment of our language, which now stands in our dictionaries a confused heap of words without dependence, and without relation.

When this part of the work is performed, it will be necessary to enquire how our primitives are to be deduced from foreign languages, which may be often very successfully performed by the assistance of our own etymologists. This search will give occasion to many curious disquisitions and sometimes perhaps to conjectures, which to readers unacquainted with this kind of study, cannot but appear improbable and capricious. But it may be reasonably imagined, that what is so much in the power of men as language, will very often be capriciously conducted. Nor are these disquisitions and conjectures to be considered altogether as wanton sports of wit, or vain shews of learning; our language is well known not to be primitive or self-originated, but to have adopted words of every generation, and, either for the supply of its necessities, or the encrease of its copiousness, to have received additions from very distant

distant regions; so that in search of the progenitors of our speech, we may wander from the tropick to the frozen zone, and find some in the vallies of *Pa-lestine*, and some upon the rocks of *Norway*.

Beside the derivation of particular words, there is likewise an etymology of phrases. Expressions are often taken from other languages; some apparently, as to *run a risque, courir un risque*; and some even when we do not seem to borrow their words; thus, to *bring about* or accomplish, appears an *English* phrase, but in reality our native word *about* has no such import, and is only a *French* expression, of which we have an example in the common phrases *venir à bout d'une affaire*.

In exhibiting the descent of our language, our etymologists seem to have been too lavish of their learning, having traced almost every word through various tongues, only to shew what was shewn sufficiently by the first derivation. This practice is of great use in synoptical lexicons, where mutilated and doubtful languages are explained by their affinity to others more certain and extensive, but is generally superfluous in *English* etymologies. When the word is easily deduced from a *Saxon* original, I shall not often enquire further, since we know not the parent of the *Saxon* dialect; but when it is borrowed from the *French*, I shall shew whence the *French* is apparently derived. Where a *Saxon* root cannot be found, the defect may be supplied from kindred languages, which will be generally furnished with much liberality by the writers of our glossaries; writers who deserve often the highest praise, both of judgment and industry, and may expect at least to

be mentioned with honour by me, whom they have freed from the greatest part of a very laborious work, and on whom they have imposed, at worst, only the easy task of rejecting superfluities.

By tracing in this manner every word to its original, and not admitting, but with great caution, any of which no original can be found, we shall secure our language from being over-run with cant, from being crowded with low terms, the spawn of folly or affectation, which arise from no just principles of speech, and of which therefore no legitimate derivation can be shewn.

When the etymology is thus adjusted, the analogy of our language is next to be considered; when we have discovered whence our words are derived, we are to examine by what rules they are governed, and how they are inflected through their various terminations. The terminations of the *English* are few, but those few have hitherto remained unregarded by the writers of our dictionaries. Our substantives are declined only by the plural termination, our adjectives admit no variation but in the degrees of comparison, and our verbs are conjugated by auxiliary words, and are only changed in the preter tense.

To our language may be with great justness applied the observation of *Quintilian*, that speech was not formed by an analogy sent from heaven. It did not descend to us in a state of uniformity and perfection, but was produced by necessity, and enlarged by accident, and is therefore composed of dissimilar parts, thrown together by negligence, by affectation, by learning, or by ignorance.



Our inflections therefore are by no means constant, but admit of numberless irregularities, which in this Dictionary will be diligently noted. Thus *fox* makes in the plural *foxes*, but *ox* makes *oxen*. *Sheep* is the same in both numbers. Adjectives are sometimes compared by changing the last syllable, as *proud*, *prouder*, *proudest*; and sometimes by particles prefixed, as *ambitious*, *more ambitious*, *most ambitious*. The forms of our verbs are subject to great variety; some end their preter tense in *ed*, as I *love*, I *loved*, I have *loved*; which may be called the regular form, and is followed by most of our verbs of Southern original. But many depart from this rule, without agreeing in any other; as I *shake*, I *shook*, I have *shaken*, or *shook*, as it is sometimes written in poetry; I *make*, I *made*, I have *made*; I *bring*, I *brought*; I *wring*; I *wrung*, and many others, which, as they cannot be reduced to rules, must be learned from the dictionary rather than the grammar.

The verbs are likewise to be distinguished according to their qualities, as actives from neuters; the neglect of which has already introduced some barbarities in our conversation, which if not obviated by just animadversions, may in time creep into our writings.

Thus, my Lord, will our language be laid down, distinct in its minutest subdivisions, and resolved into its elemental principles. And who upon this survey can forbear to wish, that these fundamental atoms of our speech might obtain the firmness and immutability of the primogenial and constituent particles of matter, that they might retain their sub-

stance while they alter their appearance, and be varied and compounded, yet not destroyed.

But this is a privilege which words are scarcely to expect: for, like their author, when they are not gaining strength, they are generally losing it. Though art may sometimes prolong their duration, it will rarely give them perpetuity; and their changes will be almost always informing us, that language is the work of man, of a being from whom permanence and stability cannot be derived.

Words having been hitherto considered as separate and unconnected, are now to be likewise examined as they are ranged in their various relations to others by the rules of syntax or construction, to which I do not know that any regard has been yet shewn in *English* dictionaries, and in which the grammarians can give little assistance. The syntax of this language is too inconstant to be reduced to rules, and can be only learned by the distinct consideration of particular words as they are used by the best authors. Thus, we say, according to the present modes of speech, The soldier died *of* his wounds, and the sailor perished *with* hunger: and every man acquainted with our language would be offended by a change of these particles, which yet seem originally assigned by chance, there being no reason to be drawn from grammar why a man may not, with equal propriety, be said to die *with* a wound, or perish *of* hunger.

Our syntax therefore is not to be taught by general rules, but by special precedents; and in examining whether *Addison* has been with justice accused of a solecism in this passage,

The

The poor inhabitant——

Starves in the midst of nature's bounty curst,  
And in the loaden vineyard *dies for thirst,*

it is not in our power to have recourse to any established laws of speech; but we must remark how the writers of former ages have used the same word, and consider whether he can be acquitted of impropriety, upon the testimony of *Davies*, given in his favour by a similar passage.

She loaths the wat'ry glass wherein she gaz'd,  
And shuns it still, although *for thirst she dye.*

When the construction of a word is explained, it is necessary to pursue it through its train of phraseology, through those forms where it is used in a manner peculiar to our language, or in senses not to be comprised in the general explanations; as from the verb *make* arise these phrases, to *make love*, to *make an end*, to *make way*; as, he *made way* for his followers, the ship *made way* before the wind; to *make a bed*, to *make merry*, to *make a mock*, to *make presents*, to *make a doubt*, to *make out an assertion*, to *make good* a breach, to *make good* a cause, to *make nothing* of an attempt, to *make lamentation*, to *make a merit*, and many others which will occur in reading with that view, and which only their frequency hinders from being generally remarked.

The great labour is yet to come, the labour of interpreting these words and phrases with brevity, fulness, and perspicuity; a task of which the extent and intricacy is sufficiently shewn by the miscarriage of those who have generally attempted it. This difficulty is increased by the necessity of explaining

the words in the same language; for there is often only one word for one idea; and though it be easy to translate the words *bright, sweet, salt, bitter*, into another language, it is not easy to explain them.

With regard to the interpretation, many other questions have required consideration. It was some time doubted whether it be necessary to explain the things implied by particular words; as under the term *baronet*, whether, instead of this explanation, *a title of honour next in degree to that of baron*, it would be better to mention more particularly the creation, privileges, and rank of baronets; and whether, under the word *barometer*, instead of being satisfied with observing that it is *an instrument to discover the weight of the air*, it would be fit to spend a few lines upon its invention, construction, and principles. It is not to be expected, that with the explanation of the one the herald should be satisfied, or the philosopher with that of the other; but since it will be required by common readers, that the explanations should be sufficient for common use; and since, without some attention to such demands, the Dictionary cannot become generally valuable, I have determined to consult the best writers for explanations real as well as verbal; and perhaps I may at last have reason to say, after one of the augmenters of *Furetier*, that my book is more learned than its author.

In explaining the general and popular language, it seems necessary to sort the several senses of each word, and to exhibit first its natural and primitive signification; as,

To

To *arrive*, to reach the shore in a voyage: he *arrived* at a safe harbour.

Then to give its consequential meaning, *to arrive*, to reach any place, whether by land or sea; as, he *arrived* at his country seat.

Then its metaphorical sense, to obtain any thing desired; as, he *arrived* at a peerage.

Then to mention any observation that arises from the comparison of one meaning with another; as, it may be remarked of the word *arrive*, that, in consequence of its original and etymological sense, it cannot be properly applied but to words signifying something desirable: thus we say, a man *arrived* at happiness; but cannot say, without a mixture of irony, he *arrived* at misery.

*Ground*, the earth, generally as opposed to the air or water. He swam till he reached *ground*. The bird fell to the *ground*.

Then follows the accidental or consequential signification, in which *ground* implies any thing that lies under another; as he laid colours upon a rough *ground*. The silk had blue flowers on a red *ground*.

Then the remoter or metaphorical signification; as, the *ground* of his opinion was a false computation. The *ground* of his work was his father's manuscript.

After having gone through the natural and figurative senses, it will be proper to subjoin the poetical sense of each word, where it differs from that which is in common use; as *wanton*, applied to any thing of which the motion is irregular without terror; as,

In *wanton* ringlets curl'd her hair.



To the poetical sense may succeed the familiar; as of *toast*, used to imply the person whose health is drank; as,

The wife man's passion, and the vain man's *toast*. POPE.

The familiar may be followed by the burlesque; as of *mellow*, applied to good fellowship.

In all thy humours, whether grave or *mellow*. ADDISON.

Or of *bite*, used for *cheat*.

———More a dupe than wit,

*Sappho* can tell you how this man was *bit*. POPE.

And, lastly, may be produced the peculiar sense, in which a word is found in any great author: as *faculties*, in *Shakespeare*, signifies the powers of authority.

———This *Duncan*

Has born his *faculties* so meek, has been  
So clear in his great office, that, &c.

The signification of adjectives may be often ascertained by uniting them to substantives; as, *simple swain*, *simple sheep*. Sometimes the sense of a substantive may be elucidated by the epithets annexed to it in good authors; as, the *boundless ocean*, the *open lawns*: and where such advantage can be gained by a short quotation, it is not to be omitted.

The difference of signification in words generally accounted synonymous, ought to be carefully observed; as in *pride*, *haughtiness*, *arrogance*: and the strict and critical meaning ought to be distinguished from that which is loose and popular; as in the word *perfection*, which, though in its philosophical and  
exact

exact sense it can be of little use among human beings, is often so much degraded from its original signification, that the academicians have inserted in their work, the perfection of a language, and, with a little more licentiousness, might have prevailed on themselves to have added *the perfection of a dictionary*.

There are many other characters of words which it will be of use to mention. Some have both an active and passive signification; as *fearful*, that which gives or which feels terror; a *fearful prodigy*, a *fearful bare*. Some have a personal, some a real meaning; as in opposition to *old*, we use the adjective *young*, of animated beings, and *new* of other things. Some are restrained to the sense of praise, and others to that of disapprobation; so commonly, though not always, we *exhort* to good actions, we *instigate* to ill; we *animate*, *incite*, and *encourage* indifferently to good or bad. So we usually *ascribe* good, but *impute* evil; yet neither the use of these words, nor, perhaps, of any other in our licentious language, is so established as not to be often reversed by the correctest writers. I shall therefore, since the rules of style, like those of law, arise from precedents often repeated, collect the testimonies on both sides, and endeavour to discover and promulgate the decrees of custom, who has so long possessed, whether by right or by usurpation, the sovereignty of words.

It is necessary likewise to explain many words by their opposition to others; for contraries are best seen when they stand together. Thus the verb *stand* has one sense, as opposed to *fall*, and another as opposed to *fly*; for want of attending to which distinction,

tion, obvious as it is, the learned Dr. *Bentley* has squandered his criticism to no purpose, on these lines of *Paradise Lost* :

———In heaps

Chariot and charioteer lay overturn'd,  
And fiery foaming steeds. What *stood, recoil'd,*  
O'erwearied, through the faint, satanic host,  
Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surpris'd,  
*Fled* ignominious —

' Here,' says the critick, ' as the sentence is now read, we find that what *stood, fled* : ' and therefore he proposes an alteration, which he might have spared if he had consulted a dictionary, and found that nothing more was affirmed than that those *fled* who did *not fall*.

In explaining such meanings as seem accidental and adventitious, I shall endeavour to give an account of the means by which they were introduced. Thus, to *eke out* any thing, signifies to lengthen it beyond its just dimensions, by some low artifice ; because the word *eke* was the usual refuge of our old writers, when they wanted a syllable. And *buxom*, which means only *obedient*, is now made, in familiar phrases, to stand for *wanton* ; because in an ancient form of marriage, before the Reformation, the bride promised complaisance and obedience, in these terms : ' I will be bonair and *buxom* in bed and at board.'

I know well, my Lord, how trifling many of these remarks will appear separately considered, and how easily they may give occasion to the contemptuous merriment of sportive idleness, and the gloomy censures of arrogant stupidity ; but dulness it is easy to despise, and laughter it is easy to repay. I shall not  
be

be solicitous what is thought of my work by such as know not the difficulty or importance of philological studies; nor shall think those that have done nothing, qualified to condemn me for doing little. It may not, however, be improper to remind them, that no terrestrial greatness is more than an aggregate of little things; and to inculcate, after the *Arabian* proverb, that drops, added to drops, constitute the ocean.

There remains yet to be considered the distribution of words into their proper classes, or that part of lexicography which is strictly critical.

The popular part of the language, which includes all words not appropriated to particular sciences, admits of many distinctions and subdivisions; as, into words of general use, words employed chiefly in poetry, words obsolete, words which are admitted only by particular writers, yet not in themselves improper; words used only in burlesque writing; and words impure and barbarous.

Words of general use will be known by having no sign of particularity, and their various senses will be supported by authorities of all ages.

The words appropriated to poetry will be distinguished by some mark prefixed, or will be known by having no authorities but those of poets.

Of antiquated or obsolete words, none will be inserted but such as are to be found in authors who wrote since the accession of *Elizabeth*, from which we date the golden age of our language; and of these many might be omitted, but that the reader may require, with an appearance of reason, that no difficulty should be left unresolved in books which he

he finds himself invited to read, as confessed and established models of stile. These will be likewise pointed out by some note of exclusion, but not of disgrace.

The words which are found only in particular books, will be known by the single name of him that has used them; but such will be omitted, unless either their propriety, elegance, or force, or the reputation of their authors, affords some extraordinary reason for their reception.

Words used in burlesque and familiar compositions, will be likewise mentioned with their proper authorities; such as *dudgeon*, from *Butler*, and *leafing*, from *Prior*; and will be diligently characterised by marks of distinction.

Barbarous, or impure words and expressions, may be branded with some note of infamy, as they are carefully to be eradicated wherever they are found; and they occur too frequently even in the best writers: as in *Pope*,

— *in endless error hur'd.*

'Tis *these* that early taint the female soul.

In *Addison*:

Attend to what a *lesser* muse indites.

And in *Dryden*,

A dreadful quiet felt, and *worser* far  
Than arms—

If this part of the work can be well performed, it will be equivalent to the proposal made by *Boileau* to the academicians, that they should review all their polite writers, and correct such impurities as might be found in them, that their authority might not contribute, at any distant time, to the depravation of the language.



With regard to questions of purity, or propriety, I was once in doubt whether I should not attribute too much to myself, in attempting to decide them, and whether my province was to extend beyond the proposition of the question, and the display of the suffrages on each side; but I have been since determined, by your Lordship's opinion, to interpose my own judgment, and shall therefore endeavour to support what appears to me most consonant to grammar and reason. *Ausonius* thought that modesty forbid him to plead inability for a task to which *Cæsar* had judged him equal.

*Cur me posse negem posse quod ille putat ?*

And I may hope, my Lord, that since you, whose authority in our language is so generally acknowledged, have commissioned me to declare my own opinion, I shall be considered as exercising a kind of vicarious jurisdiction, and that the power which might have been denied to my own claim, will be readily allowed me as the delegate of your Lordship.

In citing authorities, on which the credit of every part of this Work must depend, it will be proper to observe some obvious rules; such as of preferring writers of the first reputation to those of an inferior rank; of noting the quotations with accuracy; and of selecting, when it can be conveniently done, such sentences, as, besides their immediate use, may give pleasure or instruction, by conveying some elegance of language, or some precept of prudence, or piety.

It has been asked, on some occasions, who shall judge the judges? And since, with regard to this design, a question may arise by what authority the  
 authorities

authorities are selected, it is necessary to obviate it, by declaring that many of the writers whose testimonies will be alleged, were selected by Mr. *Pope*; of whom, I may be justified in affirming, that were he still alive, solicitous as he was for the success of this work, he would not be displeas'd that I have undertaken it.

It will be proper that the quotations be ranged according to the ages of their authors; and it will afford an agreeable amusement, if, to the words and phrases which are not of our own growth, the name of the writer who first introduced them can be affixed; and if, to words which are now antiquated, the authority be subjoined of him who last admitted them. Thus, for *scathe* and *buxom*, now obsolete, *Milton* may be cited.

—————The mountain oak  
 Stands *scath'd* to heaven —————  
 —————He with broad sails  
 Winnow'd the *buxom* air —————

By this method every word will have its history, and the reader will be inform'd of the gradual changes of the language, and have before his eyes the rise of some words, and the fall of others. But observations so minute and accurate are to be desired rather than expected; and if use be carefully supplied, curiosity must sometimes bear its disappointments.

This, my Lord, is my idea of an *English* Dictionary; a dictionary by which the pronunciation of our language may be fix'd, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserv'd, its use ascertain'd, and its duration lengthen'd. And though, perhaps, to correct the language of nations

by books of grammar, and amend their manners by discourses of morality, may be tasks equally difficult; yet, as it is unavoidable to wish, it is natural likewise to hope, that your Lordship's patronage may not be wholly lost; that it may contribute to the preservation of ancient, and the improvement of modern writers; that it may promote the reformation of those translators, who, for want of understanding the characteristic difference of tongues, have formed a chaotic dialect of heterogeneous phrases; and awaken to the care of purer diction some men of genius, whose attention to argument makes them negligent of style, or whose rapid imagination, like the *Peruvian* torrents, when it brings down gold, mingles it with sand.

When I survey the Plan which I have laid before you, I cannot, my Lord, but confess, that I am frightened at its extent, and, like the soldiers of *Cæsar*, look on *Britain* as a new world, which it is almost madness to invade. But I hope, that though I should not complete the conquest, I shall at least discover the coast, civilize part of the inhabitants, and make it easy for some other adventurer to proceed farther, to reduce them wholly to subjection, and settle them under laws.

We are taught by the great *Roman* orator, that every man should propose to himself the highest degree of excellence, but that he may stop with honour at the second or third: though therefore my performance should fall below the excellence of other dictionaries, I may obtain, at least, the praise of having endeavoured well; nor shall I think it any reproach to my diligence, that I have retired without  
a triumph,

a triumph, from a contest with united academies, and long successions of learned compilers. I cannot hope, in the warmest moments, to preserve so much caution through so long a work, as not often to sink into negligence, or to obtain so much knowledge of all its parts, as not frequently to fail by ignorance. I expect that sometimes the desire of accuracy will urge me to superfluities, and sometimes the fear of prolixity betray me to omissions: that in the extent of such variety, I shall be often bewildered; and in the mazes of such intricacy, be frequently entangled; that in one part refinement will be subtilised beyond exactness, and evidence dilated in another beyond perspicuity. Yet I do not despair of approbation from those who, knowing the uncertainty of conjecture, the scantiness of knowledge, the fallibility of memory, and the unsteadiness of attention, can compare the causes of error with the means of avoiding it, and the extent of art with the capacity of man; and whatever be the event of my endeavours, I shall not easily regret an attempt which has procured me the honour of appearing thus publickly,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most humble servant,



SAM. JOHNSON.

P R E F A C E  
T O T H E  
E N G L I S H D I C T I O N A R Y .

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**I**T is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.

Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other author may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompence has been yet granted to very few.

I have, notwithstanding this discouragement, attempted a Dictionary of the *English* language,  
VOL. IX. O which,



which, while it was employed in the cultivation of every species of literature, has itself been hitherto neglected; suffered to spread, under the direction of chance, into wild exuberance; resigned to the tyranny of time and fashion; and exposed to the corruptions of ignorance, and caprices of innovation.

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rule: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.

Having therefore no assistance but from general grammar, I applied myself to the perusal of our writers; and noting whatever might be of use to ascertain or illustrate any word or phrase, accumulated in time the materials of a dictionary, which, by degrees, I reduced to method, establishing to myself, in the progress of the work, such rules as experience and analogy suggested to me; experience, which practice and observation were continually increasing; and analogy, which, though in some words obscure, was evident in others.

In adjusting the *Orthography*, which has been to this time unsettled and fortuitous, I found it necessary to distinguish those irregularities that are inherent in our tongue, and perhaps coëval with it,  
from

from others which the ignorance or negligence of later writers has produced. Every language has its anomalies, which, though inconvenient, and in themselves once unnecessary, must be tolerated among the imperfections of human things, and which require only to be registered, that they may not be increased, and ascertained, that they may not be confounded: but every language has likewise its improprieties and absurdities, which it is the duty of the lexicographer to correct or proscribe.

As language was at its beginning merely oral, all words of necessary or common use were spoken before they were written; and while they were unfixed by any visible signs, must have been spoken with great diversity, as we now observe those who cannot read to catch sounds imperfectly, and utter them negligently. When this wild and barbarous jargon was first reduced to an alphabet, every penman endeavoured to express, as he could, the sounds which he was accustomed to pronounce or to receive, and vitiated in writing such words as were already vitiated in speech. The powers of the letters, when they were applied to a new language, must have been vague and unsettled, and therefore different hands would exhibit the same sound by different combinations.

From this uncertain pronunciation arise in a great part the various dialects of the same country, which will always be observed to grow fewer, and less different, as books are multiplied; and from this arbitrary representation of sounds by letters, proceeds that diversity of spelling observable in the *Saxon* re-

mains, and I suppose in the first books of every nation, which perplexes or destroys analogy, and produces anomalous formations, that, being once incorporated, can never be afterward dismissed or reformed.

Of this kind are the derivatives *length* from *long*, *strength* from *strong*, *darling* from *dear*, *breadth* from *broad*, from *dry*, *drought*, and from *high*, *height*, which *Milton*, in zeal for analogy, writes *hight*: *Quid te exempta juvat spinis de pluribus una?* to change all would be too much, and to change one is nothing.

This uncertainty is most frequent in the vowels, which are so capriciously pronounced, and so differently modified, by accident or affectation, not only in every province, but in every mouth, that to them, as is well known to etymologists, little regard is to be shewn in the deduction of one language from another.

Such defects are not errors in orthography, but spots of barbarity impressed so deep in the *English* language, that criticism can never wash them away: these, therefore, must be permitted to remain untouched; but many words have likewise been altered by accident, or depraved by ignorance, as the pronunciation of the vulgar has been weakly followed; and some still continue to be variously written, as authors differ in their care or skill: of these it was proper to enquire the true orthography, which I have always considered as depending on their derivation, and have therefore referred them to their original languages: thus I write *enchant*, *enchantment*, *enchanter*, after the *French*, and *incantation* after the *Latin*;

*Latin*; thus *entire* is chosen rather than *intire*, because it passed to us not from the *Latin integer*, but from the *French entier*.

Of many words it is difficult to say whether they were immediately received from the *Latin* or the *French*, since at the time when we had dominions in *France*, we had *Latin* service in our churches. It is, however, my opinion, that the *French* generally supplied us; for we have few *Latin* words, among the terms of domestick use, which are not *French*; but many *French*, which are very remote from *Latin*.

Even in words of which the derivation is apparent, I have been often obliged to sacrifice uniformity to custom; thus I write, in compliance with a numberless majority, *convey* and *inveigh*, *deceit* and *receipt*, *fancy* and *phantom*; sometimes the derivative varies from the primitive, as *explain* and *explanation*, *repeat* and *repetition*.

Some combinations of letters having the same power, are used indifferently without any discoverable reason of choice, as in *choak*, *choke*; *soap*, *sope*; *fewel*, *fuel*, and many others; which I have sometimes inserted twice, that those who search for them under either form, may not search in vain.

In examining the orthography of any doubtful word, the mode of spelling by which it is inserted in the series of the dictionary, is to be considered as that to which I give, perhaps not often rashly, the preference. I have left, in the examples, to every author his own practice unmolested, that the reader may balance suffrages, and judge between us: but this question is not always to be determined by reputed or by real learning; some men, intent upon

greater things, have thought little on sounds and derivations; some, knowing in the ancient tongues, have neglected those in which our words are commonly to be sought. Thus *Hammond* writes *fecible-ness* for *feasibleness*, because I suppose he imagined it derived immediately from the *Latin*; and some words, such as *dependant*, *dependent*; *dependance*, *dependence*, vary their final syllable, as one or another language is present to the writer.

In this part of the work, where caprice has long wanted without control, and vanity sought praise by petty reformation, I have endeavoured to proceed with a scholar's reverence for antiquity, and a grammarian's regard to the genius of our tongue. I have attempted few alterations, and among those few, perhaps the greater part is from the modern to the ancient practice; and I hope I may be allowed to recommend to those, whose thoughts have been perhaps employed too anxiously on verbal singularities, not to disturb, upon narrow views, or for minute propriety, the orthography of their fathers. It has been asserted, that for the law to be *known*, is of more importance than to be *right*. Change, says *Hooker*, is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better. There is in constancy and stability a general and lasting advantage, which will always overbalance the slow improvements of gradual correction. Much less ought our written language to comply with the corruptions of oral utterance, or copy that which every variation of time or place makes different from itself, and imitate those changes, which will again be changed, while imitation is employed in observing them,

This



This recommendation of steadiness and uniformity does not proceed from an opinion, that particular combinations of letters have much influence on human happiness; or that truth may not be successfully taught by modes of spelling fanciful and erroneous: I am not yet so lost in lexicography, as to forget that *words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven*. Language is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas: I wish, however, that the instrument might be less apt to decay, and that signs might be permanent, like the things which they denote.

In settling the orthography, I have not wholly neglected the pronunciation, which I have directed, by printing an accent upon the acute or elevated syllable. It will sometimes be found, that the accent is placed by the author quoted, on a different syllable from that marked in the alphabetical series; it is then to be understood, that custom has varied, or that the author has, in my opinion, pronounced wrong. Short directions are sometimes given where the sound of letters is irregular; and if they are sometimes omitted, defect in such minute observations will be more easily excused, than superfluity.

In the investigation both of the orthography and signification of words, their *Etymology* was necessarily to be considered, and they were therefore to be divided into primitives and derivatives. A primitive word, is that which can be traced no further to any *English* root; thus *circumspect, circumvent, circumstance, delude, concave, and complicate*, though compounds in the *Latin*, are to us primitives. Deriva-

tives, are all those that can be referred to any word in *English* of greater simplicity.

The derivatives I have referred to their primitives, with an accuracy sometimes needless; for who does not see that *remoteness* comes from *remote*, *lovely* from *love*, *concavity* from *concave*, and *demonstrative* from *demonstrate*? But this grammatical exuberance the scheme of my work did not allow me to repress. It is of great importance, in examining the general fabric of a language, to trace one word from another, by noting the usual modes of derivation and inflection; and uniformity must be preserved in systematical works, though sometimes at the expence of particular propriety.

Among other derivatives I have been careful to insert and elucidate the anomalous plurals of nouns and preterites of verbs, which in the *Teutonic* dialects are very frequent, and, though familiar to those who have always used them, interrupt and embarrass the learners of our language.

The two languages from which our primitives have been derived are the *Roman* and *Teutonic*: under the *Roman* I comprehend the *French* and provincial tongues; and under the *Teutonic* range the *Saxon*, *German*, and all their kindred dialects. Most of our polysyllables are *Roman*, and our words of one syllable are very often *Teutonic*.

In assigning the *Roman* original, it has perhaps sometimes happened that I have mentioned only the *Latin*, when the word was borrowed from the *French*; and considering myself as employed only in the illustration of my own language, I have not been very careful to observe whether the *Latin* word be  
 pure

pure or barbarous, or the *French* elegant or obsolete.

For the *Teutonick* etymologies I am commonly indebted to *Junius* and *Skinner*, the only names which I have forbore to quote when I copied their books; not that I might appropriate their labours or usurp their honours, but that I might spare a perpetual repetition by one general acknowledgment. Of these, whom I ought not to mention but with the reverence due to instructors and benefactors, *Junius* appears to have excelled in extent of learning, and *Skinner* in rectitude of understanding. *Junius* was accurately skilled in all the northern languages, *Skinner* probably examined the ancient and remoter dialects only by occasional inspection into dictionaries; but the learning of *Junius* is often of no other use than to show him a track by which he may deviate from his purpose, to which *Skinner* always presses forward by the shortest way. *Skinner* is often ignorant, but never ridiculous: *Junius* is always full of knowledge; but his variety distracts his judgment, and his learning is very frequently disgraced by his absurdities.

The votaries of the northern muses will not perhaps easily restrain their indignation, when they find the name of *Junius* thus degraded by a disadvantageous comparison; but whatever reverence is due to his diligence, or his attainments, it can be no criminal degree of censoriousness to charge that etymologist with want of judgment, who can seriously derive *dream* from *drama*, because *life is a drama, and a drama is a dream*; and who declares with a tone of defiance, that no man can fail to derive

*moon*

*moan* from *μονος*, *monos*, *single* or *solitary*, who considers that grief naturally loves to be alone\*.

Our knowledge of the northern literature is so scanty, that of words undoubtedly *Teutonick*, the original is not always to be found in any ancient lan-

\* That I may not appear to have spoken too irreverently of *Junius*, I have here subjoined a few specimens of his etymological extravagance.

**BANISH**, *religere, ex banno vel territorio exigere, in exilium agere*. G. *bannir*. It. *bandire, bandeggiare*. H. *bandir*. B. *bannen*. Ævi medii scriptores *bannire* dicebant. V. Spelm. in *Bannum* & in *Banleuga*. Quoniam verò regionum urbiumq; limites arduis plerumq; montibus, altis fluminibus, longis deniq; flexuosisq; angustissimarum viarum amfractibus includebantur, fieri potest id genus limites *ban* dici ab eo quod *Βανάται* & *Βανάδες* Tarentinis olim, sicuti tradit Hesy chius, vocabantur *αί λοξοί καὶ μὴ ἰσοτενεῖς ὁδοί*, “obliquæ ac minimè in rectum tendentes viæ.” Ac fortasse quoque huc facit quod *Βανθές*, eodem Hesy chio teste, dicebant *ὄρη τραγγύλον*, montes arduos.

**EMPTY**, *emptie, vacuus, inanis*. A. S. *Æmptig* Nescio an sint ab *ἐμῶ* vel *εὐμῶ*. Vomō, evomō, vomitu evacuō. Videtur interim etymologiam hanc non obscurè firmare codex *Rush. Mat. xii. 22.* ubi antiquè scriptum invenimus *ζεμοετεςδ ηρε εμετιγ*. “Invenit eam vacantem.”

**HILL**, *mons, collis*. A. S. *hýll*. Quod videri potest abscissum ex *κολώνη* vel *κολωνάς*. Collis, tumulus, locus in plano editior. *Hom. Il. b. v. 811.* *ἔστι δὲ τις προπάραιθε πόλιος ἀίπειτα κολώνη*. Ubi auctori brevium scholiorum *κολώνη* exp. *τύπος εἰς ὄψος ἀνίκων, γειώλοφος ἐξοχή*.

**NAP**, *to take a nap. Dormire, condormiscere*. Cym. *heppian*. A. S. *hnæppan*. Quod postremum videri potest desumptum ex *κνίφας*, obscuritas, tenebræ: nihil enim æque solet conciliare somnum, quàm caliginosa profundæ noctis obscuritas.

**STAMMERER**, *Balbus, blæfus*. Goth. *STAMMS*. A. S. *ŕtamēr, ŕtamur*. D. *ŕtam*. B. *ŕtameler*. Su. *ŕtamma*. Ifl. *ŕtamr*. Sunt a *σωμυλεῖν* vel *σωμέλλειν*, *niniâ* loquacitate alios offendere; quod impeditè loquentes libentissimè garrere soleant; vel quòd aliis nimii semper videantur, etiam parcissimè loquentes.

guage;

guage ; and I have therefore inserted *Dutch* or *German* substitutes, which I consider not as radical, but parallel, not as the parents, but sisters of the *English*.

The words which are represented as thus related by descent or cognation, do not always agree in sense ; for it is incident to words, as to their authors, to degenerate from their ancestors, and to change their manners when they change their country. It is sufficient, in etymological enquiries, if the senses of kindred words be found such as may easily pass into each other, or such as may both be referred to one general idea.

The etymology, so far as it is yet known, was easily found in the volumes where it is particularly and professedly delivered ; and, by proper attention to the rules of derivation, the orthography was soon adjusted. But to *collect* the *Words* of our language was a task of greater difficulty : the deficiency of dictionaries was immediately apparent ; and when they were exhausted, what was yet wanting must be sought by fortuitous and unguided excursions into books, and gleaned as industry should find, or chance should offer it, in the boundless chaos of a living speech. My search, however, has been either skilful or lucky ; for I have much augmented the vocabulary.

As my design was a dictionary, common or appellative, I have omitted all words which have relation to proper names ; such as *Arian*, *Socinian*, *Calvinists*, *Benedictine*, *Mahometan* ; but have retained those of a more general nature, as *Heathen*, *Pagan*.



Of the terms of art I have received such as could be found either in books of science or technical dictionaries; and have often inserted, from philosophical writers, words which are supported perhaps only by a single authority, and which being not admitted into general use, stand yet as candidates or probationers, and must depend for their adoption on the suffrage of futurity.

The words which our authors have introduced by their knowledge of foreign languages, or ignorance of their own, by vanity or wantonness, by compliance with fashion or lust of innovation, I have registered as they occurred, though commonly only to censure them, and warn others against the folly of naturalizing useless foreigners to the injury of the natives.

I have not rejected any by design, merely because they were unnecessary or exuberant; but have received those which by different writers have been differently formed, as *viscid*, and *viscidity*, *viscous*, and *viscosity*.

Compounded or double words I have seldom noted, except when they obtain a signification different from that which the components have in their simple state. Thus *highwayman*, *woodman*, and *horsecourser*, require an explanation; but of *thieflike* or *coachdriver* no notice was needed, because the primitives contain the meaning of the compounds.

Words arbitrarily formed by a constant and settled analogy, like diminutive adjectives in *ish*, as *greenish*, *bluish*; adverbs in *ly*, as *dully*, *openly*; substantives in *ness*, as *vileness*, *faultiness*; were less diligently sought, and sometimes have been omitted, when I  
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had no authority that invited me to insert them; not that they are not genuine and regular offsprings of *English* roots, but because their relation to the primitive being always the same, their signification cannot be mistaken.

The verbal nouns in *ing*, such as the *keeping* of the *castle*, the *leading* of the *army*, are always neglected, or placed only to illustrate the sense of the verb, except when they signify things as well as actions, and have therefore a plural number, as *dwelling*, *living*; or have an absolute and abstract signification, as *colouring*, *painting*, *learning*.

The participles are likewise omitted, unless, by signifying rather habit or quality than action, they take the nature of adjectives; as a *thinking* man, a man of prudence; a *pacing* horse, a horse that can pace: these I have ventured to call *participial adjectives*. But neither are these always inserted, because they are commonly to be understood, without any danger of mistake, by consulting the verb.

Obsolete words are admitted, when they are found in authors not obsolete, or when they have any force or beauty that may deserve revival.

As composition is one of the chief characteristics of a language, I have endeavoured to make some reparation for the universal negligence of my predecessors, by inserting great numbers of compounded words, as may be found under *after*, *fore*, *new*, *night*, *fair*, and many more. These, numerous as they are, might be multiplied, but that use and curiosity are here satisfied, and the frame of our language and modes of our combination amply discovered.

Of some forms of composition, such as that by which *re* is prefixed to note *repetition*, and *un* to signify *contrariety* or *privation*, all the examples cannot be accumulated, because the use of these particles, if not wholly arbitrary, is so little limited, that they are hourly affixed to new words as occasion requires, or is imagined to require them.

There is another kind of composition more frequent in our language than perhaps in any other, from which arises to foreigners the greatest difficulty. We modify the signification of many words by a particle subjoined; as to *come off*, to escape by a fetch; to *fall on*, to attack; to *fall off*, to apostatize; to *break off*, to stop abruptly; to *bear out*, to justify; to *fall in*, to comply; to *give over*, to cease; to *set off*, to embellish; to *set in*, to begin a continual tenour; to *set out*, to begin a course or journey; to *take off*, to copy; with innumerable expressions of the same kind, of which some appear wildly irregular, being so far distant from the sense of the simple words, that no sagacity will be able to trace the steps by which they arrived at the present use. These I have noted with great care; and though I cannot flatter myself that the collection is complete, I believe I have so far assisted the students of our language, that this kind of phraseology will be no longer insuperable; and the combinations of verbs and particles, by chance omitted, will be easily explained by comparison with those that may be found.

Many words yet stand supported only by the name of *Bailey*, *Ainsworth*, *Philips*, or the contracted *Dist.* for *Dictionaries* subjoined; of these I am not always certain that they are read in any book but the works  
of

of lexicographers. Of such I have omitted many, because I had never read them; and many I have inserted, because they may perhaps exist, though they have escaped my notice: they are, however, to be yet considered as resting only upon the credit of former dictionaries. Others, which I considered as useful, or know to be proper, though I could not at present support them by authorities, I have suffered to stand upon my own attestation, claiming the same privilege with my predecessors, of being sometimes credited without proof.

The words, thus selected and disposed, are grammatically considered; they are referred to the different parts of speech; traced, when they are irregularly inflected, through their various terminations; and illustrated by observations, not indeed of great or striking importance, separately considered, but necessary to the elucidation of our language, and hitherto neglected or forgotten by *English* grammarians.

That part of my work on which I expect malignity most frequently to fasten, is the *explanation*; in which I cannot hope to satisfy those, who are perhaps not inclined to be pleased, since I have not always been able to satisfy myself. To interpret a language by itself is very difficult; many words cannot be explained by synonyms, because the idea signified by them has not more than one appellation; nor by paraphrase, because simple ideas cannot be described. When the nature of things is unknown, or the notion unsettled and indefinite, and various in various minds, the words by which such notions are conveyed, or such things denoted, will be ambiguous

biguous and perplexed. And such is the fate of hapless lexicography, that not only darkness, but light, impedes and distresses it; things may be not only too little, but too much known, to be happily illustrated. To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found; for as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit a definition.

Other words there are, of which the sense is too subtle and evanescent to be fixed in a paraphrase; such are all those which are by the grammarians termed *expletives*, and, in dead languages, are suffered to pass for empty sounds, of no other use than to fill a verse, or to modulate a period, but which are easily perceived in living tongues to have power and emphasis, though it be sometimes such as no other form of expression can convey.

My labour has likewise been much increased by a class of verbs too frequent in the *English* language, of which the signification is so loose and general, the use so vague and indeterminate, and the senses deformed so widely from the first idea, that it is hard to trace them through the maze of variation, to catch them on the brink of utter inanity, to circumscribe them by any limitations, or interpret them by any words of distinct and settled meaning; such are *bear, break, come, cast, full, get, give, do, put, set, go, run, make, take, turn, throw*. If of these the whole power is not accurately delivered, it must be remembered, that while our language is yet living,  
and



and variable by the caprice of every one that speaks it, these words are hourly shifting their relations, and can no more be ascertained in a dictionary, than a grove, in the agitation of a storm, can be accurately delineated from its picture in the water.

The particles are among all nations applied with so great latitude, that they are not easily reducible under any regular scheme of explication: this difficulty is not less, nor perhaps greater, in *English*, than in other languages. I have laboured them with diligence, I hope with success; such at least as can be expected in a task, which no man, however learned or sagacious, has yet been able to perform.

Some words there are which I cannot explain, because I do not understand them; these might have been omitted very often with little inconvenience, but I would not so far indulge my vanity as to decline this confession: for when *Tully* owns himself ignorant whether *lessus*, in the twelve tables, means a *funeral song*, or *mourning garment*; and *Aristotle* doubts whether *ὄρεος*, in the *Iliad*, signifies a *mule*, or *muleteer*, I may surely, without shame, leave some obscurities to happier industry, or future information.

The rigour of interpretative lexicography requires that *the explanation, and the word explained, should be always reciprocal*; this I have always endeavoured, but could not always attain. Words are seldom exactly synonymous; a new term was not introduced, but because the former was thought inadequate: names, therefore, have often many ideas, but few ideas have many names. It was then necessary to use the proximate word, for the deficiency of single

terms can very seldom be supplied by circumlocution; nor is the inconvenience great of such mutilated interpretations, because the sense may easily be collected entire from the examples.

In every word of extensive use, it was requisite to mark the progress of its meaning, and show by what gradations of intermediate sense it has passed from its primitive to its remote and accidental signification; so that every foregoing explanation should tend to that which follows, and the series be regularly concatenated from the first notion to the last.

This is specious, but not always practicable; kindred senses may be so interwoven, that the perplexity cannot be disentangled, nor any reason be assigned why one should be ranged before the other. When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their nature collateral? The shades of meaning sometimes pass imperceptibly into each other; so that though on one side they apparently differ, yet it is impossible to mark the point of contact. Ideas of the same race, though not exactly alike, are sometimes so little different, that no words can express the dissimilitude, though the mind easily perceives it, when they are exhibited together; and sometimes there is such a confusion of acceptations, that discernment is wearied, and distinction puzzled, and perseverance herself hurries to an end, by crowding together what she cannot separate.

These complaints of difficulty will, by those that have never considered words beyond their popular use, be thought only the jargon of a man willing to magnify his labours, and procure veneration to his studies

studies by involution and obscurity. But every art is obscure to those that have not learned it: this uncertainty of terms, and commixture of ideas, is well known to those who have joined philosophy with grammar; and if I have not expressed them very clearly, it must be remembered that I am speaking of that which words are insufficient to explain.

The original sense of words is often driven out of use by their metaphorical acceptations, yet must be inserted for the sake of a regular origination. Thus I know not whether *ardour* is used for *material heat*, or whether *flagrant*, in *English*, ever signifies the same with *burning*; yet such are the primitive ideas of these words, which are therefore set first, though without examples, that the figurative senses may be commodiously deduced.

Such is the exuberance of signification which many words have obtained, that it was scarcely possible to collect all their senses; sometimes the meaning of derivatives must be sought in the mother term, and sometimes deficient explanations of the primitive may be supplied in the train of derivation. In any case of doubt or difficulty, it will be always proper to examine all the words of the same race; for some words are slightly passed over to avoid repetition, some admitted easier and clearer explanation than others, and all will be better understood, as they are considered in greater variety of structures and relations.

All the interpretations of words are not written with the same skill, or the same happiness: things equally easy in themselves, are not all equally easy to any single mind. Every writer of a long work

commits errors, where there appears neither ambiguity to mislead, nor obscurity to confound him; and in a search like this, many felicities of expression will be casually overlooked, many convenient parallels will be forgotten, and many particulars will admit improvement from a mind utterly unequal to the whole performance.

But many seeming faults are to be imputed rather to the nature of the undertaking, than the negligence of the performer. Thus some explanations are unavoidably reciprocal or circular, as *bind, the female of the stag; stag, the male of the bind*: sometimes easier words are changed into harder, as *burial* into *sepulture* or *interment*, *drier* into *desiccative*, *dryness* into *siccity* or *aridity*, *fit* into *paroxysm*; for the easiest word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy. But easiness and difficulty are merely relative; and if the present prevalence of our language should invite foreigners to this Dictionary, many will be assisted by those words which now seem only to increase or produce obscurity. For this reason I have endeavoured frequently to join a *Teutonick* and *Roman* interpretation, as to *cheer, to gladden, or exhilarate*, that every learner of *English* may be assisted by his own tongue.

The solution of all difficulties, and the supply of all defects, must be sought in the examples, subjoined to the various senses of each word, and ranged according to the time of their authors.

When I first collected these authorities, I was desirous that every quotation should be useful to some other end than the illustration of a word; I therefore extracted from philosophers principles of  
 6 science;

science; from historians remarkable facts; from chymists complete processes; from divines striking exhortations; and from poets beautiful descriptions. Such is design, while it is yet at a distance from execution. When the time called upon me to range this accumulation of elegance and wisdom into an alphabetical series, I soon discovered that the bulk of my volumes would fright away the student, and was forced to depart from my scheme of including all that was pleasing or useful in *English* literature, and reduce my transcripts very often to clusters of words, in which scarcely any meaning is retained; thus to the weariness of copying, I was condemned to add the vexation of expunging. Some passages I have yet spared, which may relieve the labour of verbal searches, and intersperse with verdure and flowers the dusty deserts of barren philology.

The examples, thus mutilated, are no longer to be considered as conveying the sentiments or doctrine of their authors; the word for the sake of which they are inserted, with all its appendant clauses, has been carefully preserved; but it may sometimes happen, by hasty detraction, that the general tendency of the sentence may be changed: the divine may desert his tenets, or the philosopher his system.

Some of the examples have been taken from writers who were never mentioned as masters of elegance or models of style; but words must be sought where they are used; and in what pages, eminent for purity, can terms of manufacture or agriculture be found? Many quotations serve no



other purpose, than that of proving the bare existence of words, and are therefore selected with less scrupulousness than those which are to teach their structures and relations.

My purpose was to admit no testimony of living authors, that I might not be misled by partiality, and that none of my cotemporaries might have reason to complain; nor have I departed from this resolution, but when some performance of uncommon excellence excited my veneration, when my memory supplied me, from late books, with an example that was wanting, or when my heart, in the tenderness of friendship, solicited admission for a favourite name.

So far have I been from any care to grace my pages with modern decorations, that I have studiously endeavoured to collect examples and authorities from the writers before the restoration, whose works I regard as *the wells of English undefiled*, as the pure sources of genuine diction. Our language, for almost a century, has, by the concurrence of many causes, been gradually departing from its original *Teutonic* character, and deviating towards a *Gallick* structure and phraseology, from which it ought to be our endeavour to recal it, by making our ancient volumes the ground-work of style, admitting among the additions of later times, only such as may supply real deficiencies, such as are readily adopted by the genius of our tongue, and incorporate easily with our native idioms.

But as every language has a time of rudeness antecedent to perfection, as well as of false refinement and declension, I have been cautious lest my zeal for antiquity might drive me into times too remote,  
and

and crowd my book with words now no longer understood. I have fixed *Sidney's* work for the boundary, beyond which I make few excursions. From the authors which rose in the time of *Elizabeth*, a speech might be formed adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance. If the language of theology were extracted from *Hooker* and the translation of the Bible; the terms of natural knowledge from *Bacon*; the phrases of policy, war, and navigation from *Raleigh*; the dialect of poetry and fiction from *Spenser* and *Sidney*; and the diction of common life from *Shakespeare*, few ideas would be lost to mankind, for want of *English* words, in which they might be expressed.

It is not sufficient that a word is found, unless it be so combined as that its meaning is apparently determined by the tract and tenour of the sentence; such passages I have therefore chosen, and when it happened that any author gave a definition of a term, or such an explanation as is equivalent to a definition, I have placed his authority as a supplement to my own, without regard to the chronological order, that is otherwise observed,

Some words, indeed, stand unsupported by any authority, but they are commonly derivative nouns or adverbs, formed from their primitives by regular and constant analogy, or names of things seldom occurring in books, or words of which I have reason to doubt the existence.

There is more danger of censure from the multiplicity than paucity of examples; authorities will sometimes seem to have been accumulated without necessity or use, and perhaps some will be found, which might, without loss, have been omitted.

But a work of this kind is not hastily to be charged with superfluities : those quotations, which to careless or unskilful perusers appear only to repeat the same sense, will often exhibit, to a more accurate examiner, diversities of signification, or, at least, afford different shades of the same meaning : one will shew the word applied to persons, another to things ; one will express an ill, another a good, and a third a neutral sense ; one will prove the expression genuine from an ancient author ; another will shew it elegant from a modern : a doubtful authority is corroborated by another of more credit ; an ambiguous sentence is ascertained by a passage clear and determinate ; the word, how often soever repeated, appears with new associates and in different combinations, and every quotation contributes something to the stability or enlargement of the language.

When words are used equivocally, I receive them in either sense ; when they are metaphorical, I adopt them in their primitive acceptation.

I have sometimes, though rarely, yielded to the temptation of exhibiting a genealogy of sentiments, by shewing how one author copied the thoughts and diction of another : such quotations are indeed little more than repetitions, which might justly be censured, did they not gratify the mind, by affording a kind of intellectual history.

The various syntactical structures occurring in the examples have been carefully noted ; the licence or negligence with which many words have been hitherto used, has made our style capricious and indeterminate ; when the different combinations of the same word are exhibited together, the preference is readily

readily given to propriety, and I have often endeavoured to direct the choice.

Thus have I laboured by settling the orthography, displaying the analogy, regulating the structures, and ascertaining the signification of *English* words, to perform all the parts of a faithful lexicographer: but I have not always executed my own scheme, or satisfied my own expectations. The work, whatever proofs of diligence and attention it may exhibit, is yet capable of many improvements: the orthography which I recommend is still controvertible; the etymology which I adopt is uncertain, and perhaps frequently erroneous; the explanations are sometimes too much contracted, and sometimes too much diffused, the significations are distinguished rather with subtilty than skill, and the attention is harassed with unnecessary minuteness.

The examples are too often injudiciously truncated, and perhaps sometimes, I hope very rarely, alleged in a mistaken sense; for in making this collection I trusted more to memory, than, in a state of disquiet and embarrassment, memory can contain, and purposed to supply at the review what was left incomplete in the first transcription.

Many terms appropriated to particular occupations, though necessary and significant, are undoubtedly omitted; and of the words most studiously considered and exemplified, many senses have escaped observation.

Yet these failures, however frequent, may admit extenuation and apology. To have attempted much is always laudable, even when the enterprize  
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is above the strength that undertakes it: To rest below his own aim is incident to every one whose fancy is active, and whose views are comprehensive; nor is any man satisfied with himself because he has done much, but because he can conceive little. When first I engaged in this work, I resolved to leave neither words nor things unexamined, and pleased myself with a prospect of the hours which I should revel away in feasts of literature, the obscure recesses of northern learning which I should enter and ransack, the treasures with which I expected every search into those neglected mines to reward my labour, and the triumph with which I should display my acquisitions to mankind. When I had thus enquired into the original of words, I resolved to show likewise my attention to things; to pierce deep into every science, to enquire the nature of every substance of which I inserted the name, to limit every idea by a definition strictly logical, and exhibit every production of art or nature in an accurate description, that my book might be in place of all other dictionaries whether appellative or technical. But these were the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer. I soon found that it is too late to look for instruments, when the work calls for execution, and that whatever abilities I had brought to my task, with those I must finally perform it. To deliberate whenever I doubted, to enquire whenever I was ignorant, would have protracted the undertaking without end, and, perhaps, without much improvement; for I did not find by my first experiments, that what I had not of my own  
was



was easily to be obtained: I saw that one enquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be informed; and that thus to pursue perfection, was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chase the sun, which, when they had reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them.

I then contracted my design, determining to confide in myself, and no longer to solicit auxiliaries, which produced more incumbrance than assistance; by this I obtained at least one advantage, that I set limits to my work, which would in time be ended, though not completed.

Despondency has never so far prevailed as to depress me to negligence; some faults will at last appear to be the effects of anxious diligence and persevering activity. The nice and subtle ramifications of meaning were not easily avoided by a mind intent upon accuracy, and convinced of the necessity of disentangling combinations, and separating similitudes. Many of the distinctions which to common readers appear useless and idle, will be found real and important by men versed in the school philosophy, without which no dictionary can ever be accurately compiled, or skilfully examined.

Some senses however there are, which, though not the same, are yet so nearly allied, that they are often confounded. Most men think indistinctly, and therefore cannot speak with exactness; and consequently some examples might be indifferently put to either signification: this uncertainty is not to be imputed to me, who do not form, but register the language;

language; who do not teach men how they should think, but relate how they have hitherto expressed their thoughts.

The imperfect sense of some examples I lamented, but could not remedy, and hope they will be compensated by innumerable passages selected with propriety, and preserved with exactness; some shining with sparks of imagination, and some replete with treasures of wisdom.

The orthography and etymology, though imperfect, are not imperfect for want of care, but because care will not always be successful, and recollection or information come too late for use.

That many terms of art and manufacture are omitted, must be frankly acknowledged; but for this defect I may boldly allege that it was unavoidable: I could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language, nor take a voyage to perfect my skill in the dialect of navigation, nor visit the warehouses of merchants, and shops of artificers, to gain the names of wares, tools and operations, of which no mention is found in books; what favourable accident, or easy enquiry brought within my reach, has not been neglected; but it has been a hopeless labour to glean up words, by courting living information, and contesting with the fullness of one, and the roughness of another.

To furnish the academicians *della Crusca* with words of this kind, a series of comedies called *la Fiera*, or *the Fair*, was professedly written by *Buonaroti*; but I had no such assistant, and therefore was content to want what they must have wanted likewise, had they not luckily been so supplied.

Nor

Nor are all words which are not found in the vocabulary, to be lamented as omissions. Of the laborious and mercantile part of the people, the diction is in a great measure casual and mutable; many of their terms are formed for some temporary or local convenience, and though current at certain times and places, are in others utterly unknown. This fugitive cant, which is always in a state of increase or decay, cannot be regarded as any part of the durable materials of a language, and therefore must be suffered to perish with other things unworthy of preservation.

Care will sometimes betray to the appearance of negligence. He that is catching opportunities which seldom occur, will suffer those to pass by unregarded, which he expects hourly to return; he that is searching for rare and remote things, will neglect those that are obvious and familiar: thus many of the most common and cursory words have been inserted with little illustration, because in gathering the authorities, I forbore to copy those which I thought likely to occur whenever they were wanted. It is remarkable that, in reviewing my collection, I found the word *sea* unexemplified.

Thus it happens, that in things difficult there is danger from ignorance, and in things easy from confidence; the mind, afraid of greatness, and disdainful of littleness, hastily withdraws herself from painful searches, and passes with scornful rapidity over tasks not adequate to her powers, sometimes too secure for caution, and again too anxious for vigorous effort; sometimes idle in a plain path, and  
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sometimes distracted in labyrinths, and dissipated by different intentions.

A large work is difficult because it is large, even though all its parts might singly be performed with facility; where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and labour, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole; nor can it be expected, that the stones which form the dome of a temple, should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring.

Of the event of this work, for which, having laboured it with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness, it is natural to form conjectures. Those who have been persuaded to think well of my design, will require that it should fix our language, and put a stop to those alterations which time and chance have hitherto been suffered to make in it without opposition. With this consequence I will confess that I flattered myself for a while; but now begin to fear that I have indulged expectation which neither reason nor experience can justify. When we see men grow old and die at a certain time one after another, from century to century, we laugh at the elixir that promises to prolong life to a thousand years; and with equal justice may the lexicographer be derided, who being able to produce no example of a nation that has preserved their words and phrases from mutability, shall imagine that his dictionary can embalm his language, and secure it from corruption and decay, that it is in his power to change sublunary nature, and clear the world at once from folly, vanity, and affectation.

With

With this hope, however, academies have been instituted, to guard the avenues of their languages, to retain fugitives, and repulse intruders; but their vigilance and activity have hitherto been vain; sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. The *French* language has visibly changed under the inspection of the academy; the style of *Amelot's* translation of father *Paul* is observed by *Le Courayer* to be *un peu passé*; and no *Italian* will maintain, that the diction of any modern writer is not perceptibly different from that of *Boccace*, *Machiavel*, or *Caro*.

Total and sudden transformations of a language seldom happen; conquests and migrations are now very rare: but there are other causes of change, which, though slow in their operation, and invisible in their progress, are perhaps as much superior to human resistance, as the revolutions of the sky, or intumescence of the tide. Commerce, however necessary, however lucrative, as it depraves the manners, corrupts the language; they that have frequent intercourse with strangers, to whom they endeavour to accommodate themselves, must in time learn a mingled dialect, like the jargon which serves the traffickers on the *Mediterranean* and *Indian* coasts. This will not always be confined to the exchange, the warehouse, or the port, but will be communicated by degrees to other ranks of the people, and be at last incorporated with the current speech.

There are likewise internal causes equally forcible. The language most likely to continue long without alteration,



alteration, would be that of a nation raised a little, and but a little, above barbarity, secluded from strangers, and totally employed in procuring the conveniencies of life; either without books, or, like some of the *Mahometan* countries, with very few: men thus busied and unlearned, having only such words as common use requires, would perhaps long continue to express the same notions by the same signs. But no such constancy can be expected in a people polished by arts, and classed by subordination, where one part of the community is sustained and accommodated by the labour of the other. Those who have much leisure to think, will always be enlarging the stock of ideas; and every increase of knowledge, whether real or fancied, will produce new words, or combinations of words. When the mind is unchained from necessity, it will range after convenience; when it is left at large in the fields of speculation, it will shift opinions; as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it; as any opinion grows popular, it will innovate speech in the same proportion as it alters practice.

As by the cultivation of various sciences, a language is amplified, it will be more furnished with words deflected from their original sense; the geometrician will talk of a courtier's zenith, or the eccentric virtue of a wild hero, and the physician of sanguine expectations and phlegmatick delays. Copiousness of speech will give opportunities to capricious choice, by which some words will be preferred, and others degraded; vicissitudes of fashion will enforce the use of new, or extend the signification of known terms. The tropes of poetry will  
make

make hourly encroachments, and the metaphorical will become the current sense: pronunciation will be varied by levity or ignorance, and the pen must at length comply with the tongue; illiterate writers will, at one time or other, by publick infatuation, rise into renown, who, not knowing the original import of words, will use them with colloquial licentiousness, confound distinction, and forget propriety. As politeness increases, some expressions will be considered as too gross and vulgar for the delicate, others as too formal and ceremonious for the gay and airy; new phrases are therefore adopted, which must, for the same reasons, be in time dismissed. *Swift*, in his petty treatise on the *English* language, allows that new words must sometimes be introduced, but proposes that none should be suffered to become obsolete. But what makes a word obsolete, more than general agreement to forbear it? and how shall it be continued, when it conveys an offensive idea, or recalled again into the mouths of mankind, when it has once become unfamiliar by disuse, and unpleasing by unfamiliarity?

There is another cause of alteration more prevalent than any other, which yet in the present state of the world cannot be obviated. A mixture of two languages will produce a third distinct from both, and they will always be mixed, where the chief parts of education, and the most conspicuous accomplishment, is skill in ancient or in foreign tongues. He that has long cultivated another language, will find its words and combinations crowd upon his memory; and haste and negligence, refine-

ment and affectation, will obtrude borrowed terms and exotick expressions.

The great pest of speech is frequency of translation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting something of its native idiom; this is the most mischievous and comprehensive innovation; single words may enter by thousands, and the fabrick of the tongue continue the same; but new phraseology changes much at once; it alters not the single stones of the building, but the order of the columns. If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our style, which I, who can never wish to see dependence multiplied, hope the spirit of *English* liberty will hinder or destroy, let them, instead of compiling grammars and dictionaries, endeavour, with all their influence, to stop the licence of translators, whose idleness and ignorance, if it be suffered to proceed, will reduce us to babble a dialect of *France*.

If the changes that we fear be thus irresistible, what remains but to acquiesce with silence, as in the other insurmountable distresses of humanity? It remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure. Life may be lengthened by care, though death cannot be ultimately defeated: tongues, like governments, have a natural tendency to degeneration; we have long preserved our constitution, let us make some struggles for our language.

In hope of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal, I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my  
6 country,

country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology, without a contest, to the nations of the continent. The chief glory of every people arises from its authors: whether I shall add any thing by my own writings to the reputation of *English* literature, must be left to time: much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me; but I shall not think my employment useless or ignoble, if by my assistance foreign nations, and distant ages, gain access to the propagators of knowledge, and understand the teachers of truth; if my labours afford light to the repositories of science, and add celebrity to *Bacon*, to *Hooker*, to *Milton*, and to *Boyle*.

When I am animated by this wish, I look with pleasure on my book, however defective, and deliver it to the world with the spirit of a man that has endeavoured well. That it will immediately become popular I have not promised to myself: a few wild blunders, and risible absurdities, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance in contempt; but useful diligence will at last prevail, and there never can be wanting some who distinguish desert; who will consider that no dictionary of a living tongue ever can be perfect, since, while it is hastening to publication, some words are budding, and some falling away; that a whole life cannot be spent upon syntax and etymology, and that even a whole life would not be sufficient; that he, whose design includes whatever language can

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express,

express, must often speak of what he does not understand; that a writer will sometimes be hurried by eagerness to the end, and sometimes faint with weariness under a task, which *Scaliger* compares to the labours of the anvil and the mine; that what is obvious is not always known, and what is known is not always present; that sudden fits of inadvertency will surprize vigilance, slight avocations will seduce attention, and casual eclipses of the mind will darken learning; and that the writer shall often in vain trace his memory at the moment of need, for that which yesterday he knew with intuitive readiness, and which will come uncalled into his thoughts tomorrow.

In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprized in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive; if the aggregated knowledge,



ledge, and co-operating diligence of the *Italian* academicians, did not secure them from the censure of *Boni*; if the embodied criticks of *France*, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its œconomy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

P R O P O S A L S  
FOR PRINTING THE  
DRAMATICK WORKS  
O F  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Printed in the Year 1756.

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WHEN the works of *Shakespeare* are, after so many editions, again offered to the publick, it will doubtless be enquired, why *Shakespeare* stands in more need of critical assistance than any other of the *English* writers, and what are the deficiencies of the late attempts, which another editor may hope to supply?

The business of him that republishes an ancient book is, to correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is obscure. To have a text corrupt in many places, and in many doubtful, is, among the authors that have written since the use of types, almost peculiar to *Shakespeare*. Most writers, by publishing their own works, prevent all various readings, and preclude all conjectural criticism. Books indeed are sometimes published after the death of him who produced them; but they are better secured

cured from corruption than these unfortunate compositions. They subsist in a single copy, written or revised by the author; and the faults of the printed volume can be only faults of one descent.

But of the works of *Shakespeare* the condition has been far different: he sold them, not to be printed, but to be played. They were immediately copied for the actors, and multiplied by transcript after transcript, vitiated by the blunders of the penman, or changed by the affectation of the player; perhaps enlarged to introduce a jest, or mutilated to shorten the representation; and printed at last without the concurrence of the author, without the consent of the proprietor, from compilations made by chance or by stealth out of the separate parts written for the theatre; and thus thrust into the world surreptitiously and hastily, they suffered another depravation from the ignorance and negligence of the printers, as every man who knows the state of the press in that age will readily conceive.

It is not easy for invention to bring together so many causes concurring to vitiate the text. No other author ever gave up his works to fortune and time with so little care: no books could be left in hands so likely to injure them, as plays frequently acted, yet continued in manuscript: no other transcribers were likely to be so little qualified for their task as those who copied for the stage, at a time when the lower ranks of the people were universally illiterate: no other editions were made from fragments so minutely broken, and so fortuitously reunited; and in no other age was the art of printing in such unskilful hands.

With the causes of corruption that make the revival of *Shakespeare's* dramattick pieces necessary, may be enumerated the causes of obscurity, which may be partly imputed to his age, and partly to himself.

When a writer outlives his contemporaries, and remains almost the only unforgotten name of a distant time, he is necessarily obscure. Every age has its modes of speech, and its cast of thought; which, though easily explained when there are many books to be compared with each other, become sometimes unintelligible, and always difficult, when there are no parallel passages that may conduce to their illustration. *Shakespeare* is the first considerable author of sublime or familiar dialogue in our language. Of the books which he read, and from which he formed his style, some perhaps have perished, and the rest are neglected. His imitations are therefore unnoted, his allusions are undiscovered, and many beauties, both of pleasantry and greatness, are lost with the objects to which they were united, as the figures vanish when the canvas has decayed.

It is the great excellence of *Shakespeare*, that he drew his scenes from nature, and from life. He copied the manners of the world then passing before him, and has more allusions than other poets to the traditions and superstition of the vulgar; which must therefore be traced before he can be understood.

He wrote at a time when our poetical language was yet unformed, when the meaning of our phrases was yet in fluctuation, when words were adopted at  
pleasure

pleasure from the neighbouring languages, and while the *Saxon* was still visibly mingled in our diction. The reader is therefore embarrassed at once with dead and with foreign languages, with obsolescences and innovation. In that age, as in all others, fashion produced phraseology, which succeeding fashion swept away before its meaning was generally known, or sufficiently authorised: and in that age, above all others, experiments were made upon our language, which distorted its combinations, and disturbed its uniformity.

If *Shakespeare* has difficulties above other writers, it is to be imputed to the nature of his work, which required the use of the common colloquial language, and consequently admitted many phrases allusive, elliptical, and proverbial, such as we speak and hear every hour without observing them; and of which, being now familiar, we do not suspect that they can ever grow uncouth, or that, being now obvious, they can ever seem remote.

These are the principal causes of the obscurity of *Shakespeare*; to which might be added the fulness of idea, which might sometimes load his words with more sentiment than they could conveniently convey, and that rapidity of imagination which might hurry him to a second thought before he had fully explained the first. But my opinion is, that very few of his lines were difficult to his audience, and that he used such expressions as were then common, though the paucity of contemporary writers makes them now seem peculiar.

Authors are often praised for improvement, or blamed for innovation, with very little justice, by those



those who read few other books of the same age. *Addison* himself has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which *Milton* has enriched our language, as perhaps not to have named one of which *Milton* was the author; and *Bentley* has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into *English* poetry, which had been used from the first essays of versification among us, and which *Milton* was indeed the last that practised.

Another impediment, not the least vexatious to the commentator, is the exactness with which *Shakespeare* followed his authors. Instead of dilating his thoughts into generalities, and expressing incidents with poetical latitude, he often combines circumstances unnecessary to his main design, only because he happened to find them together. Such passages can be illustrated only by him who has read the same story in the very book which *Shakespeare* consulted.

He that undertakes an edition of *Shakespeare*, has all these difficulties to encounter, and all these obstructions to remove.

The corruptions of the text will be corrected by a careful collation of the oldest copies, by which it is hoped that many restorations may yet be made: at least it will be necessary to collect and note the variation as materials for future criticks; for it very often happens that a wrong reading has affinity to the right.

In this part all the present editions are apparently and intentionally defective. The criticks did not so much as wish to facilitate the labour of those that followed them. The same books are still to be compared;

compared; the work that has been done, is to be done again; and no single edition will supply the reader with a text on which he can rely as the best copy of the works of *Shakespeare*.

The edition now proposed will at least have this advantage over others. It will exhibit all the observable varieties of all the copies that can be found; that, if the reader is not satisfied with the editor's determination, he may have the means of choosing better for himself.

Where all the books are evidently vitiated, and collation can give no assistance, then begins the task of critical sagacity: and some changes may well be admitted in a text never settled by the author, and so long exposed to caprice and ignorance. But nothing shall be imposed, as in the *Oxford* edition, without notice of the alteration; nor shall conjecture be wantonly or unnecessarily indulged.

It has been long found, that very specious emendations do not equally strike all minds with conviction, nor even the same mind at different times; and therefore, though perhaps many alterations may be proposed as eligible, very few will be obtruded as certain. In a language so ungrammatical as the *English*, and so licentious as that of *Shakespeare*, emendatory criticism is always hazardous; nor can it be allowed to any man who is not particularly versed in the writings of that age, and particularly studious of his author's diction. There is danger lest peculiarities should be mistaken for corruptions, and passages rejected as unintelligible, which a narrow mind happens not to understand.

All

All the former criticks have been so much employed on the correction of the text, that they have not sufficiently attended to the elucidation of passages obscured by accident or time. The editor will endeavour to read the books which the author read, to trace his knowledge to its source, and compare his copies with their originals. If in this part of his design he hopes to attain any degree of superiority to his predecessors, it must be considered, that he has the advantage of their labours; that part of the work being already done, more care is naturally bestowed on the other part; and that, to declare the truth, Mr. *Rowe* and Mr. *Pope* were very ignorant of the ancient *English* literature; Dr. *Warburton* was detained by more important studies; and Mr. *Theobald*, if fame be just to his memory, considered learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no further enquiry after his author's meaning, when once he had notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.

With regard to obsolete or peculiar diction, the editor may perhaps claim some degree of confidence, having had more motives to consider the whole extent of our language than any other man from its first formation. He hopes that, by comparing the works of *Shakespeare* with those of writers who lived at the same time, immediately preceded, or immediately followed him, he shall be able to ascertain his ambiguities, disentangle his intricacies, and recover the meaning of words now lost in the darkness of antiquity.

When therefore any obscurity arises from an allusion to some other book, the passage will be quoted.

ed. When the diction is entangled, it will be cleared by a paraphrase or interpretation. When the sense is broken by the suppression of part of the sentiment in pleasantry or passion, the connexion will be supplied. When any forgotten custom is hinted, care will be taken to retrieve and explain it. The meaning assigned to doubtful words will be supported by the authorities of other writers, or by parallel passages of *Shakespeare* himself.

The observation of faults and beauties is one of the duties of an annotator, which some of *Shakespeare's* editors have attempted, and some have neglected. For this part of his task, and for this only, was Mr. *Pope* eminently and indisputably qualified; nor has Dr. *Warburton* followed him with less diligence or less success. But I have never observed that mankind was much delighted or improved by their asterisks, commas, or double commas; of which the only effect is, that they preclude the pleasure of judging for ourselves, teach the young and ignorant to decide without principles; defeat curiosity and discernment, by leaving them less to discover; and at last shew the opinion of the critick, without the reasons on which it was founded, and without affording any light by which it may be examined.

The editor, though he may less delight his own vanity, will probably please his reader more, by supposing him equally able with himself to judge of beauties and faults, which require no previous acquisition of remote knowledge. A description of the obvious scenes of nature, a representation of general life, a sentiment of reflection or experience,  
a deduc-

a deduction of conclusive arguments, a forcible eruption of effervescent passion, are to be considered as proportionate to common apprehension, unassisted by critical officiousness; since, to convince them, nothing more is requisite than acquaintance with the general state of the world, and those faculties which he must almost bring with him who would read *Shakespeare*.

But when the beauty arises from some adaptation of the sentiment to customs worn out of use, to opinions not universally prevalent, or to any accidental or minute particularity, which cannot be supplied by common understanding, or common observation, it is the duty of a commentator to lend his assistance.

The notice of beauties and faults thus limited, will make no distinct part of the design, being reducible to the explanation of obscure passages.

The editor does not however intend to preclude himself from the comparison of *Shakespeare's* sentiments or expression with those of ancient or modern authors, or from the display of any beauty not obvious to the students of poetry; for as he hopes to leave his author better understood, he wishes likewise to procure him more rational approbation.

The former editors have affected to slight their predecessors: but in this edition all that is valuable will be adopted from every commentator, that posterity may consider it as including all the rest, and exhibiting whatever is hitherto known of the great father of the *English* drama.



# P R E F A C E

T O

S H A K E S P E A R E.

Published in the Year 1768.

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**T**HAT praises are without reason lavished on the dead, and that the honours due only to excellence are paid to antiquity, is a complaint likely to be always continued by those, who, being able to add nothing to truth, hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox; or those, who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard, which is yet denied by envy, will be at last bestowed by time.

Antiquity, like every other quality that attracts the notice of mankind, has undoubtedly votaries that reverence it, not from reason, but from prejudice. Some seem to admire indiscriminately whatever has been long preserved, without considering that time has sometimes co-operated with chance; all perhaps are more willing to honour  
past

past than present excellence; and the mind contemplates genius through the shades of age, as the eye surveys the sun through artificial opacity. The great contention of criticism is to find the faults of the moderns, and the beauties of the ancients. While an author is yet living, we estimate his powers by his worst performance; and when he is dead, we rate them by his best.

To works, however, of which the excellence is not absolute and definite, but gradual and comparative; to works not raised upon principles demonstrative and scientifick, but appealing wholly to observation and experience, no other test can be applied than length of duration and continuance of esteem. What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared; and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour. As among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so, in the productions of genius, nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind. Demonstration immediately displays its power, and has nothing to hope or fear from the flux of years; but works tentative and experimental must be estimated by their proportion to the general and collective ability of man, as it is discovered in a long succession of endeavours. Of the first building that was raised, it might be with certainty determined that it was round or square; but whether it was spacious or lofty must have been referred to time. The *Pythagorean* scale of numbers

was at once discovered to be perfect; but the poems of *Homer* we yet know not to transcend the common limits of human intelligence, but by remarking, that nation after nation, and century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new-name his characters, and paraphrase his sentiments.

The reverence due to writings that have long subsisted arises therefore not from any credulous confidence in the superior wisdom of past ages, or gloomy persuasion of the degeneracy of mankind, but is the consequence of acknowledged and indubitable positions, that what has been longest known has been most considered, and what is most considered is best understood.

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topick of merriment, or motive of sorrow, which the modes of artificial life afforded him, now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favour and competition are at an end; the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his works support no opinion with arguments, nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity, nor gratify malignity; but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as

pleasure is obtained ; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have past through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible ; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion ; it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence *Shakespeare* has gained and kept the favour of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest ; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

*Shakespeare* is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature ; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world ; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers ; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions : they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles

principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of *Shakespeare* it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of *Shakespeare* with practical axioms and domestick wisdom. It was said of *Euripides*, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of *Shakespeare*, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and œconomical prudence. Yet his real power is not shewn in the splendor of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in *Hierocles*, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much *Shakespeare* excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of *Shakespeare*. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topicks which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which



produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered; is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions; and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with *Pope*, that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristic; but, perhaps, though some may be  
equally

equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find any that can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right, when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolical or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf; and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. *Shakespeare* has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion: even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents; so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world: *Shakespeare* approximates the remote, and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but, if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said, that he has not only shewn human nature as it acts in real exigences, but as it would be found in trials, to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of *Shakespeare*, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the

world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of criticks, who form their judgments upon narrower principles. *Dennis* and *Rymer* think his *Romans* not sufficiently *Roman*; and *Voltaire* censures his kings as not completely royal. *Dennis* is offended, that *Menenius*, a senator of *Rome*, should play the buffoon; and *Voltaire* perhaps thinks decency violated when the *Danish* usurper is represented as a drunkard. But *Shakespeare* always makes nature predominate over accident; and, if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires *Romans* or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that *Rome*, like every other city, had men of all dispositions; and wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to shew an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men, and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds; a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comick and tragick scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated, and then examined.

*Shakespeare's* plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions

fitions of a distinct kind ; exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination ; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another ; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hastening to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend ; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another ; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities ; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences ; some the terrors of distress, and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of *tragedy* and *comedy*, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the *Greeks* or *Romans* a single writer who attempted both.

*Shakespeare* has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed but there is always

an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by shewing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low cooperate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatick poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players, who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.



An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us; and plays were written, which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies to-day, and comedies to-morrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions, with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other, and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra*, than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama, *Shakespeare's* mode of composition is the same; an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time, and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story, without vehemence or emotion, through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn, or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquillity without indifference.

When

When *Shakespeare's* plan is understood, most of the criticisms of *Rymer* and *Voltaire* vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two centinels; *Iago* bellows at *Brabantio's* window, without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of *Polonius* is reasonable and useful; and the grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

*Shakespeare* engaged in dramattick poetry with the world open before him; the rules of the ancients were yet known to few; the publick judgment was unformed; he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor criticks of such authority as might restrain his extravagance: he therefore indulged his natural disposition; and his disposition, as *Rymer* has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but, in his comick scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comick; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragick scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comick scenes has suffered little diminution, from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages

act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places; they are natural, and therefore durable: the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tinct, without any remains of former lustre; but the discriminations of true passion are the colours of nature: they pervade the whole mass, and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them; but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase, nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of *Shakespeare*.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation, a style which never becomes obsolete, a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language, as to remain settled and unaltered; this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life, among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right; but there is a conversation above grossness, and below refine-

refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comick dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellences deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. *Shakespeare's* familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty; as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation: his characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced, and their actions improbable; as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

*Shakespeare* with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall shew them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE. 253

precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to shew in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed, that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is probably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expence not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults *Pope* has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find *Hector* quoting *Aristotle*, when we see the loves of *Theseus* and



and *Hippolyta* combined with the gothick mythology of fairies. *Shakespeare*, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age *Sidney*, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine: the reign of *Elizabeth* is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve; yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to chuse the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he sollicit his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words,  
which

which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramattick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. *Shakespeare* found it an incumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendor.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and, instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to shew how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and, if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them

them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not soft and pathetick without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble is to *Shakespeare*, what luminous vapours are to the traveller: he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal *Cleopatra* for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange, that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and criticks.

For

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence; that his virtues be rated with his failings: but, from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood, that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled; he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and *Shakespeare* is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly, what *Aristotle* requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shewn no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles

on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of *Corneille*, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet, than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible, that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress, shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at *Alexandria*, cannot suppose that he sees the next at *Rome*, at a distance to which not the dragons of *Medea* could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place; and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was *Thebes* can never be *Persopolis*.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him by the authority of *Shakespeare*, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle,



principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramattick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at *Alexandria*, and the next at *Rome*, supposes, that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at *Alexandria*, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to *Egypt*, and that he lives in the days of *Antony* and *Cleopatra*. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the *Ptolemies*, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of *Actium*. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are *Alexander* and *Cæsar*; that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of *Pharsalia*, or the bank of *Granicus*, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature. There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstasy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brains that can make the stage a field.

The truth is, that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They came to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant

modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first *Athens*, and then *Sicily*, which was always known to be neither *Sicily* nor *Athens*, but a moderate theatre.

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against *Mitbridates* are represented to be made in *Rome*, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in *Pontus*; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in *Rome* nor *Pontus*; that neither *Mitbridates* nor *Lucullus* are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it, that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor

ditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not, that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of *Henry the Fifth*, yet no man takes his book for the field of *Agincourt*. A dramattick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of *Petruchio* may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato*?

A play read affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident, that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows, that between the

acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether *Shakespeare* knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose, that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at *Venice*, and his next in *Cyprus*. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of *Shakespeare*, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of *Voltaire*:

*Non usque adeo permiscuit imis  
Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli  
Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.*

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramattick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities

I am

I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my enquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shewn, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength: but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life.

Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as *Aeneas* withdrew from the defence of *Troy*, when he saw *Neptune* shaking the wall, and *Juno* heading the besiegers.



Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of *Shakespeare*, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to a reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the enquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of *Peru* or *Mexico* were certainly mean and incommensurable habitations, if compared to the houses of *European* monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The *English* nation, in the time of *Shakespeare*, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of *Italy* had been transplanted hither in the reign of *Henry the Eighth*; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by *Lilly*, *Linacre*, and *More*; by *Pole*, *Choke*, and *Gardiner*; and afterwards by *Smith*, *Clerk*, *Haddon*, and *Ascham*. *Greek* was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the *Italian* and  
*Spanish*

*Spanish* poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write, was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play, which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of *Palmerin* and *Guy of Warwick*, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions; and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings, to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose, that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama,

drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors, were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As you like it*, which is supposed to be copied from *Chaucer's Gamelyn*, was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. *Cibber* remembered the tale of *Hamlet* in plain *English* prose, which the critics have now to seek in *Saxo Grammaticus*.

His *English* histories he took from *English* chronicles and *English* ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by versions, they supplied him with new subjects; he dilated some of *Plutarch's* lives into plays, when they had been translated by *North*.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of *Shakespeare* than of any other writer: others please us by particular speeches; but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but *Homer* in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more  
skill

skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminated events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

*Voltaire* expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagancies are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered, that *Addison* speaks the language of poets; and *Shakespeare*, of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on *Addison*.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of *Shakespeare* is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and some-



sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. *Shakespeare* opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner minerals.

It has been much disputed, whether *Shakespeare* owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that *Shakespeare* wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that *he had small Latin, and less Greek*; who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of *Shakespeare* were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined, that they have discovered deep learning in many imitations of old writers; but the examples which I have known urged were drawn from books translated in his time; or were such easy coincidences of thought, as will happen to all who consider the same subjects; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have



I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, *Go before, I'll follow*, we read a translation of, *I præ, sequar*. I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, *I cry'd to sleep again*, the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few, that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The *Comedy of Errors* is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of *Plautus*; from the only play of *Plautus* which was then in *English*. What can be more probable, than that he who copied that would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some *French* scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of *Romeo and Juliet* he is observed to have followed the *English* translation, where it deviates from the *Italian*; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction,  
but

but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the *Roman* authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of *French* or *Italian* authors have been discovered, though the *Italian* poetry was then high in esteem, I am inclined to believe, that he read little more than *English*, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by *Pope*; but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand *Shakespeare*, must not be content to study him in the closet, he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is, however, proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the *Roman* authors were translated, and some of the *Greek*; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found *English* writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the *English* stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared, from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either

one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. *Shakespeare* may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. *Rowe* is of opinion, that *perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did, that for aught I know, says he, the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best.* But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and, when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. *Shakespeare*, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from this almost all original and native excellence proceeds. *Shakespeare* must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them  
only

only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of *Chaucer*, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in *English*, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which shewed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtilty were yet unattempted. The tales, with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks, by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

*Boyle* congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity, by facilitating his access. *Shakespeare* had no such advantage; he came to *London* a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states  
of

of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of *Shakespeare* was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty, nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, *as dew drops from a lion's mane.*

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to shew them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has been himself imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted, whether from all his successors more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed, that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions



immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies, copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority, as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. *Shakespeare*, whether life or nature be his subject, shews plainly, that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except *Homer*, who invented so much as *Shakespeare*, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the characters, the language, and the shows of the *English* drama are his. *He seems*, says Dennis, *to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by disyllable and trisyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation.*

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The disyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found,  
 though,

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE. 275

though, I think, not in *Gorboduc*, which is confessedly before our author; yet in *Hieronymo*\*, of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known, except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce, had they been much esteemed.

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless *Spenser* may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the *English* language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of *Rowe*, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better, than when he tries to sooth by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed, that as we owe every thing to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loath or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which shew that he has corrupted language

\* It appears, from the induction of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, to have been acted before the year 1590. STEEVENS.

by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence; but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am indeed far from thinking, that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than *Shakespeare*, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear, that *Shakespeare* thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect, than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity, which may be at least forgiven him, by those who recollect, that of *Congreve's* four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which perhaps never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little *declined into the vale of years*, before he

he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the deprivations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of *Shakespeare* in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death; and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, the negligence and unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shewn. The faults of all are indeed numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness and affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quietly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.

The faults are more than could have happened without the concurrence of many causes. The style of *Shakespeare* was in itself ungrammatical, perplexed, and obscure; his works were transcribed for

the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copiers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors; they were perhaps sometimes mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches; and were at last printed without correction of the press.

In this state they remained, not as Dr. *Warburton* supposes, because they were unregarded, but because the editor's art was not yet applied to modern languages, and our ancestors were accustomed to so much negligence of *English* printers, that they could very patiently endure it. At last an edition was undertaken by *Rowe*; not because a poet was to be published by a poet, for *Rowe* seems to have thought very little on correction or explanation; but that our author's works might appear like those of his fraternity, with the appendages of a life and commendatory preface. *Rowe* has been clamorously blamed for not performing what he did not undertake; and it is time that justice be done him, by confessing, that though he seems to have had no thought of corruption beyond the printer's errors, yet he has made many emendations, if they were not made before, which his successors have received without acknowledgment, and which, if they had produced them, would have filled pages and pages with censures of the stupidity by which the faults were committed, with displays of the absurdities which they involved, with ostentatious expositions of the new reading, and self-congratulations on the happiness of discovering.

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As of the other editors I have preserved the prefaces, I have likewise borrowed the author's life from *Rowe*, though not written with much elegance or spirit; it relates however what is now to be known, and therefore deserves to pass through all succeeding publications.

The nation had been for many years content enough with Mr. *Rowe's* performance, when Mr. *Pope* made them acquainted with the true state of *Shakespeare's* text, shewed that it was extremely corrupt, and gave reason to hope that there were means of reforming it. He collated the old copies, which none had thought to examine before, and restored many lines to their integrity; but, by a very compendious criticism, he rejected whatever he disliked, and thought more of amputation than of cure.

I know not why he is commended by Dr. *Warburton* for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious plays. In this choice he exerted no judgment of his own; the plays which he received, were given by *Hemings* and *Condell*, the first editors; and those which he rejected, though, according to the licentiousness of the press in those times, they were printed during *Shakespeare's* life, with his name, had been omitted by his friends, and were never added to his works before the edition of 1664, from which they were copied by the later printers.

This is a work which *Pope* seems to have thought unworthy of his abilities, being not able to suppress his contempt of *the dull duty of an editor*. He understood but half his undertaking. The duty of a collator is indeed dull, yet, like other tedious tasks, is very necessary; but an emendatory critick would

ill discharge his duty, without qualities very different from dulness. In perusing a corrupted piece, he must have before him all possibilities of meaning, with all possibilities of expression. Such must be his comprehension of thought, and such his copiousness of language. Out of many readings possible, he must be able to select that which best suits with the state, opinions, and modes of language prevailing in every age, and with his author's particular cast of thought, and turn of expression. Such must be his knowledge, and such his taste. Conjectural criticism demands more than humanity possesses, and he that exercises it with most praise, has very frequent need of indulgence. Let us now be told no more of the dull duty of an editor.

Confidence is the common consequence of success. They whose excellence of any kind has been loudly celebrated, are ready to conclude, that their powers are universal. *Pope's* edition fell below his own expectations, and he was so much offended when he was found to have left any thing for others to do, that he passed the latter part of his life in a state of hostility with verbal criticism.

I have retained all his notes, that no fragment of so great a writer may be lost; his preface, valuable alike for elegance of composition and justness of remark, and containing a general criticism on his author, so extensive that little can be added, and so exact that little can be disputed, every editor has an interest to suppress, but that every reader would demand its insertion.

*Pope* was succeeded by *Theobald*, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no  
native

native and intrinsic splendor of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning, but zealous for minute accuracy, and not negligent in pursuing it. He collated the ancient copies, and rectified many errors. A man so anxiously scrupulous might have been expected to do more, but what little he did was commonly right.

In his reports of copies and editions he is not to be trusted without examination. He speaks sometimes indefinitely of copies, when he has only one. In his enumeration of editions, he mentions the two first folios as of high, and the third folio as of middle authority; but the truth is, that the first is equivalent to all others, and that the rest only deviate from it by the printer's negligence. Whoever has any of the folios has all, excepting those diversities which mere reiteration of editions will produce. I collated them all at the beginning, but afterwards used only the first.

Of his notes I have generally retained those which he retained himself in his second edition, except when they were confuted by subsequent annotators, or were too minute to merit preservation. I have sometimes adopted his restoration of a comma, without inserting the panegyrick in which he celebrated himself for his atchievement. The exuberant excrescence of his diction I have often lopped, his triumphant exultations over *Pope* and *Rowe* I have sometimes suppressed, and his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed; but I have in some places shewn him, as he would have shewn himself, for the reader's diversion, that the inflated emptiness

emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.

*Theobald*, thus weak and ignorant, thus mean and faithless, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having *Pope* for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped alone, with reputation, from this undertaking. So willingly does the world support those who solicit favour, against those who command reverence; and so easily is he praised, whom no man can envy.

Our author fell then into the hands of Sir *Thomas Hanmer*, the *Oxford* editor, a man, in my opinion, eminently qualified by nature for such studies. He had, what is the first requisite to emendatory criticism, that intuition by which the poet's intention is immediately discovered, and that dexterity of intellect which dispatches its work by the easiest means. He had undoubtedly read much; his acquaintance with customs, opinions, and traditions, seems to have been large; and he is often learned without shew. He seldom passes what he does not understand, without an attempt to find or to make a meaning, and sometimes hastily makes what a little more attention would have found. He is solicitous to reduce to grammar what he could not be sure that his author intended to be grammatical. *Shakespeare* regarded more the series of ideas, than of words; and his language, not being designed for the reader's desk, was all that he desired it to be, if it conveyed his meaning to the audience.

*Hanmer's* care of the metre has been too violently censured. He found the measure reformed in so many

many passages, by the silent labours of some editors, with the silent acquiescence of the rest, that he thought himself allowed to extend a little further the licence, which had already been carried so far without reprehension; and of his corrections in general, it must be confessed, that they are often just, and made commonly with the least possible violation of the text.

But, by inserting his emendations, whether invented or borrowed, into the page, without any notice of varying copies, he has appropriated the labour of his predecessors, and made his own edition of little authority. His confidence indeed, both in himself and others, was too great; he supposes all to be right that was done by *Pope* and *Theobald*; he seems not to suspect a critick of fallibility; and it was but reasonable that he should claim what he so liberally granted.

As he never writes without careful enquiry and diligent consideration, I have received all his notes, and believe that every reader will wish for more.

Of the last editor it is more difficult to speak. Respect is due to high place, tenderness to living reputation, and veneration to genius and learning; but he cannot be justly offended at that liberty of which he has himself so frequently given an example, nor very solicitous what is thought of notes, which he ought never to have considered as part of his serious employments, and which, I suppose, since the ardor of composition is remitted, he no longer numbers among his happy effusions.

The original and predominant error of his commentary, is acquiescence in his first thoughts; that  
 precipitation



precipitation which is produced by consciousness of quick discernment; and that confidence which presumes to do, by surveying the surface, what labour only can perform, by penetrating the bottom. His notes exhibit sometimes perverse interpretations, and sometimes improbable conjectures; he at one time gives the author more profundity of meaning than the sentence admits, and at another discovers absurdities, where the sense is plain to every other reader. But his emendations are likewise often happy and just; and his interpretation of obscure passages learned and sagacious.

Of his notes, I have commonly rejected those, against which the general voice of the publick has exclaimed, or which their own incongruity immediately condemns, and which, I suppose, the author himself would desire to be forgotten. Of the rest, to part I have given the highest approbation, by inserting the offered reading in the text; part I have left to the judgment of the reader, as doubtful, though specious; and part I have censured without reserve, but I am sure without bitterness of malice, and, I hope, without wantonness of insult.

It is no pleasure to me, in revising my volumes, to observe how much paper is wasted in confutation. Whoever considers the revolutions of learning, and the various questions of greater or less importance, upon which wit and reason have exercised their powers, must lament the unsuccessfulness of enquiry, and the slow advances of truth, when he reflects, that great part of the labour of every writer is only the destruction of those that went before him. The first care of the builder of a new system, is to demolish

demolish the fabricks which are standing. The chief desire of him that comments an author, is to shew how much other commentators have corrupted and obscured him. The opinions prevalent in one age, as truths above the reach of controversy, are confuted and rejected in another, and rise again to reception in remoter times. Thus the human mind is kept in motion without progress. Thus sometimes truth and error, and sometimes contrarities of error, take each other's place by reciprocal invasion. The tide of seeming knowledge, which is poured over one generation, retires and leaves another naked and barren; the sudden meteors of intelligence, which for a while appear to shoot their beams into the regions of obscurity, on a sudden withdraw their lustre, and leave mortals again to grope their way.

These elevations and depressions of renown, and the contradictions to which all improvers of knowledge must for ever be exposed, since they are not escaped by the highest and brightest of mankind, may surely be endured with patience by criticks and annotators, who can rank themselves but as the satellites of their authors. How canst thou beg for life, says *Homer's* hero to his captive, when thou knowest that thou art now to suffer only what must another day be suffered by *Achilles*?

Dr. *Warburton* had a name sufficient to confer celebrity on those who could exalt themselves into antagonists, and his notes have raised a clamour too loud to be distinct. His chief assailants are the authors of *The canons of criticism*, and of *The revival of Shakespeare's text*; of whom one ridicules his errors

with airy petulance, suitable enough to the levity of the controversy; the other attacks them with gloomy malignity, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. The one stings like a fly, sucks a little blood, takes a gay flutter, and returns for more; the other bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him. When I think on one, with his confederates, I remember the danger of *Coriolanus*, who was afraid that *girls with spits, and boys with stones, should slay him in puny battle*; when the other crosses my imagination, I remember the prodigy in *Macbeth*:

*A falcon tow'ring in his pride of place,  
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.*

Let me however do them justice. One is a wit, and one a scholar\*. They have both shewn acuteness sufficient in the discovery of faults, and have both advanced some probable interpretations of obscure passages; but when they aspire to conjecture and emendation, it appears how falsely we all estimate our own abilities, and the little which they have been able to perform might have taught them more candour to the endeavours of others.

Before Dr. *Warburton's* edition, *Critical Observations on Shakespeare* had been published by Mr. *Up-*

\* It is extraordinary that this gentleman should attempt so voluminous a work, as the *Revisal of Shakespeare's text*, when he tells us in his preface, "he was not so fortunate as to be furnished with either of the folio editions, much less any of the ancient quartos: and even Sir *Thomas Hanmer's* performance was known to him only by Dr. *Warburton's* representation."

*ton* \*, a man skilled in languages, and acquainted with books, but who seems to have had no great vigour of genius or nicety of taste. Many of his explanations are curious and useful, but he likewise, though he professed to oppose the licentious confidence of editors, and adhere to the old copies, is unable to restrain the rage of emendation, though his ardour is ill seconded by his skill. Every cold empirick, when his heart is expanded by a successful experiment, swells into a theorist, and the laborious collator at some unlucky moment frolicks in conjecture.

*Critical, historical, and explanatory notes* have been likewise published upon *Shakespeare* by Dr. Grey, whose diligent perusal of the old *English* writers has enabled him to make some useful observations. What he undertook he has well enough performed, but as he neither attempts judicial nor emendatory criticism, he employs rather his memory than his sagacity. It were to be wished that all would endeavour to imitate his modesty, who have not been able to surpass his knowledge.

I can say with great sincerity of all my predecessors, what I hope will hereafter be said of me, that not one has left *Shakespeare* without improvement; nor is there one to whom I have not been indebted for assistance and information. Whatever I have taken from them, it was my intention to refer to its original author, and it is certain, that what I have not given to another, I believed when I wrote it to be my own. In some perhaps I have

\* Republished by him in 1748, after Dr. *Warburton's* edition, with alterations, &c. STEEVENS.

been anticipated; but if I am ever found to encroach upon the remarks of any other commentator, I am willing that the honour, be it more or less, should be transferred to the first claimant, for his right, and his alone, stands above dispute; the second can prove his pretensions only to himself, nor can himself always distinguish invention, with sufficient certainty, from recollection.

They have all been treated by me with candour, which they have not been careful of observing to one another. It is not easy to discover from what cause the acrimony of a scholiast can naturally proceed. The subjects to be discussed by him are of very small importance; they involve neither property nor liberty; nor favour the interest of sect or party. The various readings of copies, and different interpretations of a passage, seem to be questions that might exercise the wit, without engaging the passions. But whether it be, that *small things make mean men proud*, and vanity catches small occasions; or that all contrariety of opinion, even in those that can defend it no longer, makes proud men angry; there is often found in commentators a spontaneous strain of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politicks against those whom he is hired to defame.

Perhaps the lightness of the matter may conduce to the vehemence of the agency; when the truth to be investigated is so near to inexistence, as to escape attention, its bulk is to be enlarged by rage and exclamation: that to which all would be indifferent in its original state, may attract notice when the fate  
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of a name is appended to it. A commentator has indeed great temptations to supply by turbulence what he wants of dignity, to beat his little gold to a spacious surface, to work that to foam which no art or diligence can exalt to spirit.

The notes which I have borrowed or written are either illustrative, by which difficulties are explained; or judicial, by which faults and beauties are remarked; or emendatory, by which deprivations are corrected.

The explanations transcribed from others, if I do not subjoin any other interpretation, I suppose commonly to be right, at least I intend by acquiescence to confess, that I have nothing better to propose.

After the labours of all the editors, I found many passages which appeared to me likely to obstruct the greater number of readers, and thought it my duty to facilitate their passage. It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured. I have endeavoured to be neither superfluously copious, nor scrupulously reserved, and hope that I have made my author's meaning accessible to many, who before were frightened from perusing him, and contributed something to the publick, by diffusing innocent and rational pleasure.

The complete explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. All personal reflections, when names are suppressed, must be in a few years irrecoverably obliterated; and customs, too minute to attract the notice of law, such as modes of dress, formalities of conversation, rules of visits, disposition of furniture, and practices of ceremony, which naturally find places in familiar dialogue, are so fugitive and unsubstantial, that they are not easily retained or recovered. What can be known will be collected by chance, from the recesses of obscure and obsolete papers, perused commonly with some other view. Of this knowledge every man has some, and none has much; but when an author has engaged the publick attention, those who can add any thing to his illustration, communicate their discoveries, and time produces what had eluded diligence.

To time I have been obliged to resign many passages, which, though I did not understand them, will perhaps hereafter be explained; having, I hope, illustrated some, which others have neglected or mistaken, sometimes by short remarks, or marginal directions, such as every editor has added at his will, and often by comments more laborious than the matter will seem to deserve; but that which is most difficult is not always most important, and to an editor nothing is a trifle by which his author is obscured.

The poetical beauties or defects I have not been very diligent to observe. Some plays have more,

and some fewer judicial observations, not in proportion to their difference of merit, but because I gave this part of my design to chance and to caprice. The reader, I believe, is seldom pleased to find his opinion anticipated; it is natural to delight more in what we find or make, than in what we receive. Judgment, like other faculties, is improved by practice, and its advancement is hindered by submission to dictatorial decisions, as the memory grows torpid by the use of a table-book. Some initiation is however necessary; of all skill, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit; I have therefore shewn so much as may enable the candidate of criticism to discover the rest.

To the end of most plays I have added short strictures, containing a general censure of faults, or praise of excellence; in which I know not how much I have concurred with the current opinion; but I have not, by any affectation of singularity, deviated from it. Nothing is minutely and particularly examined, and therefore it is to be supposed, that in the plays which are condemned there is much to be praised, and in these which are praised much to be condemned.

The part of criticism in which the whole succession of editors has laboured with the greatest diligence, which has occasioned the most arrogant ostentation, and excited the keenest acrimony, is the emendation of corrupted passages, to which the publick attention having been first drawn by the violence of the contention between *Pope* and *Theobald*, has been continued by the persecution, which,

with a kind of conspiracy, has been since raised against all the publishers of *Shakespeare*.

That many passages have passed in a state of depravation through all the editions, is indubitably certain; of these the restoration is only to be attempted by collation of copies, or sagacity of conjecture. The collator's province is safe and easy, the conjecturer's perilous and difficult. Yet as the greater part of the plays are extant only in one copy, the peril must not be avoided, nor the difficulty refused.

Of the readings which this emulation of amendment has hitherto produced, some from the labours of every publisher I have advanced into the text; those are to be considered as in my opinion sufficiently supported; some I have rejected without mention, as evidently erroneous; some I have left in the notes without censure or approbation, as resting in equipoise between objection and defence; and some, which seemed specious but not right, I have inserted with a subsequent animadversion.

Having classed the observations of others, I was at last to try what I could substitute for their mistakes, and how I could supply their omissions. I collated such copies as I could procure, and wished for more, but have not found the collectors of these rarities very communicative. Of the editions which chance or kindness put into my hands I have given an enumeration, that I may not be blamed for neglecting what I had not the power to do.

By examining the old copies, I soon found that the later publishers, with all their boasts of diligence, suffered

suffered many passages to stand unauthorized, and contented themselves with *Rowe's* regulation of the text, even where they knew it to be arbitrary, and with a little consideration might have found it to be wrong. Some of these alterations are only the ejection of a word for one that appeared to him more elegant or more intelligible. These corruptions I have often silently rectified; for the history of our language, and the true force of our words, can only be preserved, by keeping the text of authors free from adulteration. Others, and those very frequent, smoothed the cadence, or regulated the measure: on these I have not exercised the same rigour; if only a word was transposed, or a particle inserted or omitted, I have sometimes suffered the line to stand; for the inconstancy of the copies is such, as that some liberties may be easily permitted. But this practice I have not suffered to proceed far, having restored the primitive diction wherever it could for any reason be preferred.

The emendations, which comparison of copies supplied, I have inserted in the text; sometimes, where the improvement was slight, without notice, and sometimes with an account of the reasons of the change.

Conjecture, though it be sometimes unavoidable, I have not wantonly nor licentiously indulged. It has been my settled principle, that the reading of the ancient books is probably true, and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of elegance, perspicuity, or mere improvement of the sense. For though much credit is not due to the fidelity, nor any to the judgment of the first publishers, yet they



who had the copy before their eyes were more likely to read it right, than we who read it only by imagination. But it is evident that they have often made strange mistakes by ignorance or negligence, and that therefore something may be properly attempted by criticism, keeping the middle way between presumption and timidity.

Such criticism I have attempted to practise, and, where any passage appeared inextricably perplexed, have endeavoured to discover how it may be recalled to sense, with least violence. But my first labour is, always to turn the old text on every side, and try if there be any interstice, through which light can find its way; nor would *Huetius* himself condemn me, as refusing the trouble of research, for the ambition of alteration. In this modest industry I have not been unsuccessful. I have rescued many lines from the violations of temerity, and secured many scenes from the inroads of correction. I have adopted the *Roman* sentiment, that it is more honourable to save a citizen, than to kill an enemy, and have been more careful to protect than to attack.

I have preserved the common distribution of the plays into acts, though I believe it to be in almost all the plays void of authority. Some of those which are divided in the later editions have no division in the first folio, and some that are divided in the folio have no division in the preceding copies. The settled mode of the theatre requires four intervals in the play; but few, if any, of our author's compositions can be properly distributed in that manner. An act is so much of the drama as passes without intervention of time, or change of place. A pause  
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makes a new act. In every real, and therefore in every imitative action, the intervals may be more or fewer, the restriction of five acts being accidental and arbitrary. This *Shakespeare* knew, and this he practised; his plays were written, and at first printed in one unbroken continuity, and ought now to be exhibited with short pauses, interposed as often as the scene is changed, or any considerable time is required to pass. This method would at once quell a thousand absurdities.

In restoring the author's works to their integrity, I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power; for what could be their care of colons and commas, who corrupted words and sentences? Whatever could be done by adjusting points, is therefore silently performed, in some plays with much diligence, in others with less; it is hard to keep a busy eye steadily fixed upon evanescent atoms, or a discursive mind upon evanescent truth.

The same liberty has been taken with a few particles, or other words of slight effect. I have sometimes inserted or omitted them without notice. I have done that sometimes, which the other editors have done always, and which indeed the state of the text may sufficiently justify.

The greater part of readers, instead of blaming us for passing trifles, will wonder that on mere trifles so much labour is expended, with such importance of debate, and such solemnity of diction. To these I answer with confidence, that they are judging of an art which they do not understand; yet cannot much reproach them with their igno-

rance, nor promise that they would become in general, by learning criticism, more useful, happier, or wiser.

As I practised conjecture more, I learned to trust it less; and after I had printed a few plays, resolved to insert none of my own readings in the text. Upon this caution I now congratulate myself, for every day encreases my doubt of my emendations.

Since I have confined my imagination to the margin, it must not be considered as very reprehensible, if I have suffered it to play some freaks in its own dominion. There is no danger in conjecture, if it be proposed as conjecture; and while the text remains uninjured, those changes may be safely offered, which are not considered even by him that offers them as necessary or safe.

If my readings are of little value, they have not been ostentatiously displayed or importunately obtruded. I could have written longer notes, for the art of writing notes is not of difficult attainment. The work is performed, first by railing at the stupidity, negligence, ignorance, and asinine tastelessness of the former editors, and shewing, from all that goes before and all that follows, the inelegance and absurdity of the old reading; then by proposing something, which to superficial readers would seem specious, but which the editor rejects with indignation; then by producing the true reading, with a long paraphrase, and concluding with loud acclamations on the discovery, and a sober wish for the advancement and prosperity of genuine criticism.

All this may be done, and perhaps done sometimes without impropriety. But I have always sus-  
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pected that the reading is right, which requires many words to prove it wrong; and the emendation wrong, that cannot without so much labour appear to be right. The justness of a happy restoration strikes at once, and the moral precept may be well applied to criticism, *quod dubitas ne feceris*.

To dread the shore which he sees spread with wrecks, is natural to the sailor. I had before my eye so many critical adventures ended in miscarriage, that caution was forced upon me. I encountered in every page wit struggling with its own sophistry, and learning confused by the multiplicity of its views. I was forced to censure those whom I admired, and could not but reflect, while I was dispossessing their emendations, how soon the same fate might happen to my own, and how many of the readings which I have corrected may be by some other editor defended and established.

Criticks I saw, that others' names efface,  
 And fix their own, with labour, in the place;  
 Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,  
 Or disappear'd, and left the first behind.      POPE.

That a conjectural critick should often be mistaken, cannot be wonderful, either to others or himself, if it be considered, that in his art there is no system, no principal and axiomatical truth that regulates subordinate positions. His chance of error is renewed at every attempt; an oblique view of the passage, a slight misapprehension of a phrase, a casual inattention to the parts connected, is sufficient to make him not only fail, but fail ridiculously; and when he succeeds best, he produces perhaps

haps but one reading of many probable, and he that suggests another will always be able to dispute his claims.

It is an unhappy state, in which danger is hid under pleasure. The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is too much delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

Yet conjectural criticism has been of great use in the learned world; nor is it my intention to depreciate a study, that has exercised so many mighty minds, from the revival of learning to our own age, from the bishop of *Aleria* to *English Bentley*. The criticks on ancient authors have, in the exercise of their sagacity, many assistances, which the editor of *Shakespeare* is condemned to want. They are employed upon grammatical and settled languages, whose construction contributes so much to perspicuity, that *Homer* has fewer passages unintelligible than *Chaucer*. The words have not only a known regimen, but invariable quantities, which direct and confine the choice. There are commonly more manuscripts than one; and they do not often conspire in the same mistakes. Yet *Scaliger* could confess to *Salmasius* how little satisfaction his emendations gave him. *Illudunt nobis conjecturæ nostræ, quarum nos pudet, posteaquam in meliores codices incidimus.* And *Lipsius* could complain, that criticks were making faults, by trying to remove them, *Ut olim vitiis, ita nunc remediis laboratur.* And indeed, where mere conjecture is to be used, the emendations of *Scaliger* and *Lipsius*, notwithstanding their  
wonderful



PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE. 299

wonderful sagacity and erudition, are often vague and disputable, like mine or *Theobald's*.

Perhaps I may not be more censured for doing wrong, than for doing little; for raising in the publick, expectations which at last I have not answered. The expectation of ignorance is indefinite, and that of knowledge is often tyrannical. It is hard to satisfy those who know not what to demand, or those who demand by design what they think impossible to be done. I have indeed disappointed no opinion more than my own; yet I have endeavoured to perform my task with no slight solicitude. Not a single passage in the whole work has appeared to me corrupt, which I have not attempted to restore; or obscure, which I have not endeavoured to illustrate. In many I have failed, like others; and from many, after all my efforts, I have retreated, and confessed the repulse. I have not passed over, with affected superiority, what is equally difficult to the reader and to myself, but, where I could not instruct him, have owned my ignorance. I might easily have accumulated a mass of seeming learning upon easy scenes; but it ought not to be imputed to negligence, that, where nothing was necessary, nothing has been done, or that, where others have said enough, I have said no more.

Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils. Let him, that is yet unacquainted with the powers of *Shakespeare*, and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give, read every play, from the first scene to the last, with utter negligence

negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of *Theobald* and of *Pope*. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness, and read the commentators.

Particular passages are cleared by notes, but the general effect of the work is weakened. The mind is refrigerated by interruption; the thoughts are diverted from the principal subject; the reader is weary, he suspects not why; and at last throws away the book which he has too diligently studied.

Parts are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed; there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full design and in its true proportions; a close approach shews the smaller niceties, but the beauty of the whole is discerned no longer.

It is not very grateful to consider how little the succession of editors has added to this author's power of pleasing. He was read, admired, studied, and imitated, while he was yet deformed with all the improprieties which ignorance and neglect could accumulate upon him; while the reading was yet not rectified, nor his allusions understood; yet then did *Dryden* pronounce, "that *Shakespeare* was the  
 " man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient  
 " poets,

“ poets, had the largest and most comprehensive  
 “ soul. All the images of nature were still present  
 “ to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but  
 “ luckily : when he describes any thing, you more  
 “ than see it, you feel it too. Those, who accuse  
 “ him to have wanted learning, give him the greater  
 “ commendation : he was naturally learned : he  
 “ needed not the spectacles of books to read na-  
 “ ture ; he looked inwards, and found her there.  
 “ I cannot say he is every where alike ; were he so  
 “ I should do him injury to compare him with the  
 “ greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and  
 “ insipid ; his comick wit degenerating into  
 “ clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But  
 “ he is always great, when some great occasion is  
 “ presented to him : no man can say, he ever had  
 “ a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise  
 “ himself as high above the rest of poets,

“ *Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.*”

It is to be lamented, that such a writer should  
 want a commentary ; that his language should be-  
 come obsolete, or his sentiments obscure. But it is  
 vain to carry wishes beyond the condition of human  
 things ; that which must happen to all, has hap-  
 pened to *Shakespeare*, by accident and time ; and  
 more than has been suffered by any other writer  
 since the use of types, has been suffered by him  
 through his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by  
 that superiority of mind, which despised its own  
 performances, when it compared them with its  
 powers, and judged those works unworthy to be  
 preserved,

preserved, which the criticks of following ages were to contend for the fame of restoring and explaining.

Among these candidates of inferior fame, I am now to stand the judgment of the publick ; and wish that I could confidently produce my commentary as equal to the encouragement which I have had the honour of receiving. Every work of this kind is by its nature deficient, and I should feel little solicitude about the sentence, were it to be pronounced only by the skilful and the learned.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

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TEMPEST.

IT is observed of *The Tempest*, that its plan is regular; this the author of *The Revival* \* thinks, what I think too, an accidental effect of the story, not intended or regarded by our author. But whatever might be *Shakespeare's* intention in forming or adopting the plot, he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life. In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters. There is the agency of airy spirits, and of an earthly goblin; the operations of magick, the tumults of a storm, the adventures of a desert island, the native effusion of untaught affection, the punishment of guilt, and the final happiness of the pair for whom our passions and reason are equally interested.

\* Mr. Heath, who wrote a revival of *Shakespeare's* text, published in 8vo. circa 1760.



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

In this play there is a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of care and negligence. The versification is often excellent, the allusions are learned and just; but the author conveys his heroes by sea from one inland town to another in the same country; he places the emperor at *Milan*, and sends his young men to attend him, but never mentions him more; he makes *Protheus*, after an interview with *Silvia*, say he has only seen her picture; and, if we may credit the old copies, he has, by mistaking places, left his scenery inextricable. The reason of all this confusion seems to be, that he took his story from a novel, which he sometimes followed, and sometimes forsook, sometimes remembered, and sometimes forgot.

That this play is rightly attributed to *Shakespeare*, I have little doubt. If it be taken from him, to whom shall it be given? This question may be asked of all the disputed plays, except *Titus Andronicus*; and it will be found more credible, that *Shakespeare* might sometimes sink below his highest flights, than that any other should rise up to his lowest.

## MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Of this play there is a tradition preserved by Mr. *Rowe*, that it was written at the command of queen *Elizabeth*, who was so delighted with the character of *Falstaff*, that she wished it to be diffused through more plays; but suspecting that it might pall by continued uniformity, directed the poet to diversify  
his

his manner, by shewing him in love. No task is harder than that of writing to the ideas of another. *Shakespeare* knew what the queen, if the story be true, seems not to have known, that by any real passion of tenderness, the selfish craft, the careless jollity, and the lazy luxury of *Falstaff* must have suffered so much abatement, that little of his former cast would have remained. *Falstaff* could not love, but by ceasing to be *Falstaff*. He could only counterfeit love, and his professions could be prompted, not by the hope of pleasure, but of money. Thus the poet approached as near as he could to the work enjoined him; yet having perhaps in the former plays completed his own idea, seems not to have been able to give *Falstaff* all his former power of entertainment.

This comedy is remarkable for the variety and number of the personages, who exhibit more characters appropriated and discriminated, than perhaps can be found in any other play.

Whether *Shakespeare* was the first that produced upon the *English* stage the effect of language distorted and depraved by provincial or foreign pronunciation, I cannot certainly decide. This mode of forming ridiculous characters can confer praise only on him, who originally discovered it, for it requires not much of either wit or judgment: its success must be derived almost wholly from the player, but its power in a skilful mouth, even he that despises it, is unable to resist.

The conduct of this drama is deficient; the action begins and ends often before the conclusion, and the different parts might change places without inconvenience; but its general power, that power by

which all works of genius shall finally be tried, is such, that perhaps it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end.

#### MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

There is perhaps not one of *Shakespeare's* plays more darkened than this, by the peculiarities of its author, and the unskilfulness of its editors, by distortions of phrase, or negligence of transcription.

The novel of *Giraldi Cynthio*, from which *Shakespeare* is supposed to have borrowed this fable, may be read in *Shakespeare illustrated*, elegantly translated, with remarks, which will assist the enquirer to discover how much absurdity *Shakespeare* has admitted or avoided.

I cannot but suspect that some other had new-modelled the novel of *Cynthio*, or written a story which in some particulars resembled it, and that *Cynthio* was not the author whom *Shakespeare* immediately followed. The emperor in *Cynthio* is named *Maximine*; the duke, in *Shakespeare's* enumeration of the persons of the drama, is called *Vincentio*. This appears a very slight remark; but since the duke has no name in the play, nor is ever mentioned but by his title, why should he be called *Vincentio* among the *persons*, but because the name was copied from the story, and placed superfluously at the head of the list by the mere habit of transcription? It is therefore likely that there was then a story of *Vincentio* duke of *Vienna*, different from that of *Maximine* emperor of the Romans.

Of this play the light or comick part is very natural and pleasing, but the grave scenes, if a few passages be excepted, have more labour than elegance. The plot is rather intricate than artful. The time of the action is indefinite; some time, we know not how much, must have elapsed between the recess of the duke and the imprisonment of *Claudio*; for he must have learned the story of *Mariana* in his disguise, or he delegated his power to a man already known to be corrupted. The unities of action and place are sufficiently preserved.

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

In this play, which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of our poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages mean, childish, and vulgar; and some which ought not to have been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden queen. But there are scattered through the whole many sparks of genius; nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of *Shakespeare*.

## MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts in their various modes are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies in his time were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and *Spenser's* poem had made them great.

## MERCHANT OF VENICE.

It has been lately discovered, that this fable is taken from a story in the *Pecorone* of *Giovanni Fiorentino*, a novelist, who wrote in 1378. The story has been published in *English*, and I have epitomized the translation. The translator is of opinion, that the choice of the caskets is borrowed from a tale of *Boccace*, which I have likewise abridged, though I believe that *Shakespeare* must have had some other novel in view.

Of the MERCHANT OF VENICE the style is even and easy, with few peculiarities of diction, or anomalies of construction. The comick part raises laughter, and the serious fixes expectation. The probability of either one or the other story cannot be maintained. The union of two actions in one event is in this drama eminently happy. *Dryden* was much pleased with his own address in connecting the two plots of his *Spanish Friar*, which yet, I believe, the critick will find excelled by this play.

## AS YOU LIKE IT.

Of this play the fable is wild and pleasing. I know not how the ladies will approve the facility with which both *Rosalind* and *Celia* give away their hearts. To *Celia* much may be forgiven for the heroism of her friendship. The character of *Jaques* is natural and well preserved. The comick dialogue is very sprightly, with less mixture of low buffoonery than in some other plays; and the graver part is elegant and harmonious. By hastening to the end of his work, *Shakespeare* suppressed the dialogue



between the usurper and the hermit, and lost an opportunity of exhibiting a moral lesson in which he might have found matter worthy of his highest powers.

## TAMING OF THE SHREW.

Of this play the two plots are so well united, that they can hardly be called two without injury to the art with which they are interwoven. The attention is entertained with all the variety of a double plot, yet is not distracted by unconnected incidents.

The part between *Katharine* and *Petrucchio* is eminently spritely and diverting. At the marriage of *Bianca* the arrival of the real father, perhaps, produces more perplexity than pleasure. The whole play is very popular and diverting.

## ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

This play has many delightful scenes, though not sufficiently probable, and some happy characters, though not new, nor produced by any deep knowledge of human nature. *Parolles* is a boaster and a coward, such as has always been the sport of the stage, but perhaps never raised more laughter or contempt than in the hands of *Shakespeare*.

I cannot reconcile my heart to *Bertram*; a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who marries *Helen* as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate: when she is dead by his unkindness, sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a

## 310 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON

woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness.

The story of *Bertram* and *Diana* had been told before of *Mariana* and *Angelo*, and, to confess the truth, scarcely merited to be heard a second time.

### T W E L F T H - N I G H T.

This play is in the graver part elegant and easy, and in some of the lighter scenes exquisitely humorous. *Ague-cheek* is drawn with great propriety, but his character is, in a great measure, that of natural fatuity, and is therefore not the proper prey of a satirist. The soliloquy of *Malvolio* is truly comick; he is betrayed to ridicule merely by his pride. The marriage of *Olivia*, and the succeeding perplexity, though well enough contrived to divert on the stage, wants credibility, and fails to produce the proper instruction required in the drama, as it exhibits no just picture of life.

### W I N T E R ' S T A L E.

The story of this play is taken from the pleasant *History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, written by *Robert Greene*.

This play, as *Dr. Warburton* justly observes, is, with all its absurdities, very entertaining. The character of *Autolycus* is very naturally conceived, and strongly represented.

### M A C B E T H.

This play is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action, but it has no nice discriminations of character;

character; the events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents.

The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said, in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that, in *Shakespeare's* time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions.

The passions are directed to their true end. *Lady Macbeth* is merely detested; and though the courage of *Macbeth* preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall.

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[*Note.* The reader, it is presumed, is by this time aware that the observations of *Johnson* here given, are such only as occur at the end of the several plays. In this of *Macbeth* there is a note at the beginning, which, as it contains the editor's sentiments respecting witches and witchcraft, and is in fact a dissertation on that subject, was thought too valuable to be rejected, and is therefore here inserted.]

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In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries. A poet who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability,

be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write fairy tales instead of tragedies; but a survey of the notions that prevailed at the time when this play was written, will prove that *Shakespeare* was in no danger of such censures, since he only turned the system that was then universally admitted, to his advantage, and was far from overburthening the credulity of his audience.

The reality of witchcraft or enchantment, which, though not strictly the same, are confounded in this play, has in all ages and countries been credited by the common people, and in most, by the learned themselves. The phantoms have indeed appeared more frequently, in proportion as the darkness of ignorance has been more gross; but it cannot be shown, that the brightest gleams of knowledge have at any time been sufficient to drive them out of the world. The time in which this kind of credulity was at its height, seems to have been that of the holy war, in which the Christians imputed all their defeats to enchantments or diabolical opposition, as they ascribed their success to the assistance of their military saints; and the learned Dr. *Warburton* appears to believe (*Suppl. to the Introduction to Don Quixote*) that the first accounts of enchantments were brought into this part of the world by those who returned from their eastern expeditions. But there is always some distance between the birth and maturity of folly as of wickedness: this opinion had long existed, though perhaps the application of it had in no foregoing age been so frequent, nor the reception so general. *Olympiodorus*, in *Photius's* extracts, tells us of one *Libanius*, who practised this kind of military magick,

gick, and having promised *χωρίς ὀπλιτῶν κατὰ βαρβάρων ἐνεργεῖν*, to perform great things against the Barbarians without soldiers, was, at the instances of the empress *Placidia*, put to death, when he was about to have given proofs of his abilities. The empress shewed some kindness in her anger, by cutting him off at a time so convenient for his reputation.

But a more remarkable proof of the antiquity of this notion may be found in St. *Chrysoptom's* book *de Sacerdotio*, which exhibits a scene of enchantments not exceeded by any romance of the middle age: he supposes a spectator overlooking a field of battle attended by one that points out all the various objects of horror, the engines of destruction, and the arts of slaughter. *Δεικνύτο δὲ ἔτι παρὰ τοῖς ἐναντίοις καὶ πετομένους ἵππους διὰ τινος μαγανείας, καὶ ὀπλίτας δι' αἴρος φερομένους, καὶ πάσῃν γοητείας δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν.* Let him then proceed to shew him in the opposite armies horses flying by enchantment, armed men transported through the air, and every power and form of magick. Whether St. *Chrysoptom* believed that such performances were really to be seen in a day of battle, or only endeavoured to enliven his description, by adopting the notions of the vulgar, it is equally certain, that such notions were in his time received, and that therefore they were not imported from the *Saracens* in a later age; the wars with the *Saracens* however gave occasion to their propagation, not only as bigotry naturally discovers prodigies, but as the scene of action was removed to a great distance.

The Reformation did not immediately arrive at its meridian, and though day was gradually increasing upon us, the goblins of witchcraft still continued to  
hover



hover in the twilight. In the time of queen *Elizabeth* was the remarkable trial of the witches of *Warbois*, whose conviction is still commemorated in an annual sermon at *Huntingdon*. But in the reign of king *James*, in which this tragedy was written, many circumstances concurred to propagate and confirm this opinion. The king, who was much celebrated for his knowledge, had, before his arrival in *England*, not only examined in person a woman accused of witchcraft, but had given a very formal account of the practices and illusions of evil spirits, the compacts of witches, the ceremonies used by them, the manner of detecting them, and the justice of punishing them, in his dialogues of *Dæmonologie*, written in the *Scottish* dialect, and published at *Edinburgh*. This book was, soon after his accession, reprinted at *London*, and as the ready way to gain king *James's* favour was to flatter his speculations, the system of *Dæmonologie* was immediately adopted by all who desired either to gain preferment or not to lose it. Thus the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated; and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity cooperated in its favour. The infection soon reached the parliament, who, in the first year of king *James*, made a law, by which it was enacted, chap. xii. That

“ if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. or take up any dead man, woman or child, out of

the grave,—or the skin, bone, or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, forcery, charm, or enchantment; 4. or shall use, practise or exercise any sort of witchcraft, forcery, charm, or enchantment; 5. whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person being convicted, shall suffer death." This law was repealed in our own time.

Thus, in the time of *Shakespeare*, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and by the fashion, and it became not only unpolite, but criminal to doubt it; and as prodigies are always seen in proportion as they are expected, witches were every day discovered, and multiplied so fast in some places, that bishop *Hall* mentions a village in *Lancashire*, where their number was greater than that of the houses. The jesuits and sectaries took advantage of this universal error, and endeavoured to promote the interest of their parties by pretended cures of persons afflicted by evil spirits; but they were detected and exposed by the clergy of the established church.

Upon this general infatuation *Shakespeare* might be easily allowed to found a play, especially since he has followed with great exactness such histories as were then thought true; nor can it be doubted that the scenes of enchantment, however they may now be ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting.

#### KING JOHN.

The tragedy of *King John*, though not written with the utmost power of *Shakespeare*, is varied with  
a very

## 316 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON

a very pleasing interchange of incidents and characters. The lady's grief is very affecting; and the character of the bastard contains that mixture of greatness and levity which this author delighted to exhibit.

### KING RICHARD II.

This play is extracted from the *Chronicle of Holinshed*, in which many passages may be found which *Shakespeare* has, with very little alteration, transplanted into his scenes; particularly a speech of the bishop of *Carlisle* in defence of king *Richard's* unalienable right, and immunity from human jurisdiction.

*Jonson* who, in his *Catiline* and *Sejanus*, has inserted many speeches from the *Roman* historians, was perhaps induced to that practice by the example of *Shakespeare*, who had condescended sometimes to copy more ignoble writers. But *Shakespeare* had more of his own than *Jonson*, and if he sometimes was willing to spare his labour, shewed by what he performed at other times, that his extracts were made by choice or idleness rather than necessity.

This play is one of those which *Shakespeare* has apparently revised; but as success in works of invention is not always proportionate to labour, it is not finished at last with the happy force of some other of his tragedies, nor can be said much to affect the passions, or enlarge the understanding.

### KING HENRY IV. PART II.

I fancy every reader, when he ends this play, cries out with *Desdemona*, "O most lame and im-  
" potent

“potent conclusion!” As this play was not, to our knowledge, divided into acts by the author, I could be content to conclude it with the death of *Henry the Fourth*.

In that Jerufalem fhall Harry die.

These scenes, which now make the fifth act of *Henry the Fourth*, might then be the first of *Henry the Fifth*; but the truth is, that they do unite very commodiously to either play. When these plays were represented, I believe they ended as they are now ended in the books; but *Shakespeare* seems to have designed that the whole series of action from the beginning of *Richard the Second*, to the end of *Henry the Fifth*, should be considered by the reader as one work, upon one plan, only broken into parts by the necessity of exhibition.

None of *Shakespeare's* plays are more read than the *First and Second Parts of Henry the Fourth*. Perhaps no author has ever in two plays afforded so much delight. The great events are interesting, for the fate of kingdoms depends upon them; the slighter occurrences are diverting, and, except one or two, sufficiently probable; the incidents are multiplied with wonderful fertility of invention, and the characters diversified with the utmost nicety of discernment, and the profoundest skill in the nature of man.

The prince, who is the hero both of the comick and tragick part, is a young man of great abilities and violent passions, whose sentiments are right, though his actions are wrong; whose virtues are obscured by negligence, and whose understanding is dissipated by levity. In his idle hours he is rather  
loose

loose than wicked; and when the occasion forces out his latent qualities, he is great without effort, and brave without tumult. The trifler is roused into a hero, and the hero again repofes in the trifler. This character is great, original, and juft.

*Percy* is a rugged foldier, cholerick, and quarrelfome, and has only the foldier's virtues, generofity and courage.

But *Falftaff* unimitated, unimitable *Falftaff*, how fhall I describe thee? Thou compound of fenfe and vice; of fenfe which may be admired, but not eftemed; of vice which may be defpifed, but hardly detefted. *Falftaff* is a character loaded with faults, and with thofe faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief and a glutton, a coward and a boafter, always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous, and insult the defencelefs. At once obfequious and malignant, he fatirizes in their abfence thofe whom he lives by flattering. He is familiar with the prince only as an agent of vice, but of this familiarity he is fo proud, as not only to be fupercilious and haughty with common men, but to think his intereft of importance to the duke of *Lancaster*. Yet the man thus corrupt, thus defpicable, makes himfelf neceffary to the prince that defpifes him, by the moft pleafing of all qualities, perpetual gaiety, by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged, as his wit is not of the fplendid or ambitious kind, but confifts in eafy fcapes and fallies of levity, which make fport, but raife no envy. It muft be obferved, that he is ftained with no enormous or fanguinary crimes,



crimes, so that his licentiousness is not so offensive but that it may be borne for his mirth.

The moral to be drawn from this representation is, that no man is more dangerous than he that, with a will to corrupt, hath the power to please; and that neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion, when they see *Henry* seduced by *Falstaff*.

## KING HENRY V.

This play has many scenes of high dignity, and many of easy merriment. The character of the king is well supported, except in his courtship, where he has neither the vivacity of *Hal*, nor the grandeur of *Henry*. The humour of *Pistol* is very happily continued; his character has perhaps been the model of all the bullies that have yet appeared on the *English* stage.

The lines given to the Chorus have many admirers; but the truth is, that in them a little may be praised, and much must be forgiven; nor can it be easily discovered why the intelligence given by the Chorus is more necessary in this play than in many others where it is omitted. The great defect of this play is the emptiness and narrowness of the last act, which a very little diligence might have easily avoided.

## KING HENRY VI. PART I.

Of this play there is no copy earlier than that of the folio in 1623, though the two succeeding parts are extant in two editions in quarto. That the  
second

second and third parts were published without the first, may be admitted as no weak proof that the copies were surreptitiously obtained, and that the printers of that time gave the publick those plays not such as the author designed, but such as they could get them. That this play was written before the two others is indubitably collected from the series of events; that it was written and played before Henry the Fifth is apparent, because in the epilogue there is mention made of this play, and not of the other parts:

Henry the sixth in swaddling bands crown'd king,  
Whose state so many had the managing  
That they lost France, and made his England bleed  
Which oft our stage hath shewn.

*France* is lost in this play. The two following contain, as the old title imports, the contention of the houses of *York* and *Lancaster*.

The second and third parts of *Henry VI.* were printed in 1600. When *Henry V.* was written, we know not, but it was printed likewise in 1600, and therefore before the publication of the first part: the first part of *Henry VI.* had been often shewn on the stage, and would certainly have appeared in its place had the author been the publisher.

#### KING HENRY VI. PART III.

The three parts of *Henry VI.* are suspected, by Mr. *Theobald*, of being supposititious, and are declared, by Dr. *Warburton*, to be certainly not *Shakespeare's*. Mr. *Theobald's* suspicion arises from some obsolete words; but the phraseology is like  
the

the rest of our author's style, and single words, of which however I do not observe more than two, can conclude little.

Dr. *Warburton* gives no reason, but I suppose him to judge upon deeper principles and more comprehensive views, and to draw his opinion from the general effect and spirit of the composition, which he thinks inferior to the other historical plays.

From mere inferiority nothing can be inferred; in the productions of wit there will be inequality. Sometimes judgment will err, and sometimes the matter itself will defeat the artist. Of every author's works one will be the best, and one will be the worst. The colours are not equally pleasing, nor the attitudes equally graceful, in all the pictures of *Titian* or *Reynolds*.

Dissemblance of style, and heterogeneity of sentiment, may sufficiently show that a work does not really belong to the reputed author. But in these plays no such marks of spuriousness are found. The diction, the versification, and the figures, are *Shakespeare's*. These plays, considered, without regard to characters and incidents, merely as narratives in verse, are more happily conceived, and more accurately finished than those of *King John*, *Richard II.* or the tragick scenes of *Henry IV.* and *V.* If we take these plays from *Shakespeare*, to whom shall they be given? What author of that age had the same easiness of expression and fluency of numbers?

Having considered the evidence given by the plays themselves, and found it in their favour, let us now enquire what corroboration can be gained

from other testimony. They are ascribed to *Shakespeare* by the first editors; whose attestation may be received in questions of fact, however unskillfully they superintended their edition. They seem to be declared genuine by the voice of *Shakespeare* himself, who refers to the second play in his epilogue to *Henry V.* and apparently connects the first act of *Richard III.* with the last of the third part of *Henry VI.* If it be objected, that the plays were popular, and that therefore he alluded to them as well known; it may be answered, with equal probability, that the natural passions of a poet would have disposed him to separate his own works from those of an inferior hand. And, indeed, if an author's own testimony is to be overthrown by speculative criticism, no man can be any longer secure of literary reputation.

Of these three plays I think the second the best. The truth is, that they have not sufficient variety of action, for the incidents are too often of the same kind; yet many of the characters are well discriminated. King *Henry*, and his queen, king *Edward*; the duke of *Gloucester*, and the earl of *Warwick*, are very strongly and distinctly painted.

The old copies of the two latter parts of *Henry VI.* and of *Henry V.* are so apparently imperfect and mutilated, that there is no reason for supposing them the first draughts of *Shakespeare*. I am inclined to believe them copies taken by some auditor who wrote down, during the representation, what the time would permit, then perhaps filled up some of his omissions at a second or third hearing, and when  
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he had by this method formed something like a play, sent it to the printer.

## KING RICHARD III.

This is one of the most celebrated of our author's performances; yet I know not whether it has not happened to him as to others, to be praised most, when praise is not most deserved. That this play has scenes noble in themselves, and very well contrived to strike in the exhibition, cannot be denied. But some parts are trifling, others shocking, and some improbable.

I have nothing to add to the observations of the learned criticks, but that some traces of this antiquated exhibition are still retained in the rustick puppet-plays, in which I have seen the Devil very lustily belaboured by Punch, whom I hold to be the legitimate successor of the old Vice.

## KING HENRY VIII.

The play of *Henry the Eighth* is one of those which still keeps possession of the stage by the splendor of its pageantry. The coronation about forty years ago, drew the people together in multitudes for a great part of the winter. Yet pomp is not the only merit of this play. The meek sorrows and virtuous distress of *Katharine* have furnished some scenes, which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of *Shakespeare* comes in and goes out with *Katharine*. Every other part may be easily conceived, and easily written.



The historical dramas are now concluded, of which the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*, and *Henry the Fifth*, are among the happiest of our author's compositions; and *King John*, *Richard the Third*, and *Henry the Eighth*, deservedly stand in the second class. Those whose curiosity would refer the historical scenes to their original, may consult *Holingshed*, and sometimes *Hall*: from *Holingshed*, *Shakespeare* has often inserted whole speeches with no more alteration than was necessary to the numbers of his verse. To transcribe them into the margin was unnecessary, because the original is easily examined, and they are seldom less perspicuous in the poet than in the historian.

To play histories, or to exhibit a succession of events by action and dialogue, was a common entertainment among our rude ancestors upon great festivities. The parish clerks once performed at *Clerkenwell* a play which lasted three days, containing *The history of the World*.

#### C O R I O L A N U S.

The tragedy of *Coriolanus* is one of the most amusing of our author's performances. The old man's merriment in *Menenius*; the lofty lady's dignity in *Volumnia*; the bridal modesty in *Virgilia*; the patrician and military haughtiness in *Coriolanus*; the plebeian malignity, and tribunitian insolence in *Brutus* and *Sicinius*, make a very pleasing and interesting variety: and the various revolutions of the hero's fortune fill the mind with anxious curiosity. There  
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is, perhaps, too much bustle in the first act, and too little in the last.

## JULIUS CÆSAR.

Of this tragedy many particular passages deserve regard, and the contention and reconciliation of *Brutus* and *Cassius* is universally celebrated; but I have never been strongly agitated in perusing it, and think it somewhat cold and unaffecting, compared with some other of *Shakespeare's* plays; his adherence to the real story, and to *Roman* manners, seems to have impeded the natural vigour of his genius.

## ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

This play keeps curiosity always busy, and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward without intermission from the first act to the last. But the power of delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene; for except the feminine arts, some of which are too low which distinguish *Cleopatra*, no character is very strongly discriminated. *Upton*, who did not easily miss what he desired to find, has discovered that the language of *Antony* is, with great skill and learning, made pompous and superb, according to his real practice. But I think his diction not distinguishable from that of others: the most timid speech in the play is that which *Cæsar* makes to *Octavia*.

## 326 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON

The events, of which the principal are described according to history, are produced without any art of connexion or care of disposition.

### TIMON OF ATHENS.

The play of *Timon* is a domestick tragedy, and therefore strongly fastens on the attention of the reader. In the plan there is not much art, but the incidents are natural, and the characters various and exact. The catastrophe affords a very powerful warning against that ostentatious liberality, which scatters bounty, but confers no benefits, and buys flattery, but not friendship.

In this tragedy, are many passages perplexed, obscure, and probably corrupt, which I have endeavoured to rectify, or explain, with due diligence; but having only one copy, cannot promise myself that my endeavours shall be much applauded.

### TITUS ANDRONICUS.

All the editors and criticks agree with Mr. *Theobald* in supposing this play spurious. I see no reason for differing from them; for the colour of the stile is wholly different from that of the other plays, and there is an attempt at regular versification, and artificial closes, not always inelegant, yet seldom pleasing. The barbarity of the spectacles, and the general massacre, which are here exhibited, can scarcely be conceived tolerable to any audience; yet we are told by *Jonson*, that they were not only borne, but praised. That *Shakespeare* wrote any part,  
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though *Theobald* declares it incontestible, I see no reason for believing.

The testimony produced at the beginning of this play, by which it is ascribed to *Shakespeare*, is by no means equal to the argument against its authenticity, arising from the total difference of conduct, language, and sentiments, by which it stands apart from all the rest. *Meres* had probably no other evidence than that of a title-page, which, though in our time it be sufficient, was then of no great authority; for all the plays which were rejected by the first collectors of *Shakespeare's* works, and admitted in later editions, and again rejected by the critical editors, had *Shakespeare's* name on the title, as we must suppose, by the fraudulence of the printers, who, while there were yet no gazettes, nor advertisements, nor any means of circulating literary intelligence, could usurp at pleasure any celebrated name. Nor had *Shakespeare* any interest in detecting the imposture, as none of his fame or profit was produced by the press.

The chronology of this play does not prove it not to be *Shakespeare's*. If it had been written twenty-five years in 1614, it might have been written when *Shakespeare* was twenty-five years old. When he left *Warwickshire* I know not; but at the age of twenty-five it was rather too late to fly for deer-stealing.

*Ravenscroft*, who in the reign of *Charles II.* revised this play, and restored it to the stage, tells us, in his preface, from a theatrical tradition, I suppose, which in his time might be of sufficient authority, that this play was touched in different parts by

*Shakespeare*, but written by some other poet. I do not find *Shakespeare's* touches very discernible.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

This play is more correctly written than most of *Shakespeare's* compositions, but it is not one of those in which either the extent of his views or elevation of his fancy is fully displayed. As the story abounded with materials, he has exerted little invention; but he has diversified his characters with great variety, and preserved them with great exactness. His vicious characters sometimes disgust, but cannot corrupt, for both *Cressida* and *Pandarus* are detested and contemned. The comick characters seem to have been the favourites of the writer; they are of the superficial kind, and exhibit more of manners than nature; but they are copiously filled, and powerfully impressed.

*Shakespeare* has in his story followed for the greater part the old book of *Caxton*, which was then very popular; but the character of *Thersites*, of which it makes no mention, is a proof that this play was written after *Chapman* had published his version of *Homer*.

CYMBELINE.

This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expence of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names, and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon  
unresisting



unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

## KING LEAR.

The tragedy of *Lear* is deservedly celebrated among the dramas of *Shakespeare*. There is perhaps no play which keeps the attention so strongly fixed; which so much agitates our passions, and interests our curiosity. The artful involutions of distinct interests, the striking opposition of contrary characters, the sudden changes of fortune, and the quick succession of events, fill the mind with a perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope. There is no scene which does not contribute to the aggravation of the distress or conduct of the action, and scarce a line which does not conduce to the progress of the scene. So powerful is the current of the poet's imagination, that the mind, which once ventures within it, is hurried irresistibly along.

On the seeming improbability of *Lear's* conduct, it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And, perhaps, if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate *Lear's* manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of *Guinea* or *Madagascar*. *Shakespeare*, indeed, by the mention of his earls and dukes, has given us the idea of times more civilized, and of life regulated by softer manners;

ners; and the truth is, that though he so nicely discriminates, and so minutely describes the characters of men, he commonly neglects and confounds the characters of ages, by mingling customs ancient and modern, *English* and foreign.

My learned friend Mr. *Warton*, who has in the *Adventurer* very minutely criticised this play, remarks, that the instances of cruelty are too savage and shocking, and that the intervention of *Edmund* destroys the simplicity of the story. These objections may, I think, be answered, by repeating, that the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little, having only drawn it into a series by dialogue and action. But I am not able to apologize with equal plausibility for the extrusion of *Gloster's* eyes, which seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatic exhibition, and such as must always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity. Yet let it be remembered that our author well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote.

The injury done by *Edmund* to the simplicity of the action is abundantly recompensed by the addition of variety, by the art with which he is made to co-operate with the chief design, and the opportunity which he gives the poet of combining perfidy with perfidy, and connecting the wicked son with the wicked daughters, to impress this important moral, that villany is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin.

But though this moral be incidentally enforced, *Shakespeare* has suffered the virtue of *Cordelia* to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas  
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of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet this conduct is justified by *The Spectator*, who blames *Tate* for giving *Cordelia* success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, *the tragedy has lost half its beauty*. *Dennis* has remarked, whether justly or not, that, to secure the favourable reception of *Cato*, *the town was poisoned with much false and abominable criticism*, and that endeavours had been used to discredit and decry poetical justice. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that the observation of justice makes a play worse; or, that if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the publick has decided. *Cordelia*, from the time of *Tate*, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add any thing to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by *Cordelia's* death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.

There is another controversy among the criticks concerning this play. It is disputed whether the predominant image in *Lear's* disordered mind be the loss of his kingdom or the cruelty of his daughters. *Mr. Murphy*, a very judicious critick, has evinced by induction of particular passages, that the cruelty of his

his daughters is the primary source of his distress, and that the loss of royalty affects him only as a secondary and subordinate evil. He observes with great justness, that *Lear* would move our compassion but little, did we not rather consider the injured father than the degraded king.

The story of this play, except the episode of *Edmund*, which is derived, I think, from *Sidney*, is taken originally from *Geoffry of Monmouth*, whom *Holingshed* generally copied; but perhaps immediately from an old historical ballad. My reason for believing that the play was posterior to the ballad, rather than the ballad to the play, is, that the ballad has nothing of *Shakespeare's* nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted, and that it follows the chronicle; it has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications: it first hinted *Lear's* madness, but did not array it in circumstances. The writer of the ballad added something to the history, which is a proof that he would have added more, if more had occurred to his mind, and more must have occurred if he had seen *Shakespeare*.

#### ROMEO AND JULIET,

This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of *Shakespeare* to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent  
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the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. *Dryden* mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by *Shakespeare*, that *he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him.* Yet he thinks him *no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed,* without danger to a poet. *Dryden* well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that, in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. *Mercutio's* wit, gaiety, and courage, will always procure him friends that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of *Shakespeare* to have continued his existence, though some of his fallies are perhaps out of the reach of *Dryden*; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive, and sublime.

The *Nurse* is one of the characters in which the author delighted: he has, with great subtilty of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comick scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, *have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit.*

## H A M L E T.

If the dramas of *Shakespeare* were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distin-



guishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of *Hamlet* the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment, that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity, not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of *Hamlet* causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of *Ophelia* fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of *Hamlet* there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats *Ophelia* with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

*Hamlet* is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which *Hamlet* had no part in producing.

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The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily have been formed to kill *Hamlet* with the dagger, and *Laertes* with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shewn little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of *Opbelia*, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

## O T H E L L O.

The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of *Othello*, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of *Iago*, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and his vengeance; the soft simplicity of *Desdemona*, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of *Shakespeare's* skill in human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which *Iago* makes in the *Moor's* conviction, and the circumstances

cumstances which he employs to inflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will perhaps not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is *a man not easily jealous*, yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him *perplexed in the extreme*.

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of *Iago* is so conducted, that he is from the first scene to the last hated and despised.

Even the inferior characters of this play would be very conspicuous in any other piece, not only for their justness, but their strength. *Cassio* is brave, benevolent, and honest, ruined only by his want of stubbornness to resist an insidious invitation. *Roderigo's* suspicious credulity, and impatient submission to the cheats which he sees practised upon him, and which by persuasion he suffers to be repeated, exhibit a strong picture of a weak mind betrayed by unlawful desires to a false friend; and the virtue of *Æmilia* is such as we often find worn loosely, but not cast off, easy to commit small crimes, but quickened and alarmed at atrocious villanies.

The scenes from the beginning to the end are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of *Othello*.

Had the scene opened in *Cyprus*, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

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**T**O solicit a subscription for a catalogue of books exposed to sale, is an attempt for which some apology cannot but be necessary; for few would willingly contribute to the expence of volumes, by which neither instruction nor entertainment could be afforded, from which only the bookseller could expect advantage, and of which the only use must cease, at the dispersion of the library.

Nor could the reasonableness of an universal rejection of our proposal be denied, if this catalogue were to be compiled with no other view, than that of promoting the sale of the books which it enumerates, and drawn up with that inaccuracy and confusion which may be found in those that are daily published.

But our design, like our proposal, is uncommon, and to be prosecuted at a very uncommon expence; it being intended, that the books shall be distributed into their distinct classes, and every class ranged with some regard to the age of the writers; that every book shall be accurately described; that the

peculiarities of editions shall be remarked, and observations from the authors of literary history occasionally interspersed; that, by this catalogue, we may inform posterity of the excellence and value of this great collection, and promote the knowledge of scarce books, and elegant editions. For this purpose men of letters are engaged, who cannot even be supplied with amanuenses, but at an expence above that of a common catalogue.

To shew that this collection deserves a particular degree of regard from the learned and the studious, that it excels any library that was ever yet offered to publick sale in the value as well as number of the volumes which it contains; and that therefore this catalogue will not be of less use to men of letters, than those of the *Thuanian*, *Heinfian*, or *Barberinian* libraries, it may not be improper to exhibit a general account of the different classes, as they are naturally divided by the several sciences.

By this method we can indeed exhibit only a general idea, at once magnificent and confused; an idea of the writings of many nations, collected from distant parts of the world, discovered sometimes by chance, and sometimes by curiosity, amidst the rubbish of forsaken monasteries, and the repositories of ancient families, and brought hither from every part, as to the universal receptacle of learning.

It will be no unpleasing effect of this account, if those, that shall happen to peruse it, should be inclined by it to reflect on the character of the late proprietors, and to pay some tribute of veneration to their ardour for literature, to that generous and exalted curiosity which they gratified with incessant  
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searches and immense expence, and to which they dedicated that time, and that superfluity of fortune, which many others of their rank employ in the pursuit of contemptible amusements, or the gratification of guilty passions. And, surely, every man, who considers learning as ornamental and advantageous to the community, must allow them the honour of publick benefactors, who have introduced amongst us authors not hitherto well known, and added to the literary treasures of their native country.

That our catalogue will excite any other man to emulate the collectors of this library, to prefer books and manuscripts to equipage and luxury, and to forsake noise and diversion for the conversation of the learned, and the satisfaction of extensive knowledge, we are very far from presuming to hope; but shall make no scruple to assert, that, if any man should happen to be seized with such laudable ambition, he may find in this catalogue hints and informations which are not easily to be met with; he will discover, that the boasted *Bodleian* library is very far from a perfect model, and that even the learned *Fabricius* cannot completely instruct him in the early editions of the classic writers.

But the collectors of libraries cannot be numerous; and, therefore, catalogues cannot very properly be recommended to the publick, if they had not a more general and frequent use, an use which every student has experienced, or neglected to his loss. By the means of catalogues only can it be known, what has been written on every part of learning, and the hazard avoided of encountering difficulties which have already been cleared, discussing questions which have

already been decided, and digging in mines of literature which former ages have exhausted.

How often this has been the fate of students, every man of letters can declare; and, perhaps, there are very few who have not sometimes valued as new discoveries, made by themselves, those observations, which have long since been published, and of which the world therefore will refuse them the praise; nor can the refusal be censured as any enormous violation of justice; for, why should they not forfeit by their ignorance, what they might claim by their sagacity.

To illustrate this remark, by the mention of obscure names, would not much confirm it; and to vilify for this purpose the memory of men truly great, would be to deny them the reverence which they may justly claim from those whom their writings have instructed. May the shade at least, of one great *English* critick rest without disturbance; and may no man presume to insult his memory, who wants his learning, his reason, or his wit.

From the vexatious disappointment of meeting reproach, where praise is expected, every man will certainly desire to be secured; and therefore that book will have some claim to his regard, from which he may receive informations of the labours of his predecessors, such as a catalogue of the *Harleian* library will copiously afford him.

Nor is the use of catalogues of less importance to those whom curiosity has engaged in the study of literary history, and who think the intellectual revolutions of the world more worthy of their attention, than the ravages of tyrants, the desolation  
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of kingdoms, the rout of armies, and the fall of empires. Those who are pleased with observing the first birth of new opinions, their struggles against opposition, their silent progress under persecution, their general reception, and their gradual decline, or sudden extinction; those that amuse themselves with remarking the different periods of human knowledge, and observe how darkness and light succeed each other; by what accident the most gloomy nights of ignorance have given way in the dawn of science, and how learning has languished and decayed, for want of patronage and regard, or been overborne by the prevalence of fashionable ignorance, or lost amidst the tumults of invasion, and the storms of violence. All those who desire any knowledge of the literary transactions of past ages, may find in catalogues, like this at least, such an account as is given by annalists, and chronologers of civil history.

How the knowledge of the sacred writings has been diffused, will be observed from the catalogue of the various editions of the bible, from the first impression by *Fust*, in 1462, to the present time; in which will be contained the polyglot editions of *Spain*, *France*, and *England*, those of the original *Hebrew*, the *Greek Septuagint*, and the *Latin Vulgate*; with the versions which are now used in the remotest parts of *Europe*, in the country of the *Grisons*, in *Lithuania*, *Bobemia*, *Finland*, and *Iceland*.

With regard to the attempts of the same kind made in our own country, there are few whose expectations will not be exceeded by the number of *English* bibles, of which not one is forgotten, whe-

ther valuable for the pomp and beauty of the impression, or for the notes with which the text is accompanied, or for any controversy or persecution that it produced, or for the peculiarity of any single passage. With the same care have the various editions of the book of common-prayer been selected, from which all the alterations which have been made in it may be easily remarked.

Amongst a great number of *Roman* missals and breviaries, remarkable for the beauty of their cuts and illuminations, will be found the *Mozarabic* missal and breviary, that raised such commotions in the kingdom of *Spain*.

The controversial treatises written in *England*, about the time of the Reformation, have been diligently collected, with a multitude of remarkable tracts, single sermons, and small treatises; which, however worthy to be preserved, are, perhaps, to be found in no other place.

The regard which was always paid, by the collectors of this library, to that remarkable period of time, in which the art of printing was invented, determined them to accumulate the ancient impressions of the fathers of the church; to which the later additions are added, lest antiquity should have seemed more worthy of esteem than accuracy.

History has been considered with the regard due to that study by which the manners are most easily formed, and from which the most efficacious instruction is received; nor will the most extensive curiosity fail of gratification in this library; from which no writers have been excluded, that relate either to the religious or civil affairs of any nation.

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Not only those authors of ecclesiastical history have been procured, that treat of the state of religion in general, or deliver accounts of sects or nations, but those likewise who have confined themselves to particular orders of men in every church; who have related the original, and the rules of every society, or recounted the lives of its founder and its members; those who have deduced in every country the succession of bishops, and those who have employed their abilities in celebrating the piety of particular saints, or martyrs, or monks, or nuns.

The civil history of all nations has been amassed together; nor is it easy to determine which has been thought most worthy of curiosity.

Of *France*, not only the general histories and ancient chronicles, the accounts of celebrated reigns, and narratives of remarkable events, but even the memorials of single families, the lives of private men, the antiquities of particular cities, churches, and monasteries, the topography of provinces, and the accounts of laws, customs, and prescriptions, are here to be found.

The several states of *Italy* have, in this treasury, their particular historians, whose accounts are, perhaps, generally more exact, by being less extensive; and more interesting, by being more particular.

Nor has less regard been paid to the different nations of the *Germanic* empire, of which neither the *Bobemians*, nor *Hungarians*, nor *Austrians*, nor *Bavarians*, have been neglected; nor have their antiquities, however generally disregarded, been less studiously searched, than their present state.



The northern nations have supplied this collection, not only with history, but poetry, with *Gothic* antiquities, and *Runic* inscriptions; which at least have this claim to veneration, above the remains of the *Roman* magnificence, that they are the works of those heroes by whom the *Roman* empire was destroyed; and which may plead, at least in this nation, that they ought not to be neglected by those that owe to the men whose memories they preserve, their constitution, their properties, and their liberties.

The curiosity of these collectors extend equally to all parts of the world; nor did they forget to add to the northern the southern writers, or to adorn their collection with chronicles of *Spain*, and the conquest of *Mexico*.

Even of those nations with which we have less intercourse, whose customs are less accurately known, and whose history is less distinctly recounted, there are in this library repositied such accounts as the *Europeans* have been hitherto able to obtain; nor are the *Mogul*, the *Tartar*, the *Turk*, and the *Saracen*, without their historians.

That persons so inquisitive with regard to the transactions of other nations, should enquire yet more ardently after the history of their own, may be naturally expected; and, indeed, this part of the library is no common instance of diligence and accuracy. Here are to be found, with the ancient chronicles, and larger histories of *Britain*, the narratives of single reigns, and the accounts of remarkable revolutions, the topographical histories of counties, the pedigrees of families, the antiquities  
of

of churches and cities, the proceedings of parliaments, the records of monasteries, and the lives of particular men, whether eminent in the church or the state, or remarkable in private life; whether exemplary for their virtues, or detestable for their crimes; whether persecuted for religion, or executed for rebellion.

That memorable period of the *English* history, which begins with the reign of king *Charles the First*, and ends with the Restoration, will almost furnish a library alone, such is the number of volumes, pamphlets, and papers, which were published by either party; and such is the care with which they have been preserved.

Nor is history without the necessary preparatives and attendants, geography and chronology: of geography, the best writers and delineators have been procured, and pomp and accuracy have both been regarded: the student of chronology may here find likewise those authors who searched the records of time, and fixed the periods of history.

With the historians and geographers may be ranked the writers of voyages and travels, which may be read here in the *Latin, English, Dutch, German, French, Italian, and Spanish* languages.

The laws of different countries, as they are in themselves equally worthy of curiosity with their history, have, in this collection, been justly regarded; and the rules by which the various communities of the world are governed, may be here examined and compared. Here are the ancient editions of the papal decretals, and the commentators

mentators on the civil law, the edicts of *Spain*, and the statutes of *Venice*.

But with particular industry have the various writers on the laws of our own country been collected, from the most ancient to the present time, from the bodies of the statutes to the minutest treatise; not only the reports, precedents, and readings of our own courts, but even the laws of our *West-Indian* colonies, will be exhibited in our catalogue.

But neither history nor law have been so far able to engross this library, as to exclude physic, philosophy, or criticism. Those have been thought, with justice, worthy of a place, who have examined the different species of animals, delineated their forms, or described their properties and instincts; or who have penetrated the bowels of the earth, treated on its different strata, and analysed its metals; or who have amused themselves with less laborious speculations, and planted trees, or cultivated flowers.

Those that have exalted their thoughts above the minuter parts of the creation, who have observed the motions of the heavenly bodies, and attempted systems of the universe, have not been denied the honour which they deserved by so great an attempt, whatever has been their success. Nor have those mathematicians been rejected, who have applied their science to the common purposes of life; or those that have deviated into the kindred arts, of tactics, architecture, and fortification.

Even arts of far less importance have found their authors, nor have these authors been despised by the boundless curiosity of the proprietors of the *Harleian* library. The writers on horsemanship and fencing  
are

are more numerous, and more bulky, than could be expected by those who reflect how seldom those excel in either, whom their education has qualified to compose books.

The admirer of *Greek* and *Roman* literature will meet, in this collection, with editions little known to the most inquisitive criticks, and which have escaped the observation of those whose great employment has been the collation of copies; nor will he find only the most ancient editions of *Faustus*, *Jenson*, *Spira*, *Sweynbeim*, and *Pannartz*, but the most accurate likewise and beautiful of *Colineus*, the *Juntæ*, *Plantin*, *Aldus*, the *Stephens*, and *Elzevir*, with the commentaries and observations of the most learned editors.

Nor are they accompanied only with the illustrations of those who have confined their attempts to particular writers, but of those likewise who have treated on any part of the *Greek* or *Roman* antiquities, their laws, their customs, their dress, their buildings, their wars, their revenues, or the rites and ceremonies of their worship, and those that have endeavoured to explain any of their authors from their statues or their coins.

Next to the ancients, those writers deserve to be mentioned, who, at the restoration of literature, imitated their language and their style with so great success, or who laboured with so much industry to make them understood: such were *Philelphus* and *Politian*, *Scaliger* and *Buchanan*, and the poets of the age of *Leo the Tenth*; these are likewise to be found in this library, together with the *Deliciæ*, or collections of all nations.

Painting

Painting is so nearly allied to poetry, that it cannot be wondered that those who have so much esteemed the one, have paid an equal regard to the other; and therefore it may be easily imagined, that the collection of prints is numerous in an uncommon degree; but surely, the expectation of every man will be exceeded, when he is informed that there are more than forty thousand engraven from *Raphael*, *Titian*, *Guido*, the *Carraches*, and a thousand others by *Nauteuil*, *Hollar*, *Collet*, *Edelinck*, and *Dorigny*, and other engravers of equal reputation.

There is also a great collection of original drawings, of which three seem to deserve a particular mention; the first exhibits a representation of the inside of *St. Peter's* church at *Rome*; the second, of that of *St. John Lateran*; and the third, of the high altar of *St. Ignatius*; all painted with the utmost accuracy, in their proper colours.

As the value of this great collection may be conceived from this account, however imperfect, as the variety of subjects must engage the curiosity of men of different studies, inclinations, and employments, it may be thought of very little use to mention any slighter advantages, or to dwell on the decorations and embellishments which the generosity of the proprietors has bestowed upon it; yet, since the compiler of the *Tbuanian* catalogue thought not even that species of elegance below his observation, it may not be improper to observe, that the *Harleian* library, perhaps, excels all others, not more in the number and excellence, than in the splendor of its volumes.



We may now surely be allowed to hope, that our catalogue will not be thought unworthy of the public curiosity; that it will be purchased as a record of this great collection, and preserved as one of the memorials of learning.

The patrons of literature will forgive the purchaser of this library, if he presumes to assert some claim to their protection and encouragement, as he may have been instrumental in continuing to this nation the advantage of it. The sale of *Vossius's* collection into a foreign country, is, to this day, regretted by men of letters; and if this effort for the prevention of another loss of the same kind should be disadvantageous to him, no man will hereafter willingly risque his fortune in the cause of learning.

A N  
E S S A Y  
O N T H E  
O R I G I N A N D I M P O R T A N C E  
O F  
S M A L L T R A C T S A N D F U G I T I V E P I E C E S .

Written for the INTRODUCTION to the  
H A R L E I A N M I S C E L L A N Y .

---

**T**HOUGH the scheme of the following miscellany is so obvious, that the title alone is sufficient to explain it; and though several collections have been formerly attempted upon plans, as to the method, very little, but, as to the capacity and execution, very different from ours; we, being possessed of the greatest variety for such a work, hope for a more general reception than those confined schemes had the fortune to meet with; and, therefore, think it not wholly unnecessary to explain our intentions, to display the treasure of materials out of which this miscellany is to be compiled, and to exhibit a general idea of the pieces which we intend to insert in it.

There is, perhaps, no nation in which it is so necessary, as in our own, to assemble, from time

to

to time, the small tracts and fugitive pieces, which are occasionally published: for, besides the general subjects of enquiry, which are cultivated by us, in common with every other learned nation, our constitution in church and state naturally gives birth to a multitude of performances, which would either not have been written, or could not have been made publick in any other place.

The form of our government, which gives every man, that has leisure, or curiosity, or vanity, the right of enquiring into the propriety of publick measures, and, by consequence, obliges those who are intrusted with the administration of national affairs, to give an account of their conduct to almost every man who demands it, may be reasonably imagined to have occasioned innumerable pamphlets, which would never have appeared under arbitrary governments, where every man lulls himself in indolence under calamities, of which he cannot promote the redress, or thinks it prudent to conceal the uneasiness, of which he cannot complain without danger.

The multiplicity of religious sects tolerated among us, of which every one has found opponents and vindicators, is another source of unexhaustible publication, almost peculiar to ourselves; for controversies cannot be long continued, nor frequently revived, where an inquisitor has a right to shut up the disputants in dungeons; or where silence can be imposed on either party, by the refusal of a licence.

Not that it should be inferred from hence, that political or religious controversies are the only products

ducts of the liberty of the *British* press; the mind once let loose to enquiry, and suffered to operate without restraint, necessarily deviates into peculiar opinions, and wanders in new tracks, where she is indeed sometimes lost in a labyrinth, from which though she cannot return, and scarce knows how to proceed; yet, sometimes, makes useful discoveries, or finds out nearer paths to knowledge.

The boundless liberty with which every man may write his own thoughts, and the opportunity of conveying new sentiments to the publick, without danger of suffering either ridicule or censure, which every man may enjoy, whose vanity does not incite him too hastily to own his performances, naturally invites those who employ themselves in speculation, to try how their notions will be received by a nation, which exempts caution from fear, and modesty from shame; and it is no wonder, that where reputation may be gained, but needs not be lost, multitudes are willing to try their fortune, and thrust their opinions into the light; sometimes with unsuccessful haste, and sometimes with happy temerity.

It is observed, that, among the natives of *England*, is to be found a greater variety of humour, than in any other country; and, doubtless, where every man has a full liberty to propagate his conceptions, variety of humour must produce variety of writers; and, where the number of authors is so great, there cannot but be some worthy of distinction.

All these, and many other causes, too tedious to be enumerated, have contributed to make pamphlets

and small tracts a very important part of an *English* library; nor are there any pieces, upon which those, who aspire to the reputation of judicious collectors of books, bestow more attention, or greater expence; because many advantages may be expected from the perusal of these small productions, which are scarcely to be found in that of larger works.

If we regard history, it is well known, that most political treatises have for a long time appeared in this form, and that the first relations of transactions, while they are yet the subject of conversation, divide the opinions, and employ the conjectures of mankind, are delivered by these petty writers, who have opportunities of collecting the different sentiments of disputants, of enquiring the truth from living witnesses, and of copying their representations from the life; and, therefore, they preserve a multitude of particular incidents, which are forgotten in a short time, or omitted in formal relations, and which are yet to be considered as sparks of truth, which, when united, may afford light in some of the darkest scenes of state, as we doubt not, will be sufficiently proved in the course of this miscellany; and which it is, therefore, the interest of the publick to preserve unextinguished.

The same observation may be extended to subjects of yet more importance. In controversies that relate to the truths of religion, the first essays of reformation are generally timorous; and those, who have opinions to offer, which they expect to be opposed, produce their sentiments, by degrees; and, for the most part, in small tracts: by degrees, that they may not shock their readers with too



many novelties at once; and in small tracts, that they may be easily dispersed, or privately printed: almost every controversy, therefore, has been, for a time, carried on in pamphlets, nor has swelled into larger volumes, till the first ardor of the disputants has subsided, and they have recollected their notions with coolness enough to digest them into order, consolidate them into systems, and fortify them with authorities.

From pamphlets, consequently, are to be learned the progress of every debate; the various state to which the questions have been changed; the artifices and fallacies which have been used, and the subterfuges by which reason has been eluded: in such writings may be seen how the mind has been opened by degrees, how one truth has led to another, how error has been disentangled, and hints improved to demonstration, which pleasure, and many others, are lost by him that only reads the larger writers, by whom these scattered sentiments are collected, who will see none of the changes of fortune which every opinion has passed through, will have no opportunity of remarking the transient advantages which error may sometimes obtain, by the artifices of its patron, or the successful rallies by which truth regains the day, after a repulse; but will be to him, who traces the dispute through into particular gradations, as he that hears of a victory, to him that sees the battle.

Since the advantages of preserving these small tracts are so numerous, our attempt to unite them in volumes cannot be thought either useless or unreasonable; for there is no other method of securing

them from accidents; and they have already been so long neglected, that this design cannot be delayed, without hazarding the loss of many pieces, which deserve to be transmitted to another age.

The practice of publishing pamphlets on the most important subjects, has now prevailed more than two centuries among us; and therefore it cannot be doubted, but that, as no large collections have been yet made, many curious tracts must have perished; but it is too late to lament that loss; nor ought we to reflect upon it, with any other view, than that of quickening our endeavours for the preservation of those that yet remain; of which we have now a greater number, than was, perhaps, ever amassed by any one person.

The first appearance of pamphlets among us, is generally thought to be at the new opposition raised against the errors and corruptions of the church of *Rome*. Those who were first convinced of the reasonableness of the new learning, as it was then called, propagated their opinions in small pieces, which were cheaply printed; and, what was then of great importance, easily concealed. These treatises were generally printed in foreign countries, and are not, therefore, always very correct. There was not then that opportunity of printing in private; for the number of printers were small, and the presses were easily overlooked by the clergy, who spared no labour or vigilance for the suppression of heresy. There is, however, reason to suspect, that some attempts were made to carry on the propagation of truth by a secret press; for one of the first treatises in favour of the Reformation, is said, at the end,

to be printed at *Greenwich*, by the permission of the *Lord of Hosts*.

In the time of king *Edward the Sixth*, the presses were employed in favour of the reformed religion, and small tracts were dispersed over the nation, to reconcile them to the new forms of worship. In this reign, likewise, political pamphlets may be said to have been begun, by the address of the rebels of *Devonshire*; all which means of propagating the sentiments of the people so disturbed the court, that no sooner was queen *Mary* resolved to reduce her subjects to the *Romish* superstition, but she artfully, by a charter \* granted to certain freemen of *London*, in whose fidelity, no doubt, she confided, intirely prohibited *all* presses, but what should be licensed by them; which charter is that by which the corporation of Stationers in *London* is at this time incorporated.

Under the reign of queen *Elizabeth*, when liberty again began to flourish, the practice of writing pamphlets became more general; presses were multiplied, and books were dispersed; and, I believe, it may properly be said, that the trade of writing began at that time, and that it has ever since gradually increased in the number, though, perhaps, not in the style of those that followed it.

In this reign was erected the first *secret* press against the church as now established, of which I have found any certain account. It was employed

\* Which begins thus, ' Know ye, that We, considering, and manifestly perceiving, that several seditious and heretical books or tracts—against the faith and sound catholic doctrine of holy mother, the church, &c.'

by the *Puritans*, and conveyed from one part of the nation to another, by them, as they found themselves in danger of discovery. From this press issued most of the pamphlets against *Whitgift* and his associates, in the ecclesiastical government; and, when it was at last seized at *Manchester*, it was employed upon a pamphlet called *More Work for a Cooper*.

In the peaceable reign of king *James*, those minds which might, perhaps, with less disturbance of the world, have been engrossed by war, were employed in controversy; and writings of all kinds were multiplied among us. The press, however, was not wholly engaged in polemical performances, for more innocent subjects were sometimes treated; and it deserves to be remarked, because it is not generally known, that the treatises of *Husbandry* and *Agriculture*, which were published about that time, are so numerous, that it can scarcely be imagined by whom they were written, or to whom they were sold.

The next reign is too well known to have been a time of confusion, and disturbance, and disputes of every kind; and the writings, which were produced, bear a natural proportion to the number of questions that were discussed at that time; each party had its authors and its presses, and no endeavours were omitted to gain proselytes to every opinion. I know not whether this may not properly be called, *The Age of Pamphlets*; for, though they, perhaps, may not arise to such multitudes as *Mr. Rawlinson* imagined, they were, undoubtedly, more numerous

than can be conceived by any who have not had an opportunity of examining them.

After the Restoration, the same differences, in religious opinions, are well known to have subsisted, and the same political struggles to have been frequently renewed; and, therefore, a great number of pens were employed, on different occasions, till, at length, all other disputes were absorbed in the popish controversy.

From the pamphlets which these different periods of time produced, it is proposed, that this miscellany shall be compiled; for which it cannot be supposed that materials will be wanting; and, therefore, the only difficulty will be in what manner to dispose them.

Those who have gone before us, in undertakings of this kind, have ranged the pamphlets, which chance threw into their hands, without any regard either to the subject on which they treated, or the time in which they were written; a practice in no wise to be imitated by us, who want for no materials; of which we shall choose those we think best for the particular circumstances of times and things, and most instructing and entertaining to the reader.

Of the different methods which present themselves, upon the first view of the great heaps of pamphlets which the *Harleian* library exhibits, the two which merit most attention are, to distribute the treatises according to their subjects, or their dates; but neither of these ways can be conveniently followed. By ranging our collection in order of time, we must necessarily publish those pieces first, which least engage the curiosity of the bulk of mankind;



kind; and our design must fall to the ground, for want of encouragement, before it can be so far advanced as to obtain general regard: by confining ourselves for any long time to any single subject, we shall reduce our readers to one class; and, as we shall lose all the grace of variety, shall disgust all those who read chiefly to be diverted. There is likewise one objection of equal force, against both these methods, that we shall preclude ourselves from the advantage of any future discoveries; and we cannot hope to assemble at once all the pamphlets which have been written in any age, or on any subject.

It may be added, in vindication of our intended practice, that it is the same with that of *Photius*, whose collections are no less miscellaneous than ours; and who declares, that he leaves it to his reader, to reduce his extracts under their proper heads.

Most of the pieces which shall be offered in this collection to the publick, will be introduced by short prefaces, in which will be given some account of the reasons for which they are inserted; notes will be sometimes adjoined, for the explanation of obscure passages, or obsolete expressions; and care will be taken to mingle use and pleasure through the whole collection. Notwithstanding every subject may not be relished by every reader; yet the buyer may be assured that each number will repay his generous subscription.

S O M E  
A C C O U N T  
OF A BOOK, CALLED  
THE LIFE OF  
BENVENUTO CELLINI.

---

THE original of this celebrated performance lay in manuscript above a century and a half. Though it was read with the greatest pleasure by the learned of *Italy*, no man was hardy enough, during so long a period, to introduce to the world a book, in which the successors of *St. Peter* were handled so roughly: a narrative, where artists and sovereign princes, cardinals and courtezans, ministers of state and mechanics, are treated with equal impartiality.

At length, in the year 1730, an enterprizing *Neapolitan*, encouraged by Dr. *Antonio Cocchi*, one of the politest scholars in *Europe*, published this so-much-desired work in one volume Quarto. The Doctor gave the editor an excellent preface, which, with very slight alteration, is judiciously preserved by the translator, Dr. *Nugent*: the book is, notwithstanding, very scarce in *Italy*: the clergy of *Naples* are very powerful; and though the editor  
very

very prudently put *Colonia* instead of *Neapoli* in the title-page, the sale of *Cellini* was prohibited; the court of *Rome* has actually made it an article in their *Index Expurgatorius*, and prevented the importation of the book into any country where the power of the Holy See prevails.

The life of *Benvenuto Cellini* is certainly a phenomenon in biography, whether we consider it with respect to the artist himself, or the great variety of historical facts which relate to others: it is indeed a very good supplement to the history of *Europe*, during the greatest part of the sixteenth century, more especially in what relates to painting, sculpture, and architecture, and the most eminent masters in those elegant arts, whose works *Cellini* praises or censures with peculiar freedom and energy.

As to the man himself, there is not perhaps a more singular character among the race of *Adam*: the admired Lord *Herbert* of *Cherbury* scarce equals *Cellini* in the number of peculiar qualities which separate him from the rest of the human species.

He is at once a man of pleasure, and a slave to superstition; a despiser of vulgar notions, and a believer in magical incantations; a fighter of duels, and a composer of divine sonnets; an ardent lover of truth, and a retailer of visionary fancies; an admirer of papal power, and a hater of popes; an offender against the laws, with a strong reliance on divine providence. If I may be allowed the expression, *Cellini* is one striking feature added to the human form—a prodigy to be wondered at, not an example to be imitated.

Though

Though *Cellini* was so blind to his own imperfections as to commit the most unjustifiable actions, with a full persuasion of the goodness of his cause and the rectitude of his intention, yet no man was a keener and more accurate observer of the blemishes of others; hence his book abounds with farcassick wit and satirical expression. Yet though his portraits are sometimes grotesque and over-charged, from misinformation, from melancholy, from infirmity, and from peculiarity of humour; in general it must be allowed that they are drawn from the life, and conformable to the idea given by cotemporary writers. His characters of pope *Clement* the seventh, *Paul* the third, and his bastard son *Pier Luigi*; *Francis* the first, and his favourite mistress madam *d'Estampes*, *Cosmo* duke of *Florence*, and his duchess, with many others, are touched by the hand of a master.

General history cannot descend to minute details of the domestick life and private transactions, the passions and foibles of great personages; but these give truer representations of their characters than all the elegant and laboured compositions of poets and historians.

To some a register of the actions of a statuary may seem a heap of uninteresting occurrences; but the discerning will not disdain the efforts of a powerful mind, because the writer is not ennobled by birth, or dignified by station.

The man who raises himself by consummate merit in his profession to the notice of princes, who converses with them in a language dictated by honest freedom, who scruples not to tell them those truths  
which

which they must despair to hear from courtiers and favourites, from minions and parasites, is a bold leveller of distinctions in the courts of powerful monarchs. Genius is the parent of truth and courage; and these, united, dread no opposition.

The *Tuscan* language is greatly admired for its elegance, and the meanest inhabitants of *Florence* speak a dialect which the rest of *Italy* are proud to imitate. The style of *Cellini*, though plain and familiar, is vigorous and energetick. He possesses, to an uncommon degree, strength of expression, and rapidity of fancy. Dr. *Nugent* seems to have carefully studied his author, and to have translated him with ease and freedom, as well as truth and fidelity.



A  
VIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN

Mons. CROUSAZ and Mr. WARBURTON,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

Mr. POPE'S ESSAY on MAN.

In a LETTER to the

EDITOR of *the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE*, vol. xiii,

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Mr. URBAN,

IT would not be found useless in the learned world, if in written controversies as in oral disputations, a moderator could be selected, who might in some degree superintend the debate, restrain all needless excursions, repress all personal reflections, and at last recapitulate the arguments on each side; and who, though he should not assume the province of deciding the question, might at least exhibit it in its true state.

This reflection arose in my mind upon the consideration of Mr. Crousaz's Commentary on the Essay on Man, and Mr. Warburton's Answer to it. The importance of the subject, the reputation and abilities of the controvertists, and perhaps the ardour with which each has endeavoured to support his

cause, have made an attempt of this kind necessary for the information of the greatest number of Mr. Pope's readers.

Among the duties of a moderator, I have mentioned that of recalling the disputants to the subject, and cutting off the excrescences of a debate, which Mr. Croufaz will not suffer to be long unemployed, and the repression of personal invectives which have not been very carefully avoided on either part; and are less excusable, because it has not been proved, that either the poet, or his commentator, wrote with any other design than that of promoting happiness by cultivating reason and piety.

Mr. Warburton has indeed so much depressed the character of his adversary, that before I consider the controversy between them, I think it necessary to exhibit some specimens of Mr. Croufaz's sentiments, by which it will probably be shewn, that he is far from deserving either indignation or contempt; that his notions are just, though they are sometimes introduced without necessity, and defended when they are not opposed; and that his abilities and parts are such as may entitle him to reverence from those who think his criticisms superfluous.

In page 35 of the *English* translation, he exhibits an observation which every writer ought to impress upon his mind, and which may afford a sufficient apology for his commentary.

On the notion of a ruling passion he offers this remark: ' Nothing so much hinders men from  
' obtaining a complete victory over their ruling  
' passion,

‘ passion, as that all the advantages gained in their  
 ‘ days of retreat, by just and sober reflections,  
 ‘ whether struck out by their own minds, or bor-  
 ‘ rowed from good books, or from the conversa-  
 ‘ tion of men of merit, are destroyed in a few mo-  
 ‘ ments by a free intercourse and acquaintance  
 ‘ with libertines; and thus the work is always to  
 ‘ be begun anew. A gamester resolves to leave off  
 ‘ play, by which he finds his health impaired, his  
 ‘ family ruined, and his passions inflamed; in this  
 ‘ resolution he persists a few days, but soon yields  
 ‘ to an invitation, which will give his prevailing  
 ‘ inclination an opportunity of reviving in all its  
 ‘ force. The case is the same with other men; but  
 ‘ is reason to be charged with these calamities and  
 ‘ follies, or rather the man who refuses to listen to  
 ‘ its voice in opposition to impertinent sollicita-  
 ‘ tions?’

On the means recommended for the attainment of  
 happiness, he observes, ‘ that the abilities which  
 ‘ our Maker has given us, and the internal and  
 ‘ external advantages with which he has invested  
 ‘ us, are of two very different kinds; those of one  
 ‘ kind are bestowed in common upon us and the  
 ‘ brute creation, but the other exalt us far above  
 ‘ other animals. To disregard any of these gifts  
 ‘ would be ingratitude; but to neglect those of  
 ‘ greater excellence, to go no farther than the  
 ‘ gross satisfactions of sense, and the functions of  
 ‘ mere animal life, would be a far greater crime.  
 ‘ We are formed by our Creator capable of ac-  
 ‘ quiring knowledge, and regulating our conduct  
 ‘ by reasonable rules; it is therefore our duty to  
 ‘ cultivate

‘ cultivate our understandings, and exalt our virtues. We need but make the experiment to find, that the greatest pleasures will arise from such endeavours.

‘ It is trifling to allege, in opposition to this truth, that knowledge cannot be acquired, nor virtue pursued, without toil and efforts, and that all efforts produce fatigue. God requires nothing disproportioned to the powers he has given, and in the exercise of those powers consists the highest satisfaction.

‘ Toil and weariness are the effects of vanity: when a man has formed a design of excelling others in merit, he is disquieted by their advances, and leaves nothing unattempted, that he may step before them: this occasions a thousand unreasonable emotions, which justly bring their punishment along with them.

‘ But let a man study and labour to cultivate and improve his abilities in the eye of his Maker, and with the prospect of his approbation; let him attentively reflect on the infinite value of that approbation, and the highest encomiums that men can bestow will vanish into nothing at the comparison. When we live in this manner, we find that we live for a great and glorious end.

‘ When this is our frame of mind, we find it no longer difficult to restrain ourselves in the gratifications of eating and drinking, the most gross enjoyments of sense. We take what is necessary to preserve health and vigour, but are not to give ourselves up to pleasures that weaken the attention, and dull the understanding.’

And

And the true sense of Mr. *Pope's* assertion, that *Whatever is, is right*, and I believe the sense in which it was written, is thus explained:—‘ A sacred  
 ‘ and adorable order is established in the govern-  
 ‘ ment of mankind. These are certain and un-  
 ‘ varied truths: he that seeks God, and makes it  
 ‘ his happiness to live in obedience to him, shall  
 ‘ obtain what he endeavours after, in a degree far  
 ‘ above his present comprehension. He that turns  
 ‘ his back upon his Creator, neglects to obey him,  
 ‘ and perseveres in his disobedience, shall obtain  
 ‘ no other happiness than he can receive from  
 ‘ enjoyments of his own procuring; void of satis-  
 ‘ faction, weary of life, wasted by empty cares,  
 ‘ and remorse equally harassing and just, he will  
 ‘ experience the certain consequences of his own  
 ‘ choice. Thus will justice and goodness resume  
 ‘ their empire, and that order be restored which  
 ‘ men have broken.’

I am afraid of wearying you or your readers with more quotations, but if you shall inform me that a continuation of my correspondence will be well received, I shall descend to particular passages, shew how Mr. *Pope* gave sometimes occasion to mistakes, and how Mr. *Croufaz* was misled by his suspicion of the system of fatality.

I am, SIR, your's, &c.



PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE  
TO THE  
LONDON CHRONICLE,  
JANUARY 1, 1757.

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**I**T has always been lamented, that of the little time allotted to man, much must be spent upon superfluities. Every prospect has its obstructions, which we must break to enlarge our view: every step of our progress finds impediments, which, however eager to go forward, we must stop to remove. Even those who profess to teach the way to happiness, have multiplied our incumbrances, and the author of almost every book retards his instructions by a preface.

The writers of the Chronicle hope to be easily forgiven, though they should not be free from an infection that has seized the whole fraternity, and instead of falling immediately to their subjects, should detain the Reader for a time with an account of the importance of their design, the extent of their plan, and the accuracy of the method which they intend to prosecute. Such premonitions, though not always necessary when the Reader has the book complete in his hand, and may find by his

own eyes whatever can be found in it, yet may be more easily allowed to works published gradually in successive parts, of which the scheme can only be so far known as the author shall think fit to discover it.

The Paper which we now invite the Publick to add to the Papers with which it is already rather wearied than satisfied, consists of many parts; some of which it has in common with other periodical sheets, and some peculiar to itself.

The first demand made by the reader of a journal is, that he should find an accurate account of foreign transactions and domestic incidents. This is always expected, but this is very rarely performed. Of those writers who have taken upon themselves the task of intelligence, some have given and others have sold their abilities, whether small or great, to one or other of the parties that divide us; and without a wish for truth or thought of decency, without care of any other reputation than that of a stubborn adherence to their abettors, carry on the same tenor of representation through all the vicissitudes of right and wrong, neither depressed by detection, nor abashed by confutation, proud of the hourly increase of infamy, and ready to boast of all the contumelies that falsehood and slander may bring upon them, as new proofs of their zeal and fidelity.

With these heroes we have no ambition to be numbered, we leave to the confessors of faction the merit of their sufferings, and are desirous to shelter ourselves under the protection of truth. That all our facts will be authentick, or all our remarks just, we dare not venture to promise: we can relate but what we hear, we can point out but what

we

we see. Of remote transactions, the first accounts are always confused, and commonly exaggerated: and in domestick affairs, if the power to conceal is less, the interest to misrepresent is often greater; and what is sufficiently vexatious, truth seems to fly from curiosity, and as many enquirers produce many narratives, whatever engages the publick attention is immediately disguised by the embellishments of fiction. We pretend to no peculiar power of disentangling contradiction or denuding forgery, we have no settled correspondence with the Antipodes, nor maintain any spies in the cabinets of princes. But as we shall always be conscious that our mistakes are involuntary, we shall watch the gradual discoveries of time, and retract whatever we have hastily and erroneously advanced.

In the narratives of the daily writers every reader perceives somewhat of neatness and purity wanting, which at the first view it seems easy to supply; but it must be considered, that those passages must be written in haste, and that there is often no other choice, but that they must want either novelty or accuracy; and that as life is very uniform, the affairs of one week are so like those of another, that by any attempt after variety of expression, invention would soon be wearied, and language exhausted. Some improvements however we hope to make; and for the rest we think that when we commit only common faults, we shall not be excluded from common indulgence.

The accounts of prices of corn and stocks are to most of our Readers of more importance than narratives of greater sound, and as exactness is here within the reach of diligence, our readers may justly require it from us.

Memorials of a private and personal kind, which relate deaths, marriages, and preferments, must always be imperfect by omission, and often erroneous by misinformation; but even in these there shall not be wanting care to avoid mistakes, or to rectify them whenever they shall be found.

That part of our work, by which it is distinguished from all others, is the literary journal, or account of the labours and productions of the learned. This was for a long time among the deficiencies of *English* literature; but as the caprice of man is always starting from too little to too much, we have now amongst other disturbers of human quiet, a numerous body of reviewers and remarkers.

Every art is improved by the emulation of competitors; those who make no advances towards excellence, may stand as warnings against faults. We shall endeavour to avoid that petulance which treats with contempt whatever has hitherto been reputed sacred. We shall repress that elation of malignity, which wantons in the cruelties of criticism, and not only murders reputation, but murders it by torture. Whenever we feel ourselves ignorant we shall at least be modest. Our intention is not to pre-occupy judgment by praise or censure, but to gratify curiosity by early intelligence, and to tell rather what our authors have attempted, than what they have performed. The titles of books are necessarily short, and therefore disclose but imperfectly the contents; they are sometimes fraudulent and intended to raise false expectations. In our account this brevity will be extended, and these frauds whenever they are detected will be exposed; for though we write without  
intention

intention to injure, we shall not suffer ourselves to be made parties to deceit.

If any author shall transmit a summary of his work, we shall willingly receive it; if any literary anecdote, or curious observation, shall be communicated to us, we will carefully insert it. Many facts are known and forgotten, many observations are made and suppressed; and entertainment and instruction are frequently lost, for want of a repository in which they may be conveniently preserved.

No man can modestly promise what he cannot ascertain: we hope for the praise of knowledge and discernment, but we claim only that of diligence and candour.



INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
WORLD DISPLAYED\*.

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Navigation, like other arts, has been perfected by degrees. It is not easy to conceive that any age or nation was without some vessel, in which rivers might be passed by travellers, or lakes frequented by fishermen; but we have no knowledge of any ship that could endure the violence of the ocean before the ark of *Noah*.

As the tradition of the deluge has been transmitted to almost all the nations of the earth; it must be supposed that the memory of the means by which *Noah* and his family were preserved, would be continued long among their descendants, and that the possibility of passing the seas could never be doubted.

What men know to be practicable, a thousand motives will incite them to try; and there is reason to believe, that from the time that the generations of the post-diluvian race spread to the sea shores, there were always navigators that ventured upon the sea, though, perhaps, not willingly beyond the sight of land.

Of the ancient voyages little certain is known, and it is not necessary to lay before the Reader such

\* A Collection of Voyages and Travels, selected from the writers of all nations, in four small pocket volumes, and published by *Newbery*; to oblige whom, it is conjectured that *Johnson* drew up this curious and learned paper.

conjectures

conjectures as learned men have offered to the world. The *Romans* by conquering *Carthage*, put a stop to great part of the trade of distant nations with one another, and because they thought only on war and conquest, as their empire increased, commerce was discouraged; till under the latter emperors, ships seem to have been of little other use than to transport soldiers.

Navigation could not be carried to any great degree of certainty without the compass, which was unknown to the ancients. The wonderful quality by which a needle, or small bar of steel, touched with a loadstone or magnet, and turning freely by equilibration on a point, always preserves the meridian, and directs its two ends north and south, was discovered according to the common opinion in 1299, by *John Gola* of *Amalfi*, a town in *Italy*.

From this time it is reasonable to suppose that navigation made continual, though slow improvements, which the confusion and barbarity of the times, and the want of communication between orders of men so distant as sailors and monks, hindered from being distinctly and successively recorded.

It seems, however, that the sailors still wanted either knowledge or courage, for they continued for two centuries to creep along the coast, and considered every headland as unpassable, which ran far into the sea, and against which the waves broke with uncommon agitation.

The first who is known to have formed the design of new discoveries, or the first who had power to execute his purposes, was *Don Henry* the fifth, son of

*John*, the first king of *Portugal*, and *Philippina*, sister of *Henry* the fourth of *England*. Don *Henry* having attended his father to the conquest of *Ceuta*, obtained, by conversation with the inhabitants of the continent, some accounts of the interior kingdoms and southern coast of *Africa*; which, though rude and indistinct, were sufficient to raise his curiosity, and convince him, that there were countries yet unknown and worthy of discovery.

He therefore equipped some small vessels, and commanded that they should pass as far as they could along that coast of *Africa* which looked upon the great *Atlantic* ocean, the immensity of which struck the gross and unskilful navigators of these times with terror and amazement. He was not able to communicate his own ardour to his seamen, who proceeded very slowly in the new attempt; each was afraid to venture much farther than he that went before him, and ten years were spent before they had advanced beyond cape *Bajador*, so called from its progression into the ocean, and the circuit by which it must be doubled. The opposition of this promontory to the course of the sea, produced a violent current and high waves, into which they durst not venture, and which they had not yet knowledge enough to avoid by standing off from the land into the open sea.

The prince was desirous to know something of the countries that lay beyond this formidable cape, and sent two commanders, named *John Gonzales Zarco*, and *Tristan Vaz*, in 1418, to pass beyond *Bajador*, and survey the coast behind it. They were caught by a tempest, which drove them out  
into

into the unknown ocean, where they expected to perish by the violence of the wind, or perhaps to wander for ever in the boundless deep. At last, in the midst of their despair, they found a small island, where they sheltered themselves, and which the sense of their deliverance disposed them to call *Puerto Santo*, or the *Holy Haven*.

When they returned with an account of this new island, *Henry* performed a publick act of thanksgiving, and sent them again with seeds and cattle, and we are told by the *Spanish* historian, that they set two rabbits on shore, which increased so much in a few years, that they drove away the inhabitants, by destroying their corn and plants, and were suffered to enjoy the island without opposition.

In the second or third voyage to *Puerto Santo* (for authors do not agree which), a third captain called *Perello*, was joined to the two former. As they looked round the island upon the ocean, they saw at a distance something which they took for a cloud, till they perceived that it did not change its place. They directed their course towards it, and, in 1419, discovered another island covered with trees, which they therefore called *Madera*, or the *Isle of Wood*.

*Madera* was given to *Vaz* or *Zarco*, who set fire to the woods, which are reported by *Souza* to have burnt for seven years together, and to have been wasted, till want of wood was the greatest inconveniency of the place. But green wood is not very apt to burn, and the heavy rains which fall in these countries must surely have extinguished the conflagration, were it ever so violent.

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There was yet little progress made upon the southern coast, and *Henry's* project was treated as chimerical by many of his countrymen. At last *Gilianes*, in 1433, passed the dreadful cape, to which he gave the name of *Bajador*, and came back to the wonder of the nation.

In two voyages more, made in the two following years, they passed forty-two leagues farther, and in the latter, two men with horses being set on shore, wandered over the country, and found nineteen men, whom, according to the savage manners of that age, they attacked; the natives having javelins, wounded one of the *Portuguese*, and received some wounds from them. At the mouth of a river they found sea-wolves in great numbers, and brought home many of their skins, which were much esteemed.

*Antonio Gonzales*, who had been one of the associates of *Gilianes*, was sent again, in 1440, to bring back a cargo of the skins of sea-wolves. He was followed in another ship by *Nunno Tristam*. They were now of strength sufficient to venture upon violence, they therefore landed, and without either right or provocation, made all whom they seized their prisoners, and brought them to *Portugal*, with great commendations both from the prince and the nation.

*Henry* now began to please himself with the success of his projects, and as one of his purposes was the conversion of infidels, he thought it necessary to impart his undertaking to the pope, and to obtain the sanction of ecclesiastical authority. To this end *Fernando Lopez d'Azevedo* was dispatched to *Rome*,  
who



who related to the pope and cardinals the great designs of *Henry*, and magnified his zeal for the propagation of religion. The pope was pleased with the narrative, and by a formal bull, conferred upon the crown of *Portugal* all the countries which should be discovered as far as *India*, together with *India* itself, and granted several privileges and indulgences to the churches which *Henry* had built in his new regions, and to the men engaged in the navigation for discovery. By this bull all other princes were forbidden to encroach upon the conquests of the *Portuguese*, on pain of the censures incurred by the crime of usurpation.

The approbation of the pope, the sight of men whose manners and appearance were so different from those of *Europeans*, and the hope of gain from golden regions, which has been always the great incentive to hazard and discovery, now began to operate with full force. The desire of riches, and of dominion, which is yet more pleasing to the fancy, filled the courts of the *Portuguese* prince with innumerable adventurers from very distant parts of *Europe*. Some wanted to be employed in the search after new countries, and some to be settled in those which had been already found.

Communities now began to be animated by the spirit of enterprize, and many associations were formed for the equipment of ships, and the acquisition of the riches of distant regions, which perhaps were always supposed to be more wealthy, as more remote. These undertakers agreed to pay the prince a fifth part of the profit, sometimes a greater share,

share, and sent out the armament at their own expence,

The city of *Lagos* was the first that carried on this design by contribution. The inhabitants fitted out six vessels, under the command of *Lucarot*, one of the prince's household, and soon after fourteen more were furnished for the same purpose, under the same commander; to those were added many belonging to private men, so that in a short time twenty-six ships put to sea in quest of whatever fortune should present.

The ships of *Lagos* were soon separated by foul weather, and the rest, taking each its own course, stopped at different parts of the *African* coast, from *Cape Blanco* to *Cape Verd*. Some of them, in 1444, anchored at *Gomera*, one of the *Canaries*, where they were kindly treated by the inhabitants, who took them into their service against the people of the isle of *Palma*, with whom they were at war; but the *Portuguese* at their return to *Gomera*, not being made so rich as they expected, fell upon their friends, in contempt of all the laws of hospitality and stipulations of alliance, and, making several of them prisoners and slaves, set sail for *Lisbon*.

The *Canaries* are supposed to have been known, however imperfectly, to the ancients; but in the confusion of the subsequent ages they were lost and forgotten, till about the year 1340, the *Biscayners* found *Lucarot*, and invading it (for to find a new country and invade it has always been the same), brought away seventy captives, and some commodities of the place. *Louis de la Cerda*, count of *Clermont*,

*Clermont*, of the blood royal both of *France* and *Spain*, nephew of *John de la Cerda*, who called himself the Prince of Fortune, had once a mind to settle in those islands, and applying himself first to the king of *Arragon*, and then to *Clement VI.* was by the pope crowned at *Avignon*, king of the *Canaries*, on condition that he should reduce them to the true religion; but the prince altered his mind, and went into *France* to serve against the *English*. The kings both of *Castile* and *Portugal*, though they did not oppose the papal grant, yet complained of it, as made without their knowledge, and in contravention of their rights.

The first settlement in the *Canaries* was made by *John de Betancour*, a *French* gentleman, for whom his kinsman *Robin de Braquement*, admiral of *France*, begged them, with the title of King, from *Henry* the magnificent of *Castile*, to whom he had done eminent services. *John* made himself master of some of the isles, but could never conquer the grand *Canary*; and having spent all that he had, went back to *Europe*, leaving his nephew, *Maffiot de Betancour*, to take care of his new dominion. *Maffiot* had a quarrel with the vicar-general, and was likewise disgusted by the long absence of his uncle, whom the *French* king detained in his service, and being able to keep his ground no longer, he transferred his rights to *Don Henry*, in exchange for some districts in the *Madera*, when he settled his family.

*Don Henry*, when he had purchased those islands, sent thither in 1424 two thousand five hundred foot, and an hundred and twenty horse; but the army

was

was too numerous to be maintained by the country. The king of *Castile* afterwards claimed them, as conquered by his subjects under *Betancour*, and held under the crown of *Castile* by fealty and homage; his claim was allowed, and the *Canaries* were resigned.

It was the constant practice of *Henry's* navigators, when they stopped at a desert island, to land cattle upon it, and leave them to breed, where, neither wanting room nor food, they multiplied very fast, and furnished a very commodious supply to those who came afterwards to the same place. This was imitated in some degree by *Anson*, at the isle of *Juan Fernandez*.

The islands of *Madera*, he not only filled with inhabitants, assisted by artificers of every kind, but procured such plants as seemed likely to flourish in that climate, and introduced sugar canes and vines, which afterwards produced a very large revenue.

The trade of *Africa* now began to be profitable, but a great part of the gain arose from the sale of slaves, who were annually brought into *Portugal*, by hundreds, as *Lafitau* relates, and without any appearance of indignation or compassion; they likewise imported gold dust in such quantities, that *Alphonfus V.* coined it into a new species of money called *Crusades*, which is still continued in *Portugal*.

In time they made their way along the south coast of *Africa*, eastward to the country of the negroes, whom they found living in tents, without any political institutions, supporting life with very little labour by the milk of their kine, and millet, to  
which

which those who inhabited the coast added fish dried in the sun. Having never seen the natives or heard of the arts of *Europe*, they gazed with astonishment on the ships when they approached their coasts, sometimes thinking them birds, and sometimes fishes, according as their sails were spread or lowered; and sometimes conceiving them to be only phantoms, which played to and fro in the ocean. Such is the account given by the historian, perhaps with too much prejudice against a negroe's understanding; who though he might well wonder at the bulk and swiftness of the first ship, would scarcely conceive it to be either a bird or a fish; but having seen many bodies floating in the water, would think it what it really is, a large boat; and if he had no knowledge of any means by which separate pieces of timber may be joined together, would form very wild notions concerning its construction, or perhaps suppose it to be a hollow trunk of a tree, from some country where trees grow to a much greater height and thickness than in his own.

When the *Portuguese* came to land, they increased the astonishment of the poor inhabitants, who saw men clad in iron, with thunder and lightning in their hands. They did not understand each other, and signs are a very imperfect mode of communication even to men of more knowledge than the negroes, so that they could not easily negotiate or traffick: at last the *Portuguese* laid hands on some of them to carry them home for a sample; and their dread and amazement was raised, says *Lafitau*, to the highest pitch, when the *Europeans* fired their cannons and muskets among them, and they saw their



their companions fall dead at their feet without any enemy at hand, or any visible cause of their destruction.

On what occasion, or for what purpose, cannons and muskets were discharged among a people harmless and secure, by strangers who without any right visited their coast; it is not thought necessary to inform us. The *Portuguese* could fear nothing from them, and had therefore no adequate provocation; nor is there any reason to believe but that they murdered the negroes in wanton merriment, perhaps only to try how many a volley would destroy, or what would be the consternation of those that should escape. We are openly told, that they had the less scruple concerning their treatment of the savage people, because they scarcely considered them as distinct from beasts; and indeed the practice of all the *European* nations, and among others of the *English* barbarians that cultivate the southern islands of *America*, proves, that this opinion, however absurd and foolish, however wicked and injurious, still continues to prevail. Interest and pride harden the heart, and it is in vain to dispute against avarice and power.

By these practices the first discoverers alienated the natives from them; and whenever a ship appeared, every one that could fly betook himself to the mountains and the woods, so that nothing was to be got more than they could steal: they sometimes surpris'd a few fishers, and made them slaves, and did what they could to offend the negroes, and enrich themselves. This practice of robbery continued till some of the negroes who had been en-

slaved learned the language of *Portugal*, so as to be able to interpret for their countrymen, and one *John Fernandez* applied himself to the negroe tongue.

From this time began something like a regular traffick, such as can subsist between nations where all the power is on one side; and a factory was settled in the isle of *Arguin*, under the protection of a fort. The profit of this new trade was assigned for a certain term to *Ferdinando Gomez*; which seems to be the common method of establishing a trade that is yet too small to engage the care of a nation, and can only be enlarged by that attention which is bestowed by private men upon private advantage. *Gomez* continued the discoveries to *Cape Catherine*, two degrees and a half beyond the line.

In the latter part of the reign of *Alphonso V.* the ardour of discovery was somewhat intermitted, and all commercial enterprises were interrupted by the wars in which he was engaged with various success. But *John II.* who succeeded, being fully convinced both of the honour and advantage of extending his dominions in countries hitherto unknown, prosecuted the designs of prince *Henry* with the utmost vigour, and in a short time added to his other titles, that of king of *Guinea* and of the coast of *Africa*.

In 1463, in the third year of the reign of *John II.* died prince *Henry*, the first encourager of remote navigation, by whose incitement, patronage and example, distant nations have been made acquainted with each other, unknown countries have been brought into general view, and the power of *Europe* has been extended to the remotest parts of

the world. What mankind has lost and gained by the genius and designs of this prince, it would be long to compare, and very difficult to estimate. Much knowledge has been acquired, and much cruelty been committed; the belief of religion has been very little propagated, and its laws have been outrageously and enormously violated. The *Europeans* have scarcely visited any coast, but to gratify avarice, and extend corruption; to arrogate dominion without right, and practise cruelty without incentive. Happy had it then been for the oppressed, if the designs of *Henry* had slept in his bosom, and surely more happy for the oppressors. But there is reason to hope that out of so much evil good may sometimes be produced; and that the light of the gospel will at last illuminate the sands of *Africa*, and the deserts of *America*, though its progress cannot but be slow, when it is so much obstructed by the lives of christians.

The death of *Henry* did not interrupt the progress of king *John*, who was very strict in his injunctions, not only to make discoveries, but to secure possession of the countries that were found. The practice of the first navigators was only to raise a cross upon the coast, and to carve upon trees the device of *Don Henry*, the name which they thought it proper to give to the new coast, and any other information, for those that might happen to follow them; but now they began to erect piles of stone with a cross on the top, and engraved on the stone, the arms of *Portugal*, the name of the king, and of the commander of the ship, with the day and year of the discovery. This was accounted sufficient to  
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prove their claim to the new lands; which might be pleaded with justice enough against any other *Europeans*, and the rights of the original inhabitants were never taken into notice. Of these stone records, nine more were erected in the reign of king *John*, along the coast of *Africa*, as far as the *Cape of Good Hope*.

The fortrefs in the isle of *Arguin* was finished, and it was found necessary to build another at *S. Georgio de la Mina*, a few degrees north of the line, to secure the trade of gold dust, which was chiefly carried on at that place. For this purpose a fleet was fitted out of ten large, and three smaller vessels, freighted with materials for building the fort, and with provisions and ammunition for six hundred men, of whom one hundred were workmen and labourers. Father *Lastau* relates, in very particular terms, that these ships carried hewn stones, bricks, and timber, for the fort, so that nothing remained but barely to erect it. He does not seem to consider how small a fort could be made out of the lading of ten ships.

The command of this fleet was given to Don *Diego d'Azambue*, who set sail *December 11, 1481*, and reaching *La Mina January 19, 1482*, gave immediate notice of his arrival to *Caramansa*, a petty prince of that part of the country, whom he very earnestly invited to an immediate conference.

Having received a message of civility from the negroe chief, he landed, and chose a rising ground, proper for his intended fortrefs, on which he planted a banner with the arms of *Portugal*, and took possession in the name of his master. He then raised

an altar at the foot of a great tree, on which mass was celebrated, the whole assembly, says *Lafitau*, breaking out into tears of devotion at the prospect of inviting these barbarous nations to the profession of the true faith. Being secure of the goodness of the end, they had no scruple about the means, nor ever considered how differently from the primitive martyrs and apostles they were attempting to make proselytes. The first propagators of christianity recommended their doctrines by their sufferings and virtues; they entered no defenceless territories with swords in their hands; they built no forts upon ground to which they had no right, nor polluted the purity of religion with the avarice of trade, or insolence of power.

What may still raise higher the indignation of a christian mind, this purpose of propagating truth appears never to have been seriously pursued by any *European* nation; no means, whether lawful or unlawful, have been practised with diligence and perseverance for the conversion of savages. When a fort is built, and a factory established, there remains no other care than to grow rich. It is soon found that ignorance is most easily kept in subjection, and that by enlightening the mind with truth, fraud and usurpation would be made less practicable and less secure.

In a few days an interview was appointed between *Caramansa* and *Azambue*. The *Portuguese* uttered by his interpreter a pompous speech, in which he made the negroe prince large offers of his master's friendship, exhorting him to embrace the religion of his new ally; and told him, that as they came to  
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form



form a league of friendship with him, it was necessary that they should build a fort, which might serve as a retreat from their common enemies, and in which the *Portuguese* might be always at hand to lend him assistance.

The negroe, who seemed very well to understand what the admiral intended, after a short pause, returned an answer full of respect to the king of *Portugal*, but appeared a little doubtful what to determine with relation to the fort. The commander saw his diffidence, and used all his art of persuasion to overcome it. *Caramansa*, either induced by hope, or constrained by fear, either desirous to make them friends, or not daring to make them enemies, consented, with a shew of joy, to that which it was not in his power to refuse; and the new comers began the next day to break the ground for a foundation of a fort.

Within the limit of their intended fortification were some spots appropriated to superstitious practices; which the negroes no sooner perceived in danger of violation by the spade and pick-ax, than they ran to arms, and began to interrupt the work. The *Portuguese* persisted in their purpose, and there had soon been tumult and bloodshed, had not the admiral, who was at a distance to superintend the unlading the materials for the edifice, been informed of the danger. He was told at the same time, that the support of their superstition was only a pretence, and that all their rage might be appeased by the presents which the prince expected, the delay of which had greatly offended him.

The *Portuguese* admiral immediately ran to his men, prohibited all violence, and stopped the commotion; he then brought out the presents, and spread them with great pomp before the prince; if they were of no great value, they were rare, for the negroes had never seen such wonders before; they were therefore received with extasy, and perhaps the *Portuguese* derided them for their fondness of trifles, without considering how many things derive their value only from their scarcity; and that gold and rubies would be trifles, if nature had scattered them with less frugality.

The work was now peaceably continued, and such was the diligence with which the strangers hastened to secure the possession of the country, that in twenty days they had sufficiently fortified themselves against the hostility of the negroes. They then proceeded to complete their design. A church was built in the place where the first altar had been raised, on which a mass was established to be celebrated for ever, once a day, for the repose of the soul of *Henry*, the first mover of these discoveries.

In this fort the admiral remained with sixty soldiers, and sent back the rest in the ships, with gold, slaves, and other commodities. It may be observed that slaves were never forgotten, and that wherever they went, they gratified their pride, if not their avarice, and brought some of the natives, when it happened that they brought nothing else.

The *Portuguese* endeavoured to extend their dominions still farther. They had gained some knowledge of the *Jaloffs*, a nation inhabiting the coast of *Guinea*, between the *Gambia* and *Senegal*. The  
king

king of the *Jaloffs* being vicious and luxurious, committed the care of the government to *Bemoin*, his brother by the mother's side, in preference to two other brothers by his father. *Bemoin*, who wanted neither bravery nor prudence, knew that his station was invidious and dangerous, and therefore made an alliance with the *Portuguese*, and retained them in his defence by liberality and kindness. At last the king was killed by the contrivance of his brothers, and *Bemoin* was to lose his power, or maintain it by war.

He had recourse in this exigence to his great ally the king of *Portugal*, who promised to support him, on condition that he should become a christian, and sent an ambassador, accompanied with missionaries. *Bemoin* promised all that was required, objecting only, that the time of a civil war was not a proper season for a change of religion, which would alienate his adherents; but said, that when he was once peaceably established, he would not only embrace the true religion himself, but would endeavour the conversion of the kingdom.

This excuse was admitted, and *Bemoin* delayed his conversion for a year, renewing his promise from time to time. But the war was unsuccessful, trade was at a stand, and *Bemoin* was not able to pay the money which he had borrowed of the *Portuguese* merchants, who sent intelligence to *Lisbon* of his delays, and received an order from the king, commanding them, under severe penalties, to return home.

*Bemoin* here saw his ruin approaching, and hoping that money would pacify all resentment, borrowed

of his friends a sum sufficient to discharge his debts; and finding that even this enticement would not delay the departure of the *Portuguese*, he embarked his nephew in their ships, with an hundred slaves, whom he presented to the king of *Portugal*, to solicit his assistance. The effect of this embassy he could not stay to know; for being soon after deposed, he sought shelter in the fortress of *Arguin*, whence he took shipping for *Portugal*, with twenty-five of his principal followers.

The king of *Portugal* pleased his own vanity and that of his subjects, by receiving him with great state and magnificence, as a mighty monarch who had fled to an ally for succour in misfortune. All the lords and ladies of the court were assembled, and *Bemoin* was conducted with a splendid attendance into the hall of audience, where the king rose from his throne to welcome him. *Bemoin* then made a speech with great ease and dignity, representing his unhappy state, and imploring the favour of his powerful ally. The king was touched with his affliction, and struck by his wisdom.

The conversion of *Bemoin* was much desired by the king; and it was therefore immediately proposed to him that he should become a christian. Ecclesiasticks were sent to instruct him; and having now no more obstacles from interest, he was easily persuaded to declare himself whatever would please those on whom he now depended. He was baptized on the third day of *December* 1489, in the palace of the queen, with great magnificence, and named *John* after the king.

Some

Some time was spent in feasts and sports on this great occasion, and the negroes signalised themselves by many feats of agility, far surpassing the power of *Europeans*, who having more helps of art, are less diligent to cultivate the qualities of nature. In the mean time twenty large ships were fitted out, well manned, stored with ammunition, and laden with materials necessary for the erection of a fort. With this powerful armament were sent a great number of missionaries under the direction of *Alvarez* the king's confessor. The command of this force, which filled the coast of *Africa* with terror, was given to *Pedro Vaz d'Acugna*, surnamed *Bisagu*; who soon after they had landed, not being well pleased with his expedition, put an end to its inconveniences by stabbing *Bemoïn* suddenly to the heart. The king heard of this outrage with great sorrow, but did not attempt to punish the murderer.

The king's concern for the restoration of *Bemoïn* was not the mere effect of kindness, he hoped by his help to facilitate greater designs. He now began to form hopes of finding a way to the *East Indies*, and of enriching his country by that gainful commerce: this he was encouraged to believe practicable, by a map which the Moors had given to prince *Henry*, and which subsequent discoveries have shewn to be sufficiently near to exactness, where a passage round the south-east part of *Africa* was evidently described.

The king had another scheme yet more likely to engage curiosity, and not irreconcilable with his interest. The world had for some time been filled with the report of a powerful christian prince called  
*Prester*



*Prefter Jobn*, whose country was unknown, and whom some, after *Paulus Venetus*, supposed to reign in the midst of *Asia*, and others in the depth of *Ethiopia*, between the ocean and Red-sea. The account of the *African* christians was confirmed by some *Abyssinians* who had travelled into *Spain*, and by some friars that had visited the holy land; and the king was extremely desirous of their correspondence and alliance.

Some obscure intelligence had been obtained, which made it seem probable that a way might be found from the countries lately discovered, to those of this far famed monarch. In 1486, an ambassador came from the king of *Bemin*, to desire that preachers might be sent to instruct him and his subjects in the true religion. He related that in the inland country, three hundred and fifty leagues eastward from *Bemin*, was a mighty monarch called *Ogane*, who had jurisdiction both spiritual and temporal over other kings; that the king of *Bemin* and his neighbours, at their accession, sent ambassadors to him with rich presents, and received from him the investiture of their dominions, and the marks of sovereignty, which were a kind of sceptre, a helmet, and a latten cross, without which they could not be considered as lawful kings; that this great prince was never seen but on the day of audience, and then held out one of his feet to the ambassador, who kissed it with great reverence, and who at his departure had a cross of latten hung on his neck, which ennobled him thenceforward, and exempted him from all servile offices.

*Bemoin* had likewise told the king, that to the east of the kingdom of *Tombut*, there was among other princes, one that was neither Mahometan nor idolater, but who seemed to profess a religion nearly resembling the christian. These informations compared with each other, and with the current accounts of *Prestor John*, induced the king to an opinion, which, though formed somewhat at hazard, is still believed to be right, that by passing up the river *Senegal* his dominions would be found. It was therefore ordered that when the fortrefs was finished, an attempt should be made to pass upward to the source of the river. The design failed then, and has never yet succeeded.

Other ways likewise were tried of penetrating to the kingdom of *Prestor John*, for the king resolved to leave neither sea nor land unsearched till he should be found. The two messengers who were sent first on this design, went to *Jerusalem*, and then returned, being persuaded that, for want of understanding the language of the country, it would be vain or impossible to travel farther. Two more were then dispatched, one of whom was *Pedro de Covillan*, the other *Alphonso de Pavia*; they passed from *Naples* to *Alexandria*, and then travelled to *Cairo*, from whence they went to *Aden*, a town of *Arabia*, on the Red-sea, near its mouth. From *Aden*, *Pavia* set sail for *Ethiopia*, and *Covillan* for the *Indies*. *Covillan* visited *Canavar*, *Calicut*, and *Goa* in the *Indies*, and *Sofula* in the eastern *Africa*, thence he returned to *Aden*, and then to *Cairo*, where he had agreed to meet *Pavia*. At *Cairo* he was informed that *Pavia* was dead, but he met with two *Portuguese* Jews, one  
of

of whom had given the king an account of the situation and trade of *Ormus*: they brought orders to *Covillan*, that he should send one of them home with the journal of his travels, and go to *Ormus* with the other.

*Covillan* obeyed the orders, sending an exact account of his adventures to *Lisbon*, and proceeding with the other messenger to *Ormus*; where having made sufficient enquiry, he sent his companion homewards with the caravans that were going to *Aleppo*, and embarking once more on the Red-sea, arrived in time at *Abissinia*, and found the prince whom he had sought so long, and with such danger.

Two ships were sent out upon the same search, of which *Bartbolomew Diaz* had the chief command; they were attended by a smaller vessel laden with provisions, that they might not return upon pretence of want either felt or feared.

Navigation was now brought nearer to perfection. The *Portuguese* claim the honour of many inventions by which the sailor is assisted, and which enable him to leave sight of land, and commit himself to the boundless ocean. *Diaz* had orders to proceed beyond the river *Zaire*, where *Diego Can* had stopped, to build monuments of his discoveries, and to leave upon the coasts negroe men and women well instructed, who might inquire after *Prestor John*, and fill the natives with reverence for the *Portuguese*.

*Diaz*, with much opposition from his crew, whose mutinies he repressed, partly by softness and partly by steadiness, sailed on till he reached the utmost point of *Africa*, which from the bad weather that he met there, he called *Caba Tormentoso*, or the  
Cape

Cape of Storms. He would have gone forward, but his crew forced him to return. In his way back he met the *Viſtuller*, from which he had been parted nine months before; of the nine men which were in it at the ſeparation, ſix had been killed by the negroes, and of the three remaining, one died for joy at the ſight of his friends. *Diaz* returned to *Lifbon* in *December* 1487, and gave an account of his voyage to the king, who ordered the Cape of Storms to be called thenceforward *Cabo de Buena Eſperanza*, or the *Cape of Good Hope*.

Some time before the expedition of *Diaz*, the river *Zarie* and the kingdom of *Congo* had been diſcovered by *Diego Can*, who found a nation of negroes who ſpoke a language which thoſe that were in his ſhips could not underſtand. He landed, and the natives, whom he expected to fly like the other inhabitants of the coaſt, met them with confidence, and treated them with kindneſs; but *Diego* finding that they could not underſtand each other, ſeized ſome of their chiefs, and carried them to *Portugal*, leaving ſome of his own people in their room to learn the language of *Congo*.

The negroes were ſoon pacified, and the *Portugueſe* left to their mercy were well treated; and as they by degrees grew able to make themſelves underſtood, recommended themſelves, their nation, and their religion. The king of *Portugal* ſent *Diego* back in a very ſhort time with the negroes whom he had forced away; and when they were ſet ſafe on ſhore, the king of *Congo* conceived ſo much eſteem for *Diego*, that he ſent one of thoſe who had returned back again in his ſhip to *Lifbon*, with two  
young

### 398 INTRODUCTION TO THE

young men dispatched as ambassadors, to desire instructors to be sent for the conversion of his kingdom.

The ambassadors were honourably received, and baptised with great pomp, and a fleet was immediately fitted out for *Congo*, under the command of *Gonsalvo Sorza*, who dying in his passage, was succeeded in authority by his nephew *Roderigo*.

When they came to land, the king's uncle, who commanded the province, immediately requested to be solemnly initiated into the christian religion, which was granted to him and his young son, on *Easter* day 1491. The father was named *Manuel*, and the son *Antonio*. Soon afterwards the king, queen, and eldest prince, received at the font the names of *John*, *Eleanor*, and *Alphonso*, and a war breaking out, the whole army was admitted to the rites of christianity, and then sent against the enemy. They returned victorious, but soon forgot their faith, and formed a conspiracy to restore paganism; a powerful opposition was raised by infidels and apostates, headed by one of the king's younger sons; and the missionaries had been destroyed had not *Alphonso* pleaded for them and for christianity.

The enemies of religion now became the enemies of *Alphonso*, whom they accused to his father of disloyalty. His mother, queen *Eleanor*, gained time by one artifice after another, till the king was calmed; he then heard the cause again, declared his son innocent, and punished his accusers with death.

The king died soon after, and the throne was disputed by *Alphonso*, supported by the christians,  
and



and *Aquitimo* his brother, followed by the infidels. A battle was fought, *Aquitimo* was taken and put to death, and christianity was for a time established in *Congo*; but the nation has relapsed into its former follies.

Such was the state of the *Portuguese* navigation, when in 1492, *Columbus* made the daring and prosperous voyage, which gave a new world to *European* curiosity and *European* cruelty. He had offered his proposal, and declared his expectations to king *John of Portugal*, who had slighted him as a fanciful and rash projector, that promised what he had not reasonable hopes to perform. *Columbus* had solicited other princes, and had been repulsed with the same indignity; at last *Isabella of Arragon* furnished him with ships, and having found *America*, he entered the mouth of the *Tagus* in his return, and shewed the natives of the new country. When he was admitted to the king's presence, he acted and talked with so much haughtiness, and reflected on the neglect which he had undergone with so much acrimony, that the courtiers who saw their prince insulted, offered to destroy him; but the king, who knew that he deserved the reproaches that had been used, and who now sincerely regretted his incredulity, would suffer no violence to be offered him, but dismissed him with presents and with honours.

The *Portuguese* and *Spaniards* became now jealous of each other's claim to countries which neither had yet seen; and the Pope, to whom they appealed, divided the new world between them by a line drawn from north to south, a hundred leagues westward from *Cape Verd* and the *Azores*, giving all that lies west

west from that line to the *Spaniards*, and all that lies east to the *Portuguese*. This was no satisfactory division, for the east and west must meet at last, but that time was then at a great distance.

According to this grant, the *Portuguese* continued their discoveries eastward, and became masters of much of the coast both of *Africa* and the *Indies*; but they seized much more than they could occupy, and while they were under the dominion of *Spain*, lost the greater part of their *Indian* territories.

THE  
P R E F A C E  
TO THE  
P R E C E P T O R:  
CONTAINING  
A GENERAL PLAN OF EDUCATION.

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**T**HE importance of education is a point so generally understood and confessed, that it would be of little use to attempt any new proof or illustration of its necessity and advantages.

At a time when so many schemes of education have been projected, so many proposals offered to the Publick, so many schools opened for general knowledge, and so many lectures in particular sciences attended; at a time when mankind seems intent rather upon familiarising than enlarging the several arts; and every age, sex and profession, is invited to an acquaintance with those studies, which were formerly supposed accessible only to such as had devoted themselves to literary leisure, and dedicated their powers to philosophical enquiries; it seems rather requisite that an apology should be made for any further attempt to smooth a path so

frequently beaten, or to recommend attainments so ardently pursued, and so officiously directed.

That this general desire may not be frustrated, our schools seem yet to want some book, which may excite curiosity by its variety, encourage diligence by its facility, and reward application by its usefulness. In examining the treatises hitherto offered to the youth of this nation, there appeared none that did not fail in one or other of these essential qualities; none that were not either unpleasing, or abstruse, or crowded with learning, very rarely applicable to the purposes of common life.

Every man, who has been engaged in teaching, knows with how much difficulty youthful minds are confined to close application, and how readily they deviate to any thing, rather than attend to that which is imposed as a task. That this disposition, when it becomes inconsistent with the forms of education, is to be checked, will be readily granted; but since, though it may be in some degree obviated, it cannot wholly be suppressed, it is surely rational to turn it to advantage, by taking care that the mind shall never want objects on which its faculties may be usefully employed. It is not impossible, that this restless desire of novelty, which gives so much trouble to the teacher, may be often the struggle of the understanding starting from that to which it is not by nature adapted, and travelling in search of something on which it may fix with greater satisfaction. For without supposing each man particularly marked out by his genius for particular performances, it may be easily conceived, that when a numerous class of boys is confined indiscriminately

criminatingly to the same forms of composition, the repetition of the same words, or the explication of the same sentiments, the employment must, either by nature or accident, be less suitable to some than others; that the ideas to be contemplated may be too difficult for the apprehension of one, and too obvious for that of another: they may be such as some understandings cannot reach, though others look down upon them as below their regard. Every mind in its progress through the different stages of scholastick learning, must be often in one of these conditions, must either flag with the labour, or grow wanton with the facility of the work assigned; and in either state it naturally turns aside from the track before it. Weariness looks out for relief, and leisure for employment, and surely it is rational to indulge the wanderings of both. For the faculties which are too lightly burdened with the business of the day, may with great propriety add to it some other enquiry; and he that finds himself over-wearied by a task, which perhaps, with all his efforts, he is not able to perform, is undoubtedly to be justified in addicting himself rather to easier studies, and endeavouring to quit that which is above his attainment, for that which nature has not made him incapable of pursuing with advantage.

That therefore this roving curiosity may not be unsatisfied, it seems necessary to scatter in its way such allurements as may withhold it from an useless and unbounded dissipation; such as may regulate it without violence, and direct it without restraint; such as may suit every inclination, and fit every capacity; may employ the stronger genius, by operations



rations of reason, and engage the less active or forcible mind, by supplying it with easy knowledge, and obviating that despondence, which quickly prevails, when nothing appears but a succession of difficulties, and one labour only ceases that another may be imposed.

A book intended thus to correspond with all dispositions, and afford entertainment for minds of different powers, is necessarily to contain treatises on different subjects. As it is designed for schools, though for the higher classes, it is confined wholly to such parts of knowledge as young minds may comprehend; and as it is drawn up for Readers yet unexperienced in life, and unable to distinguish the useful from the ostentatious or unnecessary parts of science, it is requisite that a very nice distinction should be made, that nothing unprofitable should be admitted for the sake of pleasure, nor any arts of attraction neglected, that might fix the attention upon more important studies.

These considerations produced the book which is here offered to the Publick, as better adapted to the great design of pleasing by instruction, than any which has hitherto been admitted into our seminaries of literature. There are not indeed wanting in the world compendiums of science, but many were written at a time when philosophy was imperfect, as that of *G. Valla*; many contain only naked schemes, or synoptical tables, as that of *Stierius*; and others are too large and voluminous, as that of *Alstedius*; and, what is not to be considered as the least objection, they are generally in a language, which, to boys, is more difficult than the subject; and

and it is too hard a task to be condemned to learn a new science in an unknown tongue. As in life, so in study, it is dangerous to do more things than one at a time; and the mind is not to be harassed with unnecessary obstructions, in a way, of which the natural and unavoidable asperity is such as too frequently produces despair.

If the language however had been the only objection to any of the volumes already extant, the schools might have been supplied at a small expence by a translation; but none could be found that was not so defective, redundant, or erroneous, as to be of more danger than use. It was necessary then to examine, whether upon every single science there was not some treatise written for the use of scholars, which might be adapted to this design, so that a collection might be made from different authors, without the necessity of writing new systems. This search was not wholly without success; for two authors were found, whose performances might be admitted with little alteration. But so widely does this plan differ from all others, so much has the state of many kinds of learning been changed, or so unfortunately have they hitherto been cultivated, that none of the other subjects were explained in such a manner as was now required; and therefore neither care nor expence has been spared to obtain new lights, and procure to this book the merit of an original.

With what judgment the design has been formed, and with what skill it has been executed, the learned world is now to determine. But before sentence shall pass, it is proper to explain more fully what

has been intended, that censure may not be incurred by the omission of that which the original plan did not comprehend; to declare more particularly who they are to whose instructions these treatises pretend, that a charge of arrogance and presumption may be obviated; to lay down the reasons which directed the choice of the several subjects; and to explain more minutely the manner in which each particular part of these volumes is to be used.

The title has already declared, that these volumes are particularly intended for the use of schools, and therefore it has been the care of the authors to explain the several sciences, of which they have treated, in the most familiar manner; for the mind used only to common expressions, and inaccurate ideas, does not suddenly conform itself to scholastick modes of reasoning, or conceive the nice distinctions of a subtile philosophy, and may be properly initiated in speculative studies by an introduction like this, in which the grossness of vulgar conception is avoided, without the observation of metaphysical exactness. It is observed, that in the course of the natural world no change is instantaneous, but all its vicissitudes are gradual and slow; the motions of intellect proceed in the like imperceptible progression, and proper degrees of transition from one study to another are therefore necessary; but let it not be charged upon the writers of this book, that they intended to exhibit more than the dawn of knowledge, or pretended to raise in the mind any nobler product than the blossoms of science, which more powerful institutions may ripen into fruit.

PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR. 407

For this reason it must not be expected, that in the following pages should be found a complete circle of the sciences; or that any authors, now deservedly esteemed, should be rejected to make way for what is here offered. It was intended by the means of these precepts, not to deck the mind with ornaments, but to protect it from nakedness; not to enrich it with affluence, but to supply it with necessaries. The *enquiry* therefore was not what degrees of knowledge are desirable, but what are in most stations of life indispensably required; and the *choice* was determined not by the splendor of any part of literature, but by the extent of its use, and the inconvenience which its neglect was likely to produce.

I. The prevalence of this consideration appears in the first part, which is appropriated to the humble purposes of teaching to *read*, and *speak*, and *write letters*; an attempt of little magnificence, but in which no man needs to blush for having employed his time, if honour be estimated by use. For precepts of this kind, however neglected, extend their importance as far as men are found who communicate their thoughts one to another; they are equally useful to the highest and the lowest; they may often contribute to make ignorance less inelegant; and may it not be observed, that they are frequently wanted for the embellishment even of learning?

In order to shew the proper use of this part, which consists of various exemplifications of such differences of style as require correspondent diversities of pronunciation, it will be proper to inform the

scholar, that there are in general three forms of style, each of which demands its particular mode of elocution: the *familiar*, the *solemn*, and the *pathetick*. That in the *familiar*, he that reads is only to talk with a paper in his hand, and to indulge himself in all the lighter liberties of voice, as when he reads the common articles of a newspaper, or a cursory letter of intelligence or business. That the *solemn* style, such as that of a serious narrative, exacts an uniform steadiness of speech, equal, clear, and calm. That for the *pathetick*, such as an animated oration, it is necessary the voice be regulated by the sense, varying and rising with the passions. These rules, which are the most general, admit a great number of subordinate observations, which must be particularly adapted to every scholar; for it is observable, that though very few read well, yet every man errs in a different way. But let one remark never be omitted: inculcate strongly to every scholar the danger of copying the voice of another; an attempt which, though it has been often repeated, is always unsuccessful.

The importance of writing letters with propriety justly claims to be considered with care, since, next to the power of pleasing with his presence, every man would wish to be able to give delight at a distance. This great art should be diligently taught, the rather, because of those letters which are most useful, and by which the general business of life is transacted, there are no *examples* easily to be found. It seems the general fault of those who undertake this part of education, that they propose for the exercise of their scholars, occasions which rarely  
 happen;



PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR. 409

happen ; such as congratulations and condolences, and neglect those without which life cannot proceed. It is possible to pass many years without the necessity of writing panegyrics or epithalamiums ; but every man has frequent occasion to state a contract, or demand a debt, or make a narrative of some minute incidents of common life. On these subjects, therefore, young persons should be taught to think justly, and write clearly, neatly, and succinctly, lest they come from school into the world without any acquaintance with common affairs, and stand idle spectators of mankind, in expectation that some great event will give them an opportunity to exert their rhetoric.

II. The second place is assigned to *geometry* ; on the usefulness of which it is unnecessary to expatiate in an age when mathematical studies have so much engaged the attention of all classes of men. This treatise is one of those which have been borrowed, being a translation from the work of Mr. *Le Clerc* ; and is not intended as more than the first initiation. In delivering the fundamental principles of *geometry*, it is necessary to proceed by slow steps, that each proposition may be fully understood before another is attempted. For which purpose it is not sufficient, that when a question is asked in the words of the book, the scholar likewise can in the words of the book return the proper answer ; for this may be only an act of memory, not of understanding : it is always proper to vary the words of the question, to place the proposition in different points of view, and to require of the learner an explanation in his own terms, informing him however when they are improper.

## 410 PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR.

improper. By this method the scholar will become cautious and attentive, and the master will know with certainty the degree of his proficiency. Yet, though this rule is generally right, I cannot but recommend a precept of *Pardie's*, that when the student cannot be made to comprehend some particular part, it should be, for that time, laid aside, till new light shall arise from subsequent observation.

When this compendium is completely understood, the scholar may proceed to the perusal of *Tacquet*, afterwards of *Euclid* himself, and then of the modern improvers of *geometry*, such as *Barrow*, *Keil*, and Sir *Isaac Newton*.

III. The necessity of some acquaintance with *geography* and *astronomy* will not be disputed: If the pupil is born to the ease of a large fortune, no part of learning is more necessary to him than the knowledge of the situation of nations, on which their interests generally depend; if he is dedicated to any of the learned professions, it is scarcely possible that he will not be obliged to apply himself in some part of his life to these studies, as no other branch of literature can be fully comprehended without them; if he is designed for the arts of commerce or agriculture, some general acquaintance with these sciences will be found extremely useful to him; in a word, no studies afford more extensive, more wonderful, or more pleasing scenes; and therefore there can be no ideas impressed upon the soul, which can more conduce to its future entertainment.

In

## PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR. 411

In the pursuit of these sciences, it will be proper to proceed with the same gradation and caution as in *geometry*. And it is always of use to decorate the nakedness of science, by interspersing such observations and narratives as may amuse the mind, and excite curiosity. Thus, in explaining the state of the polar regions, it might be fit to read the narrative of the *Englishmen* that wintered in *Greenland*, which will make young minds sufficiently curious after the cause of such a length of night, and intenseness of cold; and many stratagems of the same kind might be practised to interest them in all parts of their studies, and call in their passions to animate their inquiries. When they have read this treatise, it will be proper to recommend to them *Varenius's* Geography, and *Gregory's* Astronomy.

IV. The study of *chronology* and *history* seems to be one of the most natural delights of the human mind. It is not easy to live without inquiring by what means every thing was brought into the state in which we now behold it, or without finding in the mind some desire of being informed concerning the generations of mankind that have been in possession of the world before us, whether they were better or worse than ourselves; or what good or evil has been derived to us from their schemes, practices, and institutions. These are inquiries which *history* alone can satisfy; and *history* can only be made intelligible by some knowledge of *chronology*, the science by which events are ranged in their order, and the periods of computation are settled;

settled; and which therefore assist the memory by method, and enlighten the judgment, by shewing the dependence of one transaction on another. Accordingly it should be diligently inculcated to the scholar, that unless he fixes in his mind some idea of the time in which each man of eminence lived, and each action was performed, with some part of the contemporary history of the rest of the world, he will consume his life in useless reading, and darken his mind with a crowd of unconnected events; his memory will be perplexed with distant transactions resembling one another, and his reflections be like a dream in a fever, busy and turbulent, but confused and indistinct.

The technical part of chronology, or the art of computing and adjusting time, as it is very difficult, so it is not of absolute necessity, but should however be taught, so far as it can be learned without the loss of those hours which are required for attainments of nearer concern. The student may join with this treatise *Le Clerc's Compendium of History*; and afterwards may, for the historical part of *chronology*, procure *Helvicus's* and *Isaacson's Tables*; and, if he is desirous of attaining the technical part, may first peruse *Holder's Account of Hearne's Duëtor Historicus*, *Strauchius*, the first part of *Petavius's Rationarium Temporum*; and at length *Scaliger de Emendatione Temporum*. And for instruction in the method of his historical studies, he may consult *Hearne's Duëtor Historicus*, *Wheare's Lectures*, *Rawlinson's Directions for the Study of History*; and for ecclesiastical history, *Cave* and *Dupin*, *Baronius* and *Fleury*.

V. Rhetorick

PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR. 413

V. *Rhetorick* and *poetry* supply life with its highest intellectual pleasures; and in the hands of virtue are of great use for the impressiion of just sentiments, and recommendation of illustrious examples. In the practice of these great arts, so much more is the effect of nature than the effect of education, that nothing is attempted here but to teach the mind some general heads of observation, to which the beautiful passages of the best writers may commonly be reduced. In the use of this it is not proper that the teacher should confine himself to the examples before him, for by that method he will never enable his pupils to make just application of the rules; but, having inculcated the true meaning of each figure, he should require them to exemplify it by their own observations, pointing to them the poem, or, in longer works, the book or canto in which an example may be found, and leaving them to discover the particular passage by the light of the rules which they have lately learned.

For a farther progress in these studies, they may consult *Quintilian* and *Vossius's* *Rhetorick*; the art of poetry will be best learned from *Bossu* and *Bobours* in *French*, together with *Dryden's* *Essays* and *Prefaces*, the critical *Papers* of *Addison*, *Spence* on *Pope's* *Odyssey*, and *Trapp's* *Prælectiones Poeticæ*; but a more accurate and philosophical account is expected from a commentary upon *Aristotle's* *Art of Poetry*, with which the literature of this nation will be in a short time augmented.

VI. With regard to the practice of *drawing*, it is not necessary to give any directions, the use of  
the



#### 414 PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR.

the treatise being only to teach the proper method of imitating the figures which are annexed. It will be proper to incite the scholars to industry, by shewing in other books the use of the art, and informing them how much it assists the apprehension, and relieves the memory; and if they are obliged sometimes to *write* descriptions of engines, utensils, or any complex pieces of workmanship, they will more fully apprehend the necessity of an expedient which so happily supplies the defects of language, and enables the eye to receive what cannot be conveyed to the mind any other way. When they have read this treatise, and practised upon these figures, their theory may be improved by the *Jesuit's Perspective*, and their manual operations by other figures which may be easily procured.

VII. *Logick*, or the art of arranging and connecting ideas, of forming and examining arguments, is universally allowed to be an attainment in the utmost degree worthy the ambition of that being whose highest honour is to be endued with reason; but it is doubted whether that ambition has yet been gratified, and whether the powers of ratiocination have been much improved by any systems of art, or methodical institutions. The *logick* which for so many ages kept possession of the schools, has at last been condemned as a mere art of wrangling, of very little use in the pursuit of truth; and later writers have contented themselves with giving an account of the operations of the mind, marking the various stages of her progress, and giving some general rules for the regulation of her conduct. The method of these writers is here followed;

PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR. 415

but without a servile adherence to any, and with endeavours to make improvements upon all. This work, however laborious, has yet been fruitless, if there be truth in an observation very frequently made, that logicians out of the school do not reason better than men unassisted by those lights which their science is supposed to bestow. It is not to be doubted but that logicians may be sometimes overborne by their passions, or blinded by their prejudices; and that a man may reason ill, as he may act ill, not because he does not know what is right, but because he does not regard it; yet it is no more the fault of his art that it does not direct him when his attention is withdrawn from it, than it is the defect of his sight that he misses his way when he shuts his eyes. Against this cause of error there is no provision to be made, otherwise than by inculcating the value of truth, and the necessity of conquering the passions. But *logick* may likewise fail to produce its effects upon common occasions, for want of being frequently and familiarly applied, till its precepts may direct the mind imperceptibly, as the fingers of a musician are regulated by his knowledge of the tune. This readiness of recollection is only to be procured by frequent impression; and therefore it will be proper, when *logick* has been once learned, the teacher take frequent occasion, in the most easy and familiar conversation, to observe when its rules are preserved, and when they are broken; and that afterwards he read no authors, without exacting of his pupil an account of every remarkable exemplification or breach of the laws of reasoning.

When

When this system has been digested, if it be thought necessary to proceed farther in the study of method, it will be proper to recommend *Croufaz*, *Watts*, *Le Clerc*, *Wolfius*, and *Locke's Essay on Human Understanding*; and if there be imagined any necessity of adding the peripatetick logick, which has been perhaps condemned without a candid trial, it will be convenient to proceed to *Sanderfon*, *Wallis*, *Crackranthorp*, and *Aristotle*.

VIII. To excite a curiosity after the works of God, is the chief design of the small specimen of *natural history* inserted in this collection; which, however, may be sufficient to put the mind in motion, and in some measure to direct its steps; but its effects may easily be improved by a philosophick master, who will every day find a thousand opportunities of turning the attention of his scholars to the contemplation of the objects that surround them, of laying open the wonderful art with which every part of the universe is formed, and the providence which governs the vegetable and animal creation. He may lay before them the *Religious Philosopher*, *Ray*, *Derham's Physico-Theology*, together with the *Speſtacle de la Nature*; and in time recommend to their perusal *Rondoletius* and *Aldrovandus*.

IX. But how much soever the reason may be strengthened by *logick*, or the conceptions of the mind enlarged by the study of nature, it is necessary the man be not suffered to dwell upon them so long as to neglect the study of himself, the knowledge of his own station in the ranks of being,  
and

and his various relations to the innumerable multitudes which surround him, and with which his Maker has ordained him to be united for the reception and communication of happiness. To consider these aright is of the greatest importance, since from these arise duties which he cannot neglect. *Ethics*, or *morality*, therefore, is one of the studies which ought to begin with the first glimpse of reason, and only end with life itself. Other acquisitions are merely temporary benefits, except as they contribute to illustrate the knowledge, and confirm the practice of morality and piety, which extend their influence beyond the grave, and increase our happiness through endless duration.

This great science, therefore, must be inculcated with care and assiduity, such as its importance ought to incite in reasonable minds; and for the prosecution of this design, fit opportunities are always at hand. As the importance of *logick* is to be shewn by detecting false arguments; the excellence of morality is to be displayed by proving the deformity, the reproach, and the misery of all deviations from it. Yet it is to be remembered, that the laws of mere morality are no coercive power; and, however they may by conviction of their fitness please the reasoner in the shade, when the passions stagnate without impulse, and the appetites are secluded from their objects, they will be of little force against the ardour of desire, or the vehemence of rage, amidst the pleasures and tumults of the world. To counteract the power of temptations, hope must be excited by the prospect of rewards, and fear by the expectation of pu-



nishment; and virtue may owe her panegyrics to morality, but must derive her authority from religion.

When therefore the obligations of morality are taught, let the sanctions of christianity never be forgotten; by which it will be shewn, that they give strength and lustre to each other; religion will appear to be the voice of reason, and morality the will of God. Under this article must be recommended *Tully's Offices*, *Grotius*, *Puffendorf*, *Cumberland's Laws of Nature*, and the excellent *Mr. Addison's Moral and Religious Essays*.

X. Thus far the work is composed for the use of scholars, merely as they are men. But it was thought necessary to introduce something that might be particularly adapted to that country for which it is designed; and therefore a discourse has been added upon *trade and commerce*, of which it becomes every man of this nation to understand at least the general principles, as it is impossible that any should be high or low enough not to be in some degree affected by their declension or prosperity. It is therefore necessary that it should be universally known among us, what changes of property are advantageous, or when the balance of trade is on our side; what are the products or manufactures of other countries; and how far one nation may in any species of traffick obtain or preserve superiority over another. The theory of trade is yet but little understood, and therefore the practice is often without real advantage to the publick: but it might be carried on with more general success, if its principles were better considered; and



to excite that attention is our chief design. To the perusal of this book may succeed that of *Mun upon foreign Trade*, Sir *Josiah Child*, *Locke upon Coin*, *Davenant's* treatises, the *British Merchant*, *Dictionnaire de Commerce*, and, for an abstract or compendium, *Gee*, and an improvement that may hereafter be made upon his plan.

XI. The principles of *laws* and *government* come next to be considered; by which men are taught to whom obedience is due, for what it is paid, and in what degree it may be justly required. This knowledge, by peculiar necessity, constitutes a part of the education of an *Englishman*, who professes to obey his prince according to the law, and who is himself a secondary legislator, as he gives his consent, by his representative, to all the laws by which he is bound, and has a right to petition the great council of the nation, whenever he thinks they are deliberating upon an act detrimental to the interest of the community. This is therefore a subject to which the thoughts of a young man ought to be directed; and that he may obtain such knowledge as may qualify him to act and judge as one of a free people, let him be directed to add to this introduction *Fortescue's Treatises*, *N. Bacon's Historical Discourse on the Laws and Government of England*, *Temple's Introduction*, *Locke on Government*, *Zouch's Elementa Juris Civilis*, *Plato Redivivus*, *Gurdon's History of Parliaments*, and *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*.

XII. Having thus supplied the young student with knowledge, it remains now that he learns its application; and that thus qualified to act his part, he be at last taught to chuse it. For this purpose a

fection is added upon *human life* and *manners*; in which he is cautioned against the danger of indulging his *passions*, of vitiating his *habits*, and depraving his *sentiments*. He is instructed in these points by three fables, two of which were of the highest authority in the ancient *Pagan* world. But at this he is not to rest; for if he expects to be wise and happy, he must diligently study the **SCRIPTURES of GOD**.

Such is the book now proposed, as the first initiation into the knowledge of things, which has been thought by many to be too long delayed in the present forms of education. Whether the complaints be not often ill-grounded, may perhaps be disputed; but it is at least reasonable to believe, that greater proficiency might sometimes be made; that real knowledge might be more early communicated; and that children might be allowed, without injury to health, to spend many of those hours upon useful employments, which are generally lost in idleness and play; therefore the Publick will surely encourage an experiment, by which, if it fails, nobody is hurt; and if it succeeds, all the future ages of the world may find advantage; which may eradicate or prevent vice, by turning to a better use those moments in which it is learned or indulged; and in some sense lengthen life, by teaching posterity to enjoy those years which have hitherto been lost. The success, and even the trial of this experiment, will depend upon those to whom the care of our youth is committed; and a due sense of the importance of their trust will easily prevail upon them to encourage a work which pursues the design  
of

PREFACE TO THE PRECEPTOR. 421

of improving education. If any part of the following performance shall upon trial be found capable of amendment; if any thing can be added or altered, so as to render the attainment of knowledge more easy; the Editor will be extremely obliged to any gentleman, particularly those who are engaged in the business of teaching, for such hints or observations as may tend towards the improvement, and will spare neither expence nor trouble in making the best use of their information.

P R E F A C E  
T O  
R O L T ' S D I C T I O N A R Y \* .

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**N**O expectation is more fallacious than that which authors form of the reception which their labours will find among mankind. Scarcely any man publishes a book, whatever it be, without believing that he has caught the moment when the publick attention is vacant to his call, and the world is disposed in a particular manner to learn the art which he undertakes to teach.

The writers of this volume are not so far exempt from epidemical prejudices, but that they likewise please themselves with imagining, that they have reserved their labours to a propitious conjuncture, and that this is the proper time for the publication of a Dictionary of Commerce.

The predictions of an author are very far from infallibility; but in justification of some degree of confidence it may be properly observed, that there was never from the earliest ages a time in which trade so much engaged the attention of mankind, or commercial gain was sought with such general emulation. Nations which have hitherto cultivated no art but that of war, nor conceived any means of encreasing riches but by plunder, are awakened to

\* A new Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, compiled from the Information of the most eminent Merchants, and from the Works of the best Writers on commercial Subjects in all Languages, by Mr. *Rolt*. Folio, 1757.

more inoffensive industry. Those whom the possession of subterraneous treasures have long disposed to accommodate themselves by foreign industry, are at last convinced that idleness never will be rich. The merchant is now invited to every port, manufactures are established in all cities, and princes who just can view the sea from some single corner of their dominions, are enlarging harbours, erecting mercantile companies, and preparing to traffick in the remotest countries.

Nor is the form of this work less popular than the subject. It has lately been the practice of the learned to range knowledge by the alphabet, and publish dictionaries of every kind of literature. This practice has perhaps been carried too far by the force of fashion. Sciences, in themselves systematical and coherent, are not very properly broken into such fortuitous distributions. A dictionary of arithmetick or geometry can serve only to confound: but commerce, considered in its whole extent, seems to refuse any other method of arrangement, as it comprises innumerable particulars unconnected with each other, among which there is no reason why any should be first or last, better than is furnished by the letters that compose their names.

We cannot indeed boast ourselves the inventors of a scheme so commodious and comprehensive. The *French*, among innumerable projects for the promotion of traffick, have taken care to supply their merchants with a *Dictionnaire de Commerce*, collected with great industry and exactness, but too large for common use, and adapted to their own



trade. This book, as well as others, has been carefully consulted, that our merchants may not be ignorant of any thing known by their enemies or rivals.

Such indeed is the extent of our undertaking, that it was necessary to solicit every information, to consult the living and the dead. The great qualification of him that attempts a work thus general is diligence of enquiry. No man has opportunity or ability to acquaint himself with all the subjects of a commercial dictionary, so as to describe from his own knowledge, or assert on his own experience. He must therefore often depend upon the veracity of others, as every man depends in common life, and have no other skill to boast than that of selecting judiciously, and arranging properly.

But to him who considers the extent of our subject, limited only by the bounds of nature and of art, the task of selection and method will appear sufficient to overburden industry and distract attention. Many branches of commerce are subdivided into smaller and smaller parts, till at last they become so minute as not easily to be noted by observation. Many interests are so woven among each other as not to be disentangled without long enquiry; many arts are industriously kept secret, and many practices necessary to be known, are carried on in parts too remote for intelligence.

But the knowledge of trade is of so much importance to a maritime nation, that no labour can be thought great by which information may be obtained; and therefore we hope the reader will not  
have

have reason to complain, that, of what he might justly expect to find, any thing is omitted.

To give a detail or analysis of our work is very difficult; a volume intended to contain whatever is requisite to be known by every trader, necessarily becomes so miscellaneous and unconnected as not to be easily reducible to heads; yet, since we pretend in some measure to treat of traffick as a science, and to make that regular and systematical which has hitherto been to a great degree fortuitous and conjectural, and has often succeeded by chance rather than by conduct, it will be proper to shew that a distribution of parts has been attempted, which, though rude and inadequate, will at least preserve some order, and enable the mind to take a methodical and successive view of this design.

In the dictionary which we here offer to the publick, we propose to exhibit the *materials*, the *places*, and the *means* of traffick.

The materials or subjects of traffick are *whatever is bought and sold*, and include therefore every manufacture of art, and almost every production of nature.

In giving an account of the commodities of nature, whether those which are to be used in their original state, as drugs and spices, or those which become useful when they receive a new form from human art, as flax, cotton, and metals, we shall shew the places of their production, the manner in which they grow, the art of cultivating or collecting them, their discriminations and varieties, by which the best sorts are known from the worse, and genuine from fictitious, the arts by which they are counter-

counterfeited, the casualties by which they are impaired, and the practices by which the damage is palliated or concealed. We shall likewise shew their virtues and uses, and trace them through all the changes which they undergo.

The history of manufactures is likewise delivered. Of every artificial commodity the manner in which it is made is in some measure described, though it must be remembered, that manual operations are scarce to be conveyed by any words to him that has not seen them. Some general notions may however be afforded; it is easy to comprehend, that plates of iron are formed by the pressure of rollers, and bars by the strokes of a hammer; that a cannon is cast, and that an anvil is forged. But as it is to most traders of more use to know when their goods are well wrought, than by what means, care has been taken to name the places where every manufacture has been carried furthest, and the marks by which its excellency may be ascertained.

By the *places of trade* are understood all ports, cities, or towns, where staples are established, manufactures are wrought, or any commodities are bought and sold advantageously. This part of our work includes an enumeration of almost all the remarkable places in the world, with such an account of their situation, customs, and products, as the merchant would require, who being to begin a new trade in any foreign country, was yet ignorant of the commodities of the place, and the manners of the inhabitants.

But the chief attention of the merchant, and consequently of the author who writes for merchants,  
ought

ought to be employed upon the *means* of trade, which include all the knowledge and practice necessary to the skilful and successful conduct of commerce.

The first of the means of trade is proper education, which may confer a competent skill in numbers; to be afterwards completed in the counting-house, by observation of the manner of stating accounts, and regulating books, which is one of the few arts which having been studied in proportion to its importance, is carried as far as use can require. The counting-house of an accomplished merchant is a school of method, where the great science may be learned of ranging particulars under generals, of bringing the different parts of a transaction together, and of shewing at one view a long series of dealing and exchange. Let no man venture into large business while he is ignorant of the method of regulating books; never let him imagine that any degree of natural abilities will enable him to supply this deficiency, or preserve multiplicity of affairs from inextricable confusion.

This is the study, without which all other studies will be of little avail; but this alone is not sufficient. It will be necessary to learn many other things, which however may be easily included in the preparatory institutions, such as an exact knowledge of the *weights* and *measures* of different countries, and some skill in geography and navigation, with which this book may perhaps sufficiently supply him.

In navigation, considered as part of the skill of a merchant, is included not so much the art of steering a ship, as the knowledge of the sea-coast, and  
of

of the different parts to which his cargoes are sent, the customs to be paid; the passes, permissions, or certificates to be procured; the hazards of every voyage, and the true rate of insurances. To this must be added, an acquaintance with the policies and arts of other nations, as well those to whom the commodities are sold, as of those who carry goods of the same kind to the same market; and who are therefore to be watched as rivals endeavouring to take advantage of every error, miscarriage, or debate.

The chief of the *means* of trade is *money*, of which our late refinements in traffick have made the knowledge extremely difficult. The merchant must not only inform himself of the various denominations and value of foreign coins, together with their method of counting and reducing; such as the milleries of *Portugal*, and the livres of *France*; but he must learn what is of more difficult attainment; the discount of exchanges, the nature of current paper, the principles upon which the several banks of *Europe* are established, the real value of funds, the true credit of trading companies, with all the sources of profit, and possibilities of loss.

All this he must learn merely as a private dealer, attentive only to his own advantage; but as every man ought to consider himself as part of the community to which he belongs, and while he prosecutes his own interest to promote likewise that of his country, it is necessary for the trader to look abroad upon mankind, and study many questions which are perhaps more properly political than mercantile.

He



He ought therefore to consider very accurately the balance of trade, or the proportion between things exported and imported; to examine what kinds of commerce are unlawful, either as being expressly prohibited, because detrimental to the manufactures or other interest of his country, as the exportation of silver to the *East-Indies*, and the introduction of *French* commodities; or unlawful in itself, as the traffick for negroes. He ought to be able to state with accuracy, the benefits and mischiefs of monopolies, and exclusive companies; to enquire into the arts which have been practised by them to make themselves necessary, or by their opponents to make them odious. He should inform himself what trades are declining, and what are improveable; when the advantage is on our side, and when on that of our rivals.

The state of our *colonies* is always to be diligently surveyed, that no advantage may be lost which they can afford, and that every opportunity may be improved of encreasing their wealth and power, or of making them useful to their mother country.

There is no knowledge of more frequent use than that of duties and impost, whether customs paid at the ports, or excises levied upon the manufacturer. Much of the prosperity of a trading nation depends upon duties properly apportioned; so that what is necessary may continue cheap, and what is of use only to luxury may in some measure atone to the publick for the mischief done to individuals. Duties may often be so regulated as to become useful even to those that pay them; and they may be likewise so unequally imposed as to discourage honesty,
   
 and

#### 430 PREFACE TO ROLT'S DICTIONARY.

and depress industry, and give temptation to fraud and unlawful practices.

To teach all this is the design of the Commercial Dictionary, which, though immediately and primarily written for the merchants, will be of use to every man of business or curiosity. There is no man who is not in some degree a merchant, who has not something to buy and something to sell, and who does not therefore want such instructions as may teach him the true value of possessions or commodities.

The descriptions of the productions of the earth and water, which this volume will contain, may be equally pleasing and useful to the speculatist with any other natural history; and the accounts of various manufactures will constitute no contemptible body of experimental philosophy. The descriptions of ports and cities may instruct the geographer as well as if they were found in books appropriated only to his own science; and the doctrines of funds, insurances, currency, monopolies, exchanges, and duties, is so necessary to the politician, that without it he can be of no use either in the council or the senate, nor can speak or think justly either on war or trade.

We therefore hope that we shall not repent the labour of compiling this work, nor flatter ourselves unreasonably, in predicting a favourable reception to a book which no condition of life can render useless, which may contribute to the advantage of all that make or receive laws, of all that buy or sell, of all that wish to keep or improve their possessions, of all that desire to be rich, and all that desire to be wise.

PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION  
OF  
FATHER LOBO'S VOYAGE  
TO ABYSSINIA\*.

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THE following relation is so curious and entertaining, and the dissertations that accompany it so judicious and instructive, that the translator is confident his attempt stands in need of no apology, whatever censures may fall on the performance.

The *Portuguese* traveller, contrary to the general vein of his countrymen, has amused his reader with no romantick absurdities or incredible fictions: whatever he relates, whether true or not, is at least probable; and he who tells nothing exceeding the bounds of probability, has a right to demand that they should believe him who cannot contradict him.

He appears, by his modest and unaffected narration, to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from the life, and to have consulted his senses, not his imagination. He meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes; his crocodiles devour their prey without tears; and his

\* For an account of this book, see the *Life of Dr. Johnson*, by the Editor.

catarafts fall from the rock without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants.

The reader will here find no regions cursed with irremediable barrenness, or blest with spontaneous fecundity; no perpetual gloom or unceasing sunshine; nor are the nations here described either devoid of all sense of humanity, or consummate in all private and social virtues: here are no *Hottentots* without religion, polity, or articulate language; no *Chinese* perfectly polite, and completely skilled in all sciences: he will discover what will always be discovered by a diligent and impartial inquirer, that wherever human nature is to be found, there is a mixture of vice and virtue, a contest of passion and reason; and that the Creator doth not appear partial in his distributions, but has balanced in most countries their particular inconveniencies by particular favours.

In his account of the mission, where his veracity is most to be suspected, he neither exaggerates overmuch the merits of the jesuits, if we consider the partial regard paid by the *Portuguese* to their countrymen, by the jesuits to their society, and by the papists to their church, nor aggravates the vices of the *Abyssinians*; but if the reader will not be satisfied with a popish account of a popish mission, he may have recourse to the History of the Church of *Abyssinia*, written by Dr. *Geddes*, in which he will find the actions and sufferings of the missionaries placed in a different light, though the same in which Mr. *Le Grand*, with all his zeal for the *Roman* church, appears to have seen them.

This

This learned differtator, however valuable for his industry and erudition, is yet more to be esteemed for having dared so freely, in the midst of *France*, to declare his disapprobation of the patriarch *Oviedo's* sanguinary zeal, who was continually importuning the *Portuguese* to beat up their drums for missionaries who might preach the gospel with swords in their hands, and propagate by desolation and slaughter the true worship of the God of peace.

It is not easy to forbear reflecting with how little reason these men profess themselves the followers of JESUS, who left this great characteristick to his disciples, that they should be known *by loving one another*, by universal and unbounded charity and benevolence.

Let us suppose an inhabitant of some remote and superior region, yet unskilled in the ways of men, having read and considered the precepts of the gospel, and the example of our Saviour, to come down in search of the *true church*, if he would not enquire after it among the cruel, the insolent, and the oppressive; among those who are continually grasping at dominion over souls as well as bodies; among those who are employed in procuring to themselves impunity for the most enormous villainies, and studying methods of destroying their fellow-creatures, not for their crimes but their errors? If he would not expect to meet benevolence, engage in massacres, or to find mercy in a court of inquisition, he would not look for the *true church* in the church of *Rome*.

Mr. *Le Grand* has given in one dissertation an example of great moderation, in deviating from the



## 434 PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION

temper of his religion; but in the others has left proofs, that learning and honesty are often too weak to oppose prejudice. He has made no scruple of preferring the testimony of father *Du Bernat* to the writings of all the *Portuguese* jesuits, to whom he allows great zeal, but little learning, without giving any other reason than that his favourite was a *Frenchman*. This is writing only to *Frenchmen* and to papists: a protestant would be desirous to know, why he must imagine that father *Du Bernat* had a cooler head or more knowledge, and why one man, whose account is singular, is not more likely to be mistaken than many agreeing in the same account.

If the *Portuguese* were biassed by any particular views, another bias equally powerful may have deflected the *Frenchman* from the truth; for they evidently write with contrary designs: the *Portuguese*, to make their mission seem more necessary, endeavoured to place in the strongest light the differences between the *Abyssinian* and *Roman* church; but the great *Ludolfus*, laying hold on the advantage, reduced these later writers to prove their conformity.

Upon the whole, the controversy seems of no great importance to those who believe the Holy Scriptures sufficient to teach the way of salvation; but, of whatever moment it may be thought, there are not proofs sufficient to decide it.

His discourses on indifferent subjects will divert as well as instruct; and if either in these, or in the relation of father *Lobo*, any argument shall appear unconvincing, or description obscure, they are defects incident to all mankind, which however are

not

not too rashly to be imputed to the authors, being sometimes perhaps more justly chargeable on the translator.

In this translation (if it may be so called) great liberties have been taken, which, whether justifiable or not, shall be fairly confessed, and let the judicious part of mankind pardon or condemn them.

In the first part the greatest freedom has been used, in reducing the narration into a narrow compass; so that it is by no means a translation, but an epitome, in which, whether every thing either useful or entertaining be comprised, the compiler is least qualified to determine.

In the account of *Abyssinia*, and the continuation, the authors have been followed with more exactness; and as few passages appeared either insignificant or tedious, few have been either shortened or omitted.

The dissertations are the only part in which an exact translation has been attempted; and even in those, abstracts are sometimes given instead of literal quotations, particularly in the first; and sometimes other parts have been contracted.

Several memorials and letters, which are printed at the end of the dissertations to secure the credit of the foregoing narrative, are entirely left out.

It is hoped that after this confession, whoever shall compare this attempt with the original, if he shall find no proofs of fraud or partiality, will candidly overlook any failure of judgment.

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**T**HOUGH criticism has been cultivated in every age of learning, by men of great abilities and extensive knowledge, till the rules of writing are become rather burthensome than instructive to the mind; though almost every species of composition has been the subject of particular treatises, and given birth to definitions, distinctions, precepts, and illustrations; yet no critic of note, that has fallen within my observation, has hitherto thought *sepulchral inscriptions* worthy of a minute examination, or pointed out with proper accuracy their beauties and defects.

The reasons of this neglect it is useless to enquire, and perhaps impossible to discover; it might be justly expected that this kind of writing would have been the favourite topic of criticism, and that self-love might have produced some regard for it, in those authors that have crowded libraries with elaborate dissertations upon *Homer*; since to afford a subject for heroick poems is the privilege of very few, but every man may expect to be recorded in an epitaph, and therefore finds some interest in providing

viding that his memory may not suffer by an unskilful panegyrick.

If our prejudices in favour of antiquity deserve to have any part in the regulation of our studies, EPITAPHS seem intitled to more than common regard, as they are probably of the same age with the art of writing. The most ancient structures in the world, the Pyramids, are supposed to be sepulchral monuments, which either pride or gratitude erected; and the same passions which incited men to such laborious and expensive methods of preserving their own memory, or that of their benefactors, would doubtless incline them not to neglect any easier means by which the same ends might be obtained. Nature and reason have dictated to every nation, that to preserve good actions from oblivion, is both the interest and duty of mankind: and therefore we find no people acquainted with the use of letters, that omitted to grace the tombs of their heroes and wise men with panegyrical inscriptions.

To examine, therefore, in what the perfection of EPITAPHS consists, and what rules are to be observed in composing them, will be at least of as much use as other critical enquiries; and for assigning a few hours to such disquisitions, great examples at least, if not strong reasons, may be pleaded.

An EPITAPH, as the word itself implies, is an *inscription on the tomb*, and in its most extensive import may admit indiscriminately satire or praise. But as malice has seldom produced monuments of defamation, and the tombs hitherto raised have been the work of friendship and benevolence, custom has contracted the original latitude of the *word*, so that

it signifies in the general acceptation an *inscription engraven on a tomb in honour of the person deceased.*

As honours are paid to the dead in order to incite others to the imitation of their excellences, the principal intention of EPITAPHS is to perpetuate the examples of virtue, that the tomb of a good man may supply the want of his presence, and veneration for his memory produce the same effect as the observation of his life. Those EPITAPHS are, therefore, the most perfect, which set virtue in the strongest light, and are best adapted to exalt the reader's ideas and rouse his emulation.

To this end it is not always necessary to recount the actions of a hero, or enumerate the writings of a philosopher; to imagine such informations necessary, is to detract from their characters, or to suppose their works mortal, or their achievements in danger of being forgotten. The bare name of such men answers every purpose of a long inscription.

Had only the name of Sir ISAAC NEWTON been subjoined to the design upon his monument, instead of a long detail of his discoveries, which no philosopher can want, and which none but a philosopher can understand, those, by whose direction it was raised, had done more honour both to him and to themselves.

This indeed is a commendation which it requires no genius to bestow, but which can never become vulgar or contemptible, if bestowed with judgment; because no single age produces many men of merit superior to panegyrick. None but the first names can stand unassisted against the attacks of time; and if men raised to reputation by accident

OR



or caprice, have nothing but their names engraved on their tombs, there is danger lest in a few years the inscription require an interpreter. Thus have their expectations been disappointed who honoured *Picus of Mirandola* with this pompous epitaph.

*Hic situs est PICUS MIRANDOLA, cætera nunt  
Et Tagus et Ganges, forsan et Antipodes.*

His name, then celebrated in the remotest corners of the earth, is now almost forgotten; and his works, then studied, admired, and applauded, are now mouldering in obscurity.

Next in dignity to the bare name is a short character simple and unadorned, without exaggeration, superlatives, or rhetorick. Such were the inscriptions in use among the *Romans*, in which the victories gained by their emperors were commemorated by a single epithet; as *Cæsar Germanicus*, *Cæsar Dacicus*, *Germanicus*, *Illyricus*. Such would be this epitaph, *ISAACUS NEWTONUS, naturæ legibus investigatis, hic quiescit.*

But to far the greatest part of mankind a longer encomium is necessary for the publication of their virtues, and the preservation of their memories; and in the composition of these it is that art is principally required, and precepts therefore may be useful.

In writing EPITAPHS, one circumstance is to be considered, which affects no other composition; the place in which they are now commonly found restrains them to a particular air of solemnity, and debars them from the admission of all lighter or  
gayer

gayer ornaments. In this it is that the style of an EPITAPH necessarily differs from that of an ELEGY. The custom of burying our dead either in or near our churches, perhaps originally founded on a rational design of fitting the mind for religious exercises, by laying before it the most affecting proof of the uncertainty of life, makes it proper to exclude from our EPITAPHS all such allusions as are contrary to the doctrines for the propagation of which the churches are erected, and to the end for which those who peruse the monuments must be supposed to come thither. Nothing is, therefore, more ridiculous than to copy the *Roman* inscriptions, which were engraven on stones by the highway, and composed by those who generally reflected on mortality only to excite in themselves and others a quicker relish of pleasure, and a more luxurious enjoyment of life, and whose regard for the dead extended no farther than a wish that *the earth might be light upon them*.

All allusions to the heathen mythology are therefore absurd, and all regard for the senseless remains of a dead man impertinent and superstitious. One of the first distinctions of the primitive christians, was their neglect of bestowing garlands on the dead, in which they are very rationally defended by their apologist in *Minutius Felix*. "We lavish no flowers nor odours on the dead," says he, "because they have no sense of fragrance or of beauty." We profess to reverence the dead, not for their sake, but for our own. It is therefore always with indignation or contempt that I read the epitaph on

*Cowley*, a man, whose learning and poetry were his lowest merits.

*Aurea dum late volitant tua scripta per orbem  
Et fama eternum vivis, divine Poëta,  
Hic placida jaceas requie, custodiat urnam  
Cana, Fides, vigilant que perenni Lampade Musæ!  
Sit sacer ille locus, nec quis temerarius aufit  
Sacrilega turbare manu venerabile bustum,  
Intacti maneant, maneant per sæcula dulces.  
COWLEII cineres, serventque immobile Saxum.*

To pray that the ashes of a friend may lie undisturbed, and that the divinities that favoured him in his life, may watch for ever round him to preserve his tomb from violation, and drive sacrilege away, is only rational in him who believes the soul interested in the repose of the body, and the powers which he invokes for its protection able to preserve it. To censure such expressions as contrary to religion, or as remains of heathen superstition, would be too great a degree of severity. I condemn them only as un instructive and un affecting, as too ludicrous for reverence or grief, for christianity and a temple.

That the designs and decorations of monuments ought likewise to be formed with the same regard to the solemnity of the place, cannot be denied: it is an established principle, that all ornaments owe their beauty to their propriety. The same glitter of dress that adds graces to gaiety and youth, would make age and dignity contemptible. *Charon* with his boat is far from heightening the awful grandeur of the universal judgement, though drawn by *Angelo*

gelo himself; nor is it easy to imagine a greater absurdity than that of gracing the walls of a christian temple with the figure of *Mars* leading a hero to battle, or *Cupids* sporting round a virgin. The pope who defaced the statues of the deities at the tomb of *Sannazarius* is, in my opinion, more easily to be defended, than he that erected them.

It is for the same reason improper to address the EPITAPH to the passenger, a custom which an injudicious veneration for antiquity introduced again at the revival of letters, and which, among many others, *Passeratius* suffered to mislead him in his EPITAPH upon the heart of *Henry* king of *France*, who was stabbed by *Clement* the monk, which yet deserves to be inserted, for the sake of shewing how beautiful even improprieties may become, in the hands of a good writer.

*Adsta, Viator, et dole regum vices.  
Cor Regis isto conditur sub marmore,  
Qui jura Gallis, jura Sarmatis dedit.  
Teetus Cucullo hunc sustulit Sicarius.  
Abi, Viator, et dole regum vices.*

In the monkish ages, however ignorant and unpolished, the EPITAPHS were drawn up with far greater propriety than can be shewn in those which more enlightened times have produced.

*Orate pro Anima—miserrimi Peccatoris,*

was an address to the last degree striking and solemn, as it flowed naturally from the religion then believed, and awakened in the reader sentiments of benevolence for the deceased, and of concern for his  
own

own happiness. There was nothing trifling or ludicrous, nothing that did not tend to the noblest end, the propagation of piety and the increase of devotion.

It may seem very superfluous to lay it down as the first rule for writing EPITAPHS, that the name of the deceased is not to be omitted; nor should I have thought such a precept necessary, had not the practice of the greatest writers shewn, that it has not been sufficiently regarded. In most of the poetical EPITAPHS, the names for whom they were composed may be sought to no purpose, being only prefixed on the monument. To expose the absurdity of this omission, it is only necessary to ask how the EPITAPHS, which have outlived the stones on which they were inscribed, would have contributed to the information of posterity, had they wanted the names of those whom they celebrated.

In drawing the character of the deceased, there are no rules to be observed which do not equally relate to other compositions. The praise ought not to be general, because the mind is lost in the extent of any indefinite idea, and cannot be affected with what it cannot comprehend. When we hear only of a good or great man, we know not in what class to place him, nor have any notion of his character, distinct from that of a thousand others; his example can have no effect upon our conduct, as we have nothing remarkable or eminent to propose to our imitation. The EPITAPH composed by *Ennius* for his own tomb, has both the faults last mentioned,

*Nemo me decoret lacrumis, nec funera, fletu  
Faxit. Cur? volito vivu' per ora virum.*



The reader of this EPITAPH receives scarce any idea from it; he neither conceives any veneration for the man to whom it belongs, nor is instructed by what methods this boasted reputation is to be obtained.

Though a sepulchral inscription is professedly a panegyrick, and, therefore, not confined to historical impartiality, yet it ought always to be written with regard to truth. No man ought to be commended for virtues which he never possessed, but whoever is curious to know his faults must enquire after them in other places; the monuments of the dead are not intended to perpetuate the memory of crimes, but to exhibit patterns of virtue. On the tomb of *Mæcenæ*s, his luxury is not to be mentioned with his munificence, nor is the proscription to find a place on the monument of *Augustus*.

The best subject for EPITAPHS is private virtue; virtue exerted in the same circumstances in which the bulk of mankind are placed, and which, therefore, may admit of many imitators. He that has delivered his country from oppression, or freed the world from ignorance and error, can excite the emulation of a very small number; but he that has repelled the temptations of poverty, and disdained to free himself from distress at the expence of his virtue, may animate multitudes, by his example, to the same firmness of heart and steadiness of resolution.

Of this kind I cannot forbear the mention of two *Greek* inscriptions; one upon a man whose writings are well known, the other upon a person whose memory is preserved only in her EPITAPH,  
who

who both lived in slavery, the most calamitous estate in human life :

Ζωσιμη ἢ πρὶν εἶσα μούω τῷ ζώματι δαλη,  
Και τῷ ζώματι νυν εὐρεν ελευθερίην.

ZOSIMA, quæ solo fuit olim corpore serva,  
Corpore nunc etiam libera facta fuit.

“ ZOSIMA, who in her life could only have her body enslaved, now finds her body likewise fet at liberty.”

It is impossible to read this ΕΠΙΤΑΦΗ without being animated to bear the evils of life with constancy, and to support the dignity of human nature under the most pressing afflictions, both by the example of the heroine, whose grave we behold, and the prospect of that state in which, to use the language of the inspired writers, “ The poor cease from their labours, and the weary be at rest.” —

The other is upon *Epicætetus*, the *Stoick* philosopher :

Δαλῶ Ἐπικτῆτῶ γενομένη, και ζώμ' αναπηρῶ ;  
Και πενίην Ἰρῶ, και φιλῶ Ἀθανάτοισ.

Servus Epicætetus, mutilatus corpore vixi  
Pauperieque Irus, curaue prima Deum.

“ EPICÆTETUS, who lies here, was a slave and a cripple, poor as the beggar in the proverb, and the favourite of Heaven.”

In this distich is comprised the noblest panegyrick, and the most important instruction. We may learn from it, that virtue is impracticable in no condition,

446    ESSAY ON EPITAPHS.

condition, since *Epictetus* could recommend himself to the regard of Heaven, amidst the temptations of poverty and slavery: slavery, which has always been found so destructive to virtue, that in many languages a slave and a thief are expressed by the same word. And we may be likewise admonished by it, not to lay any stress on a man's outward circumstances, in making an estimate of his real value, since *Epictetus* the beggar, the cripple, and the slave, was the favourite of Heaven.



END OF THE NINTH VOLUME.

