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VAGARIES VINDICATED ;

A Poem.

By GEORGE COLMAN, the YOUNGER.

13t from Mr. Belt Smith.

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VAGARIES VINDICATED;

OR,

HYPOCRITICK HYPERCRITICKS.

Hartnell, Wine-Office Court, Fleet-Street.

VAGARIES VINDICATED;

OR,

HYPOCRITICK HYPERCRITICKS:

A POEM,

ADDRESS'D TO THE REVIEWERS,

BY

GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER.

‘ Nunc, quam rem vitio dent, quæso, animum advortite.’

* * * * *

desinant

Maledicere, malefacta ne noscant sua.’

TERENCE.

‘ I am mightily abuse’d.’

SHAKESPEARE.

‘ Now step I forth to whip Hypocrisy.’

IBID.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, & BROWN, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
AND R. W. ELLISTON, JOHN-STREET, BRISTOL.

1813.



ADVERTISEMENT.

AFTER having express'd, with perfect sincerity, (in my last trifling Poems, call'd *Poetical Vagaries*,) an utter contempt for **REVIEWERS**;---after having told the mighty **WE** of such Publications, that,

‘ If Porridge were my only cheer,

‘ Thy *Praise* or *Blame* must, both, appear

‘ Two tasteless Chips thrown into't;’—

after this,---it may appear inconsistent that I should have elaborated the following Couplets, to defend myself against

obscure and anonymous Censors, whom I profess to despise ;---against Bush-Fighters of the Press, who aim, in ambuscade, to wound, and exterminate, those of the literary Line whom they never fairly face.

But my reasons for this will be palpable to every one who may bestow upon me the patience to peruse the present Verses.

I intended to have detail'd many points in a Preface, which, I trust, are, now, sufficiently explain'd in a Poem ;---by which method, if I have produce'd weariness to the Reader in my Poetry, I have, proportionally, relieve'd him from it in my Prose ; and have certainly more con-

form'd with the desire of my Booksellers, while I have given more trouble to myself.

Since the publication of my *Vagaries*, Chance has thrown in my way only Four Reviews, which have (as they call it) *criticise'd* them ; they are, I am told, specimens of various others. THREE of them are (on the subject of my brains) very complimentary ; generally in the *wrong*, and, perhaps, never in the *right* place ; if I may be allow'd to suppose that I can boast a right place where true Criticism might bestow an eulogy.

I exult not in their commendations ; for I do not covet the praise of Shadows who are substantially stupid;---of venal pertness, nor of tasteless pedantry.

These three, however, pointedly condemn me for lines that tend to the inculcation of **IMMORALITY**.

The **FOURTH** (*the Quarterly Review*) damns me, *in toto*; as so *indecent* I ought not to be read, so *dull* I cannot be peruse'd; as an Author, probably, unheard of, but by those who know something of the low *Farce-Comedy* Writers of the present day; &c. &c. &c.

Enough, Reviewers! Good bye, ye *Things!*

17th June, 1813.

G. C.

VAGARIES VINDICATED;

OR,

Hypocritick Hypercriticks.

‘MONSTROUS!’ quoth Mrs. Foresight, ‘Sister
Frail,
‘Your Character is crack’d, and growing stale;’*

* In the Comedy of “*Love for Love*,” one Lady accuses another of incontinence; and the following sentences are extracted from their dialogue.

“*Mrs. Foresight.* To be seen with a man in a hackney-coach is scandalous.—You never were at the *World’s End*?—but, look you here, now, where did you lose this Gold Bodkin? Oh! Sister, Sister!

Mrs. Frail. Well, if you go to that, where did you find this Bodkin? Oh, Sister, Sister!—Sister every way

Mrs. Foresight. Oh, devil on’t! that I could not accuse her, *without betraying MYSELF!*”

See Act 2d. of the above-mention’d Comedy.

‘ Box’d in a hackney-coach, you glide from home,
 ‘ And (faugh!) to vile Intriguing-Houses roam.
 ‘ Nay answer to the Charge; ne’er stand aloof;
 ‘ If you prevaricate, behold a Proof.
 ‘ Where did you lose *this* BODKIN ?’ Frail replies,
 (The golden witness glittering in her eyes,)
 ‘ Where did I *lose* that Bodkin, do you say?
 ‘ Where did you *find* that Bodkin, Sister, pray?
 “ Ah, Sister, Sister,—Sister every way !”

CONGREVE, with ample Treasury of Wit,
 But ever fond of overdrawing it ;
 With Brain so spurr’d, that, as full speed it goes,
 Footmen chop logick, Blockheads speak *bon mots* :*
 So bright in style, like Phœbus scattering fog,
 He quite dispels dull *Nature’s* dialogue ;

* Tell me if Congreve’s Fools are Fools indeed?—POPE.

CONGREVE (how dimly, now, my Verse pourtrays
 Whate'er his Sun of Prose vouchsafes to blaze,) }
 The fragile Sisters, whom I cite, displays;
 Shews that backsliding, hypocritick elves,
 Arraigning others, *once* betray'd themselves.

But is the World, now, grown so wondrous pure
 That all are modest who appear demure?
 Have we no sinful Saint, since Congreve's days?
 No Wolf in a Sheep's clothing, but in Plays?
 And no *Tartuffe*?—his orthodoxy such
 As righteous men deem righteous over-much:
 No Serpent, that in mild Religion's bower,
 Spits ethick venom, under Virtue's flower?
 No Satan, who would Pandæmonium swell,
 And send e'en *Peccadillos* down to hell?
 Must we be told no Censor, in the nation,
 Fits Congreve's Fable?—come then, Application.

Come, HACKNEY'D CRITICK! shock'd at every
speck

In my o'er-censure'd *Lady of the Wreck* ;---

Pope of a prostituted Press ; who choose

To thunder Bulls against a trifling Muse ;

A *half* Tenth Leo,—sensual as he,

But no encourager of Poetry ;*

Come canting Chiron!† Mentor from a stew !

Venal Impartialist of a Review !

Whose Praise may equipoise'd with Censure seem,

Till pique or pay make either kick the beam ;

Whose tide of vinegar and treacle prose

Once in a Month, or Quarter, overflows ;

* LEO THE TENTH was a very debauch'd Pope, but a great Patron of the *Belles Lettres*.

† CHIRON, Instructor to the most celebrated characters of his age, was half a man, and *half a beast* :—this Hippo-Tutor must have been, no doubt, a fine *bit* of BLOOD. In what respect the modern *Reviewer* (who is only a *Hack*) may resemble the Centaur, famous men of the present day, if they ever attend to his lessons, may determine. Inglorious as I am, it would be presumption in me to think of ranking myself as a pupil.

Come, HACKNEY'D CRITICK! if my slip-shod rhimes,
 All my *Vagaries*, must be construed crimes,—
 If I have sinn'd,—while you my sins assail,
 Just as Dame Foresight lectures Mrs. Frail,—
 Stand forth!—and own, my supercilious friend,
 That You, like Me, have *been at the World's End*.

Whether a Highland Zoilus (whom spleen,
 And the *Huma-anities* of Aberdeen,
 Have raise'd, till proud Yahoo! the point is reach'd
 To be, by Booksellers, maintain'd, and *breech'd*,)
 You sentence pass on all men's prose, and verse,
 Who write in English, while you *think in Erse* ; *

* Here the Critick may retort a witty piece of dull matter of fact upon me, by observing that I was myself a Collegiate in the place I have mention'd.—Granted.—Some juvenile VAGARIES (not *poetical*) cause'd me to be transplanted, from the warmer regions of Christ-Church, in Oxford, to the cold latitude of King's College, in Old Aberdeen; where I vegetated one year, out of

Whether, a Magazine's bought Irish lad,
 You, now, Bull-Beef to your Potato add,
 And, born to some low name, before it tack
 The Pedigree,—implying *O*, or *Mac*,
 Which appellation, lofty though it be,
 Is whelm'd, at Press, beneath the loftier *We* ;—

three which I pass'd in North Britain. There (judging from a sample) I learn'd,—so I learn'd *something*,—to subscribe to the recorded opinion of (I think) Dr. Johnson; that, in regard to Scotch scholastick acquirement, 'every body may get a mouthful, but very few a meal.' There are two Towns of Aberdeen, the Old, and the New. In each of these there is a University; each *University* consisting of *ONE College!* and each College making a very inferior appearance in the eyes of an Oxonian, or a Cantab. To that of the Old Town, mere *Boys* pour in, from the Highlands, and other parts of the Country, and sojourn there for five months, annually; the remaining seven months being a period of uninterrupted vacation. They occupy almost unfurnish'd rooms, with bare walls; huddling two, three, and sometimes, perhaps, four in a bed. The decent accommodation of my Scotch servant, who had a room and bed to himself, exhibited a luxury which excited their envy. They commence with the very rudiments of Latin and Greek, proceed to Mathematicks, &c. and, in four years, those young gentlemen, having *begun and finish'd their education*, are created *Masters of Arts*, or even dubb'd *Doctors*, if they choose, at the age, perhaps, of sixteen or eighteen, without any intermediate Degree. The University of the New Town I understood to be conducted on the same principles. Let it be remember'd I have given an account of a state of things when I happen'd to see them. They may, since, have been amended: we live in an age of improvement; but it is to be doubted whether the advancement of an Aberdeen University has, of late years, been rapid.

Whether in Grub-Street's Seminary, first,
You studied, ere upon the town you burst,
Where Want (keen Tutor!) check'd your childish
 fears
Of losing those redundancies call'd ears ;
Train'd your apt nature sordidly to think,
And form'd you for a SWISS of pen and ink ;
Taught you, when *hire'd*, to side with Wit or Fool,
To turn a Statesman's, nay, an Author's Tool, }
And damn, or libel, all who write, or *Rule*,
Content with Infamy, so Cash be got,
Still blotting on, till all your Life's a blot ;
Whether,—but 'tis a work not soon despatch'd
To trace where Toads are spawn'd, and Snakes are
 hatch'd,
Therefore, stand forth, at once ! and let us try
Who is the greater Culprit,—YOU, or I.

'Tis true, with little care, and far less skill,
I pace a Poney on the bifork'd Hill,
And, when the bridle, heedlessly, is thrown
Upon *his* neck, I think not of my *own* ;
Think not, when he curvets, or makes a slip,
(And, oft, my minor Pegasus will trip,)
With what a headlong tumble I may go
Into a *Critical Morass*, below ;
Forget the modern mud Reviewers heap
About the bottom of the ancient steep,—
Where Dulness lurks, anonymous, in fog,
To smother Bards, in a Bœotian bog ;
Assisted in the despicable task
By Scotch or English Rancour, in a Mask.

I own, (though no apology from me,
Be due to a Reviewing Debauchee,

When, o'er my Hippocrene, as o'er my Wine,
Idling I sit, and gaily toast the Nine,
Neglectful of the Big-Wigs while I quaff,
Should Fancy tickle, I am prone to laugh:
Too prone, perhaps!—for, then, *some* roguery may
Beneath my soberer meaning's covert play;
And they who, through the better, seek the worse,
Spy strange allusions ambush'd in my verse.

'Tis then, in presence of audacious Man,
The Prude pretends to blush behind her fan;
Which only serves audacious Man to shew
How much a Prude, so quickly shock'd, must know;
How squeamish poison'd morals make her mind,
As Metal, oft, with Arsenick is refine'd:—

'Tis then, with dimple'd and unconscious face,
The Novice smiling sits, in native grace,

Nor dreams of ill; nor can a cause discern
Why practise'd Affectation's cheek should burn:
But, like a Nymph, who leaves the inland brook,
At Ocean's perilous expanse to look,
In Summer's heat, when even Zephyrs sleep,
And silver moon-beams slumber on the Deep,
She feels the surface yield a smooth delight,
While dangers, hid below, nor hurt, nor fright.

'Tis then the stiff Reviewer, seeming vex'd,
Turns to the Maid, and glosses on the text:
Warns her of what it's passages *may* mean;
'That is immoral!—this, downright obscene!'
Till, soon, the curious Fair, half-bursting swells;
'Obscene! what's *that*?' she asks;—and, then, he tells!

Thus, in Cross-Lanes, deface'd, and rotten, stands
A Road-Post, that had, once, a *pair* of hands;

But, one dropt off, the other leads astray,
Or points to nothing but the *foulest* way.

Thus—but the next Comparison has fled ;
So take an Anecdote ('tis short) instead.

A MATRON sour there was, a formal fool,
The Mistress of a Female Boarding-School ;
So much of this World's Wickedness she knew,
She made her pliant Pupils learn it too ;
Evil reveal'd, that they might evil shun,—
And, like a watchful Priestess of the Sun,
Enjoin'd her Virgins, morning, noon, and night,
To keep their lamp of Purity alight.

One day, she led them forth, as wont to do,
Round Walworth's rural brick-kilns, two by two,

And, as they march'd behind her awful back,
The merry chits maintain'd a half-quell'd clack.
Soon, to her Partner, as the prattle ran,
Spake a pubescent Damsel, in the van:—
' Miss! though it looks so fine, 'twill rain to-day;
' I know it; for I heard a Jack-Ass bray:'
The other, full as weather-wise, said, ' No,
' It won't, Miss! for the Cock is crowing so.'
The Priestess overheard;—with choler burn'd;
And, furious, on the Novices she turn'd.
' Children!' she said, ' it is a thousand shames
' To call such Creatures by their naughty names!
' Fy on such words!—I can't think where you got 'em!
' Call them,—a *Biddy*, and a *Jacky-Bottom*.'

The Lecture sank in either Virgin's mind;
They marvell'd much; *inquire'd*,—and, then, *combine'd*;

Gain'd new ideas, their discourse to rule,
And grew *quite learned*, ere they left the School.

Say, ye! who, dozing, and dogmatick, sit
Starch Drivellers over Morals, Science, Wit;
Whose page a mental brick-kiln walk supplies,
To give young thoughts unwholesome exercise;
Do ye not, *sage Old Women* as ye are!
Stop Frolick short, and go, yourselves, too far?
Deprave with preaching? and, corruptly nice,
Turn Schools of Virtue into Schools for Vice?—
My Slips, like underwoods, are scarce discern'd
In the mind's Paradise of the unlearn'd;
Your Tree of Knowledge brings Temptation in,
And all your Tyros pluck the fruit of Sin.

Why, HACKNEY'D CRITICK! to this doctrine lean,—
'Vice to be hated needs but to be seen?'

And, therefore, like a truly virtuous man,
Strive to see all the Vice that mortal can?
Why, zealously, *explain* all you espy,
As if Simplicity to edify?
Till, *taught* by YOU, the chaste find Vice has charms,
And sink, enamour'd, in the Circe's arms.

Such heathen tenets might *Lycurgus* suit,
Who deeming, like a decent proper brute,
That exhibition appetite destroys,
Drew forth his Spartan girls before the boys ;
And, that both sexes might be pure enough,
Made the young females dance, and sing, in buff.
Think you displaying all that passion fires
Tends to subdue irregular desires?
Think you it *cool'd* a stout Laconian lad
To see Laconian lasses sport unclad?

No,—* like your comments, Critick! 'twas the same
As oil, instead of water, on a flame.

Decide, then, Goddess! if a Goddess be
Yet hovering o'er us, name'd *Morality*,—

* Again the Critick may retort, by asking whether I have not divested my *LADY OF THE WRECK* of her apparel;

‘*Stript by the unrelenting Storm.*’

And what then? The most natural emotion of an unadulterated bosom, on reading the description of a half-drown'd Woman, is Pity; and, while Pity exists, although it, sometimes, ‘melts the soul to *Love*,’ does it's object rouse to *Licentiousness*?—But this is not the question here:—for I am arguing, *metaphorically*, against the system of better maintaining decorum, by stripping poetical sallies of poetical clothing; and comparing such *gross* absurdity to that of actually undressing Females, for the purpose of promoting Continence.

The denuded Personages of Poetry, Painting, and Sculpture, delineated with a sufficient observance of the delicacy of Art to display some of Nature's attractions, and to conceal others, are readily welcome'd into the most open Apartments of polish'd Society;—but *real* flesh and blood, approaching the same rooms, and in the same state, would experience a very different reception:—And when a Reviewer *lays bare* all that is hidden in the imagery of metre, it is much the same as his rushing into an Exhibition of Pictures, and Statues, and crying out,—‘Young Ladies, and Gentlemen! don't look at that Apollo, and this Venus!—you cannot see half the Vice that belongs to them:—but come with me, and I will convince you of all, by shewing you the *original living Subjects*, in their *shameful state of nakedness*, as they sat to the Artists, who have so *alter'd* them.’

Full sure there is! for daily at her shrine
I see some *Men of Good* their heads incline,
And, every day, see sundry *Men of Ill*
Bow, hypocritically, lower still,—
Decide—and, ere the sentence you unfold,
Bid Cheerfulness the scales of Justice hold,—
Who harms the worst, (if any harm *I* do,)
I, or my whining friend of a Review;
Which vitiates most the Female, and the Youth,
My muffle'd Meaning, or his naked Truth.

But, were this settle'd, are my trials o'er?
Alas! I am but where I was before!
One cause despatch'd, another Action lies,
And Sins allege'd, on Sins allege'd, arise;—
For Critick Scribes the rule of thrift persue,
As pettifogging *Qui Tam* Lawyers do;

Impeach to live, and prosecute a Bard,
Not for the publick welfare, but reward.

Proceed, Mock Judges ! earn your vile support
Like low Informers, in the Muses' Court ;
Rake the Fanatick's code, for dormant law,
To prove the Poet's *License* has a flaw ;
And, by amercements on each Author's head,
Eat (since your Readers pay) your dirty bread.
Rejoice, too, that this difference all confess
Between the Offal of the Law and Press,—
You for your unprove'd charges pelf obtain,
While They can, only, by *convicting* gain ;
Still, one sure parallel 'twixt either tribe
Is—hushing up proceedings for a Bribe.

Be bribe'd, then, by the meanly rich;—but I
Too proud to court, and all too poor to buy

That dear, at lowest price,—that worthless *Thing*,
A Pseudo-Literary Underling ;
I—who should think, e'en Millions could I raise,
A Mite too much to squander for his Praise,
A Farthing, by instalments paid, profuse,
Nay, worse than waste, to silence his Abuse,—
I laugh, if at my Intellect, alone,
His bolt (soon shot !) the feeble Jove has thrown ;
And, now and then, by an irreverent flout,
Provoke the puny storm he patters out :

But when, in SLANDER's ink, he showers a *rant*,
Accompanied with *heavy* gales of *Cant* ;
Howls whirlwinds, less upon my Muse than Me,
To root me from the pale of Decency ;
Flashes dull lightning, on a double plan,
To strike the Poet, and to blast the Man!—

Then,—then, as now,—I rise, in just disdain,
 (When the Hire'd PUFFER blows a *Hurricane*,)
 To keep foul weather out, and bar my doors,
 While DEFAMATION's Tempest round me roars.

“ Who steals *my* purse steals trash ;”—my Prose and
 Verse,

Perhaps, may be as trashy as my purse ;
 But, if my scenick Sketches have beguile'd
 Ingenuous list'ners, till they wept or smile'd,
 If my rude numbers e'er achieve'd the power
 To dissipate the Spleen, for half an hour,
 'Twas hope'd new efforts would some gain impart,
 And sooth a harmless vanity of heart.

Take these, Reviewers !—Hopes of future gain,
 Of fresh success, to make me freshly vain ,
 Wrest from me these,—and on the pillage thrive ;
 (Tis reckon'd fair in the foul trade *You* drive ;)

The Town's applause, if any I might claim,
 "Filch" when you *can*,—but leave me "my *good*
name."

Heavens! is that "jewel of my soul" to fall
 Into men's hands who have NO NAMES at all?
 No,—Strip my brains of credit as they will,
 At least, my CHARACTER they shall not kill ;—
 Nor, as Freebooters *in disguise* will do,
 Unsatisfied with Robbing, *murder* too.

Then once again, SIR HACK! stand forward, pray;
 Repeat your second Charge; what is it? Say!
 Oh, heinous Sin!—from what am I exempt?
 I—' *write to bring the CLERGY in contempt!**
 Contempt! I'll worship, next, if this be true,
 That Calf who writes the Quarterly Review.

* So says the *Hired Critick* of the Quarterly Review; to whom the Author presents his Compliments, and has the dishonour of answering him.

Hail to the CLOTH ! which, with unholy shears,
 The Tailor subdivides for Pulpiteers.
 'Tis true, no inch of Righteousness he sells,
 When clipping off canonick yards, and ells ;
 Certain, the sober Raiment, and the Band,
 But typify the Pastors of our Land ;
 Still, (since to mark the Function 'tis design'd)
 A piece of mere Prunello sways the mind ;
 And gives to Man, through relative effect,
 A Bill at Sight upon Mankind's respect :—
 'Tis *honour'd*, though Experience understands
 Good Bills are, sometimes, found in knavish hands.*

Hail, then, the *Cloth* !—and hail, thrice hail, to those
 Whose Lives perform the promise of their Clothes!

* POPE appears to shew no respect whatever to the externals of Clergymen. He says, with seeming contempt for their dress,

'Worth makes the Men, and want of it the Fellow,'

'The rest is all but Leather or Prunello.'

Who, meek though mitre'd, steadfast though they rise,
 Add dignity to Lawn that dignifies ;
 Or who, Want's troublous torrent doom'd to stem,
 Still grace the Gown which, darn'd, still graces them.

Thrice hail to These !—but, *good* REVIEWER, hold !
 Nor all that glitters force on us for gold.
 Why think the shell the kernel ? why profess
 That a sound Parson is a Parson's Dress ?
 You might as well pronounce upon the Wine
 A Tavern yields, by looking at the Sign.—
 Must every limb be truly sanctified
 Which lawn, or cambrick, or prunello hide ?
 Does History present to our research
 No Churchmen who were Scandals to the Church ?
 O'er nothing wanton can a Cassock float ?
 Ordain as much, then, for a Petticoat ;

One general notion to *that* garb annex,
And vindicate the ways of all the Sex :
For grosser Laymen look on Womankind
As Beings, like the Priesthood, more refine'd,
And deem a Woman, and a Priest, no doubt,
Alike unspotted, till alike found out.

But how must indignation doubly boil
When Priests our reverence for their Cloth would
 spoil !—

If an Impostor,—worst of Satan's leaven !—
Clad in the worldly livery of HEAVEN,
Should drink, wench, gamble, bully, flatter, lie,
Commit all crimes,—including *Simony*,—
Must we not, then, to prove our zeal complete,
The more we love the ORDER, loath the CHEAT ?

The Cheat!—and are there such?—Strange things,
 alas!

Have, among Holy Shepherds, come to pass!
 Some, to the Wolf abandoning their Flocks,
 Have broke their necks by following the Fox;
 Some have admire'd, as sundry folks opine,
 Their Patrons' *Tables*, Moses! more than thine;
 Others—but, oh, Reviewer! groan and pray!
 The Reverend Doctor D—dd was *hang'd*, one day!
 He *only* forge'd; for MURDER H—ckm—n died,
 But strove to chouse Jack Ketch, by SUICIDE.*
 Wretched Divines! whose Office 'twas to jog
 Our memories to obey the Decalogue;—
 The veriest Urchin, old enough to look
 Into a Writing-Master's Copy-Book,

* By attempting to destroy himself with the butt-end of the pistol which he had discharge'd, in
 perpetrating the crime for which he suffer'd.

Teaching these *Teachers*, might have quoted, then,
 ‘ Command your *Passions*,’ and—‘ Command your *Pen*.’*

Hence let us learn, be Callings what they may,
 Frailty, and Crime, *will* mix with mortal clay ;
 And Men think Men within the Devil’s reach,
 Whether in Pulpits or Reviews they preach.
 Hope you the World will more confiding grow
 For all your bilious canting, Critick ? No !
 No,—though in every Parish there exists
 A myriad, now, of sucking Methodists. †

* The fate of the two unhappy men, abovemention’d, is fresh in memory :—and, although there can be no indelicacy in alluding to facts so notorious, and upon record, in the Newgate Calendars, and Publick Journals, they are only introduce’d here, as happening to be very strong illustrations of the argument.

† The people call’d *Methodists* (a kind of modern Puritans) are, apparently, incline’d to be very intolerant towards their Tolerators. The doctrine of this overgrown Sect is *FAITH without good WORKS* :—a Faith (the transition from no good to *bad* being so easy that it is, at first, almost imperceptible,) inducing the swarm of it’s lower adherents to combine canting and knavery ; and to make the Gallows a short passage to Heaven. To rouse ignorant Enthusiasts to the commission of *Arson*, (for which, of course, they would be hang’d,) thanks to God were return’d,

Worst may *seem* best ;—why You,—who rail at Me,
 As destitute of Christian decency,—
 E'en You, 'tis probable, Reviewer! You
 May be a circumcised Turk, or Jew.

Yet more ;—it seems, the Church's Chief I call
 A name much too familiar.*—Bless us all !—
 Are harmless names, when Truth gives Fancy flight,
 So *very* graceless in His Grace's sight ?
 Not so; a savage Hierarchy fled,
 Sense wakes, and ' Rigour, now, is gone to bed.'†

it is said, in a Methodist Chapel, for the late destruction, by Fire, of a London Theatre, acting under a Royal Patent. This anecdote is given on report, but it is presume'd there would be but little difficulty in establishing the fact. Be this as it may, the instances of the Methodists asserting, in print, that '*all* who defend the Stage defend Sin,' are innumerable. Is such contumacy long to be endure'd, even by the mildest Government? Are men, dissenting from the regular Church, to be suffer'd to inculcate that, either the Constitution encourages *abomination*, or that the King upholds it, in defiance of the Constitution?

* A *Soul-Mender*.—See *Poetical Vagaries*, and the vulgar unqualified abuse of them in the *Quarterly Review*.

† MILTON.—See *A Mask presented at Ludlow Castle*.

Prelates, in rude, intolerant, times of old,
 Were, like Cathedrals, gloomy, dull, and cold:—
 Their stomachs proud, their ordinance severe,
 And nought Episcopal if not austere ;
 The Ring-Doves of the Altar plume'd their wings
 To hover Kites o'er Governments, and Kings.*
 'Twas then the Devotee his journey trod
 In darkness, and in terror, tow'rd his God,
 While the drear Clergy, fulminant in ire,
 Flash'd, through his bigot Midnight, threat'ning fire :
 Thus on he fare'd,—and not a glimpse was given
 To guide him, save when he was tempest-driven.

* In the late Dr. PERCY'S '*Reliques of Ancient Poetry*' we are inform'd of an old black-letter Play, entitle'd *Every Man*, publish'd in the time of Henry the Eighth; and the following Specimen is extracted from the Dramatist's 'high encomiums on the Priesthood :'

' *There is no emperour, kynge, duke, ne baron,*
 ' *That of God hath commissyon,*
 ' *As hath the leest Preest in the world beynge.*'

But Churchmen, now, to set the Wanderer right,
 From cheerful skies impart celestial light ;
 Illumine not the path we should pursue
 By Lightning,—but with Sunshine gild the view.
 And sweet the prospect where Religion scorns
 To make the way to Heaven a way of Thorns,
 To think that Pilgrims miss the blest abode,
 Because a Primrose springs beside the road.*

Observe how mild each Dignitary stands !
 They *smile*,—although a Crosier decks their hands ;

* STERNE thought that Religion might be mix'd even with a *Dance*.—

————— ' the old man, as soon as the dance ended, said that this was their constant way ;
 ' and that all his life-long, he had made it a rule, after supper was over, to dance and rejoice ;
 ' believing, he said, that a cheerful and contented mind was the best sort of thanks to Heaven that
 ' an illiterate peasant could pay.' —————

————— ' Or a *learned prelate* either, said I.' —————

See *Sentimental Journey*.

Draw with it's Crook the docile to their heart,
 And grieve whene'er it's Point inflicts a smart.*
 Think you such men would clerick thunder raise,
 And curse, and ban me, for a trivial Phrase?
 Would drag me o'er ecclesiastick coals,
 For saying that a Primate *mends our souls?*
 A Primate!—who, we trust, in fervour's tone,
 Calls, daily, upon HEAVEN to *mend his own.*

Go where the Metropolitan is found,
 With all his liberal Suffragans around ;
 Say this,—‘ a wicked Poet (horrid case!)’
 ‘ Has call'd you a SOUL-MENDER, please your
 Grace !’—
 His Grace's gravity a shock receives,
 While Bishops titter in their ample sleeves.

* The Bishop's Crosier is crooked at one end, and pointed at the other ; as emblematick of
drawing the tractable, and *goading* the refractory, to the performance of their religious duties.
 it is thus mention'd in the latin hexameter :

‘ Curca trahit mites, pars pungit acuta rebelles.

To moral Quacks no Regulars attend ;
 Then pious, prim Informer, whither wend ?
 To Fools, Fanaticks, or to whom you will ;
 To a *Hire'd Critick*, or to *R—wl—d H—ll*.*

If Diocesans ne'er my rhimes resent,
 Nor take offence before offence is meant,
 The holy Subalterns will pardon, sure,
 A Poet who describes a Parson poor.
 Pinch'd Worthies!—could a Voice so weak as mine
 Breathe Fortunes for each indigent Divine,
 From fictious Verse could stubborn Fact ensue,
 You should be affluent,—and Poets, too !

No more should Curates bump their Sunday rounds,
 Of Twenty miles,† for Twenty annual Pounds,

* Proprietor of a Methodist Chapel, and a Preacher there of great notoriety.

† This is often the case when Curates have to attend two or three Parishes.

On Nags that make it doubtful which one sees,
Them, or the Riders, oftenest on their knees ;
No longer should distress repentance rouse,
For having cleave'd to a prolifick Spouse ;
Nor should the needy Preacher, pondering o'er
Love's lispig Pledges, check his chance of more ;
And weigh, with rueful face, and lengthen'd chin,
His goings out against his comings in.

Then, too, would I, poetick drudgery done,
Taste the dull joys of dot and carry one ;
Would dare inspect Accounts ; and, bolder still,
Tax *items* in a ticking Tradesman's bill ;
Hear the tame insolence, without a shock,
Of a stiff Dun's loud, sullen, single knock ;
First, by admission given without delay,
Surprise him,—then astonish him with pay.

But wherefore rear these Castles in the Skies?
 Gay Dreams!—that fade when Reason opes her eyes.
 Bid Reason wake, then!—what does she behold?
 A Curate, who, ‘in conscious virtue bold,’
 Can boast a scanty board, a creaking bed,
 Nine Small Ones living, and Small-Beer that’s dead,
 A Sweeting, sour’d by Care, to patch his gown,
 And Bible, with the leaves in JOB turn’d down.—
 A frost-nipt Poet, who, in thin attire,
 Invokes a frigid Muse to lend him fire,
 Who, when his Hat he puts upon his pate,
 Claps a Ring-Fence around his whole Estate,*
 And will, when his embarrassments are o’er
 Have paid his Debt of Nature, and no more.

* This has so long been the case with many Poets that it would be strange if the thought were original. FARQUHAR, in ‘*The Picture*’ of himself, says,—‘I have very little Estate but what lies under the circumference of my hat; and should I by mischance come to lose my head, I should not be worth a groat.’—See his *Poems and Letters*.

Well,—if the Bard and Poet, both, have miss'd
The road to Riches,—still, they both exist ;
' And is *Existence* all !—if we respire,
' Is that enough ?' some Blockhead will inquire.
Why what is Life ?—Thou Fool of Discontent !
Stretch thy weak vision to yon Firmament ;
View, there, the UNIVERSE'S Systems roll,
Our ponderous Globe an atom 'midst the whole ;
View the vast Orbs of the stupendous plan
As grains of dust beneath their MAKER'S span !
And shall a whimpering Mortal, crawling here,
Mean as one maggot in a Cheese's sphere,
Complain that He, forsooth ! must take his share
Of ills, and ' groan, and sweat, and fardles bear ?'
Bear them *how long* ?—So brief our date of breath,
That cradle'd Infancy seems rock'd by Death.

Childhood has childish grief ; Youth fever'd joy ;
Age feels the World, which still it clings to, cloy ;
In every Station, every Stage of Life,
All, more or less, meet woe, disgust, and strife.
Then, who are least unhappy ?—e'en the Wise,
Who, under pressure, can philosophize ;
Who sail to Dissolution's destine'd port,
Smiling at Storms they're certain must be short.

Say by what rules Philosophers are made.
PARSONS and POETS *should* be so, by *trade*.
True Christian Preachers still keep Heaven in view,
So, doubtless, all true Christian Poets, too ;
By *those* the awful Word of GOD is read,
By *these* his Works admire'd, each step they tread ;
Through different paths one point of Mind they reach,
Till they entwine reflections, each with each ;

Each, on each other's Studies led to look,
Blend Nature's pages with the Sacred Book ;*
Each thro' the present Time's dark fore-ground, see
A bright perspective in Eternity :
Hence Firmness springs ; hence Resignation's birth ;
While hope of Bliss in Heaven brings Calm on earth.—
Since, then, your fates, neglected Priest, and Bard !
Few friends e'er soften, though all own them hard,
Resign'd, and cheerful, in your wants remain,
And pity Discontent that drinks Champaign ;
Serenely write and sit, or preach and ride,
Then rise to wealth,—when *Dreams* are verified.

Mean time, the Sons of Education find
A narrow Stipend narrows not the mind.

* The Bible, meaning (according to it's Greek derivation) THE BOOK, is so call'd by way of eminence.

Conscious that Moral Worth excels the Trash,
Which various knaves accumulate, call'd Cash ;
Despising Ruffians, who, alone, 'tis sure,
Affront the Liberal for being Poor ;
Free from the touchiness of vulgar pride,
They laugh when Mirth presents Want's comick side ;
And Tales of ludicrous Distress run o'er,
Too dignified, too polish'd, to be sore.

No well-meant railleries dissention make
Twixt those with little else to give or take ;
No sufferer, under adverse Fortune's yoke,
Feels angry at a fellow-sufferer's joke ;
No spleen from light *Vagaries* will arise,—
No jests mean insult where men sympathize.

But the REVIEWER cometh, nothing loth !—
Priest, Poet,—oh ! he wishes well to both !

And strives to set, the moment he appears,
The Parson and the Poet by the ears.—
So, in this specious World, too oft we see
A Busy-Body, in a family,
Meddling between a merry Man and Wife,
Till the pert puppy breeds domestick strife.

Tell me, did FIELDING dip his powerful pen
In gall, to stigmatize all Clergymen?
Although he shews their need,—nay, shews, to boot,
This Priest a Drunkard, that a selfish Brute,
Who, in his senses, ever understood
He aim'd at writing down the Brotherhood?
Ye Novel-Readers!—such as relish most
Plain Nature's feast, unpepper'd with a Ghost,
Tell me how many Parsons there may be
In JOSEPH ANDREWS's adventures;—Three.

The *first**—the choicest Punch-Maker, by far,
Of Customers behind the *Dragon's* bar ;
Who, ere the Bowl's replenish'd, reels up stairs,
And, o'er a wretch deem'd dying, hiccups prayers;
While no one ventures, though impatience burns,
To squeeze the Oranges till he returns.

The *Second*,†—witless in the bashful art
That hides a sulky savageness of heart,
Who, though a multitude of sins had He,
Would scorn to cover them with Charity;—
A bare decorum, and his Cure, to keep,
Sure as the Sabbath comes, attends his Sheep ;
On other days, more Farmer than Divine,
He, most religiously, attends his Swine ;

* Parson Trulliber.

† Parson Barnabas.

Drives to the Fair fat Porkers that he feeds,—
A much more genuine Hog than all he breeds.

The *Third*,—oh, FIELDING! *there*, thy Master-Hand
Will Truth deny? can Gravity withstand?
There Genius, Observation by his side,
Has taught us how to *sport*, yet not *deride*;
There the keen Artist, the poor Churchman's Friend,
Bids Laughter, Moral, and Religion, blend.

Seek contrarities in Man combine'd :
Book-knowledge, with no knowledge of Mankind ;
Good parts, good nature, open to the shaft
Of worldly Ill, for want of worldly Craft ;
Virtue so pure it ne'er suspects Deceit,
Though, every hour, it suffers by a Cheat ;
Simplicity of Soul that claims respect,
But leaves its Owner threadbare, in neglect ;

Grave Character in situations thrown
That playful Comedy declares her own ;
Starve'd Hospitality beneath a hut,
And Learning made rich Ignorance's Butt;—
Seek, in one Person mix'd, the traits that move,
At once, our pity, mirth, esteem, and love ;
Seek these, and more, where Wit displays them best,
And honest PARSON ADAMS stands confest.
As from Jove's head the mythologick Dame,
Full grown, and all mature, Minerva came,
So *Adams* sprang, to offer Taste a treat,
From Fielding's brain, a *Character* complete.

And though the Curate meets with many a rub ;
Is souse'd, alas ! into a water-tub,
By Witlings, who in *practick waggery* deal,
To prove they know not how to joke, nor feel ;

Though, wigless, with his Cassock torn, he bounds,
 From some facetious Squire's encourage'd hounds,
 Hounds who their Keeper, oft, in sense surpass,
 And, if they eat him up, would eat an Ass ;
 Does, then, the good man's Ducking, Candour, say !
 His, or his Order's, virtues wash away ?
 Or does his Hunting, when our hearts we search,
 Hunt down respect for Him, and all the Church ?
 If so, then Fielding, doubtless, would infer
 Scandal by *Barnabas*, and *Trulliber* ;
 Infer the reverend Clergy's weightiest work
 Consists—in making Punch, and fattening Pork.*

* In what spirit *Fielding* drew the Character of *Parson Adams* his Preface to *Joseph Andrews* may testify ;—and thence may be gather'd his general sentiments towards the Clergy.—He writes thus :—“ And here I solemnly protest I have no intention to vilify or asperse any one.—As to the character of *Adams*—It is design'd a character of perfect simplicity ; and as the goodness of his heart will recommend him to the good-nature'd, so I hope it will excuse me to the gentlemen of his cloth ; for whom, *while they are worthy* of their sacred order, no man can possibly have a greater respect. They will, therefore, excuse me, notwithstanding *the low adventures* in which he is engage'd, that I have made him a Clergyman.”

Departed GOLDSMITH ! snatch'd, by ruthless Time,
 From History, Philosophy, and Rhime ;
 To touch most points of Literature born,
 And every point, which thou hast touch'd, adorn ;
 Master of Passions,—Master mild, though strong,—
 Which to our human joys, or griefs, belong ;
 In Talent vigorous, vivid, versatile ;
 Impressive, brilliant, beautiful in Style ;*

* The above lines are a paraphractical imitation of a part of *Doctor Johnson's* Latin Epitaph on the worthy *Goldsmith* :—

" OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,
 POETÆ, PHYSICI, HISTORICI,
 QUI NULLUM FERE SCRIBENDI GENUS
 NON TETIGIT,
 NULLUM QUOD TETIGIT NON ORNAVIT:
 SIVE RISUS ESSENT MOVENDI,
 SIVE LACRIMÆ,
 AFFECTUUM POTENS ET LENIS DOMINATOR:
 INGENIO SUBLIMIS, VIVIDUS, VERSATILIS,
 ORATIONE GRANDIS, NITIDUS, VENUSTUS:"
 &c. &c. &c.

However Johnson might have consider'd, in zeal for the memory of his departed friend, the words *Sublimis*, and *Grandis*, as applicable to his qualities, such epithets do not exactly appear to characterise Goldsmith's turn of thought, nor style of writing. They are omitted in the present humble imitation, and other expressions substituted,—certainly with no intention of appearing presumptuous, by deviating from the sense of the gigantick Samuel Johnson, or derogating from the literary beauties of the fascinating Oliver Goldsmith.

Thou, who hast, sweetly, Wakefield's Vicar shewn,
 With heart, and fortunes, not unlike thy own;
 With native goodness, in it's simplest dress,
 And Erudition struggling with Distress :
 Thou, who hast made him bring, with matchless grace,
 A kind of April in the Reader's face,
 Made us lament his checker'd sorrows,—while
 We dart through tears the sunshine of a smile;
 Didst thou think fit our interests to engage
 In the droll shifts of his poor Parsonage?
 Hast thou thy Vicar represented (though
 In fewer comick lights than shades of woe)
 A kindred subject, guileless, green, and bland,
 To walk near Adams, though not hand in hand?—
 Didst thou do this?—and will Reviewers say,
 According to the canting of the day,
 This to *Contempt of Clergy* leads the way?

Why let them say it, dolts!—and, having said,
 Let thy *Deserted Village*, then, be read;
 Let them peruse thy Parson *there*,—each line
 That speaks *his* piety proclaiming *thine*,—
 And, if confusion *can* their faces flush,
 Confess how thou hast made him charm,—and blush!*

With such admire'd Authorities in view,
 With many in reserve,—some *Parsons*, too!
 If *I* have dare'd some airy jests to pass,
 The humblest Rhimer, in the humblest class;—

* Goldsmith dedicated his '*Traveller*' to his Brother,—a poor Parson;—to whom he says,—
 'It will, also, throw a light upon many parts of it, (*the Poem*) when the Reader understands
 that it is address'd to a man, who, despising Fame and Fortune, has retire'd early to Happiness
 and Obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.—I now perceive, my dear brother, the
 wisdom of your humble choice. You have enter'd upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great
 and the labourers are but few; while you have left the field of Ambition, where the labourers are
 many, and the harvest not worth carrying away.'—

His reverence for clerical poverty is evident enough; but he has not scruple'd to give various
 touches of the ludicrous to *Parson Primrose*.

So careless, I scarce venture to be grave
In Verse, except my *Character* to save,
And, even then, though gravely I begin,¹
Still various idle fancies *will* creep in,—
If, following the flights I cannot reach,
I bungle tasks my happier Masters teach,
And, Heaven, help us! never meaning hurt,
Produce a Priest so poor he wants a Shirt;*
Must I be dragg'd before some scribbling *Hack*,
With FIELDING and with GOLDSMITH at my back,
And bend to the unknown and jobbing Drudge,
The *Phantom* THING that calls itself my Judge,
A Shadow in judicial Masquerade,
That makes keen Criticism, clumsy *Trade*?
No,—the light Muse, that's privilege'd to sport,
Disdains his venal, puritanick Court!

* See *Two Parsons, or the Tale of a Shirt*, in *Poetical Vagaries*.

Thence I appeal, for Judgement on my Pen,
To *moral* but *unbuckram'd* GENTLEMEN:
To their decision, be it what it may,
I bow respectful; yet, respectful, say,
Religious tenets, to my latest breath,
Such as I have I'll keep, and smile at death;
March gaily down my slope of Life, and sing
GOD prosper long OLD ENGLAND'S CHURCH, AND
KING!

Here might I close,—here rest, on Common Sense,
Against Reviewers' Charges, my Defence;
Charges calumnious Dulness will prefer,
To make Contempt become it's Answerer.
But, courteous Reader! who hast deign'd to hear,
Thus far, my pleadings, with a patient ear,
Let me subjoin (as my superiors do)
To my harangue an *after-word* or two.

When in the CHAPEL of that Saint whose bones
 Were pelted, till he *fell asleep*, by Stones ;*—
 Where Britons, now, although they do not kill,
 Unmercifully pelt each other, still ;
 And, still, while very many of them pelt,
 A great propensity to sleep is felt ;—
 When we behold some Rhetorician, there,
 Arise, and solemnly address *the Chair* ;—
 Perhaps, some flaming Patriot, choice full bad
 Of Westminster, when Westminster runs mad ;†

* *St. Stephen's Chapel* ; i. e. the *House of Commons*.—Although STEPHEN was stone'd to death, our English version of the New Testament relates the fact in words which can, scarcely, make it clear to the comprehension of many religious honest people, who understand nothing of tropes and figures. It tells us that when the Jews murder'd the Saint, he exclaim'd—" Lord ! lay not this to their Charge ;" ' And when he had said this *he fell asleep*.'—Literal translations of the stupid are, sometimes, productive of mischief to the ignorant. They have done no harm, indeed, in the story of St. Stephen ;—but not so in the case of the Doctor's prescription for a lying-in woman :—the Apothecary rendering '*pro re natâ*,' word for word, label'd the Draught ' to be taken by *the thing born*.' It was administer'd to the *Child* instead of the Mother ;—and the infant was kill'd.

† Did it ever run mad ?—if so, let the reader of research determine the era.

Perhaps, some Borough's modern Tully, sent,
 By rotten Votes, unripe to Parliament;
 Or some Demosthenes, *return'd* to shine
 Grand Representative of Eight or Nine;*—
 When there, *upon his legs*, we hear him state
 How measures must, if *carried*, *militate*;
 That the main Question, which should be distinct,
 Right Honourable Gentlemen have *blink'd*;
 That nothing *relevant*† he can espy,
 Broach'd by the gallant General *in his eye*;

* Sometimes of a less number.—'Near it is a farm-house, and that is all which is left of this eminent city; yet this is call'd the Borough of *Old Sarum*, and sends two Members to Parliament, who are chosen by proprietors of certain lands. *Whom* these Members can justly say *they represent* would, however, be hard for them to answer.'

Tour through Great Britain, by Defoe, and Richardson.

† For WALKER'S opinion of the introduction of '*relevant*' and '*irrelevant*,' into Parliament, see his *Pronouncing Dictionary*. Under these words he talks of '*the coinage of the House of Commons*;' and of '*the annual productions of the House of Commons, where new words, and money Bills, naturally originate*.'

The Reader need, scarcely, be told that, the several words and phrases, mark'd in *Italicks*, in this part of the text, are the coinage of that House.

That many things he deeply must deplore,
Fall'n from the Noble Lord upon the Floor ;
That no one clearly has the Bill define'd,
Before him, but his Learned Friend behind ;—
When thus, impressively, he has declaim'd,
Within that House for Oratory fame'd,
That Language-Mint, which stamps, howe'er absurd,
A currency on many a Phrase, and Word ;
Then down he sits, —but does he long remain
In silence ? —no ; —he *rises to explain.*

Thus I, —if lowly Versifiers may
Persue the mighty senatorial way,
But with no arrogant attempt to reach
Such technical *sublimity* of Speech, —
Presume to add, my chief discussion o'er,
A few explanatory periods more.

Once more, then, to my *first* imputed crime,—
Those *Double Meanings** that disgrace my rhyme.
Why, all who understand them know no more
Of evil than they understood before ;
And all who do not are no wiser grown,
Would Criticks let the simple souls alone.
But grant that Innocents,—yet shew the ground,
Name the Utopian Soil where they are found,
Where Youth, in all the *broadest* phrases mean,
Bursts not to Knowledge before warm Eighteen,—
Grant they derive, without one Note annex'd,
Their naughty cunning from my doubtful Text ;
If such quick Geniuses there, haply, be,
And I have hurt them, say—in what degree ?
'Tis not the laugh-exciting *Equivoque*,
The salt allusion, no nor broader joke,

* The *Quarterly Review* asserts that I have, sometimes, only *Single Meanings*,—and those very bad ones.—Where are they to be found ?

That deeply injures innocence ;—the *droll*
No *passion* moves, nor *penetrates the Soul*.
No,—turn for this to Twickenham's *moral* Bard ;
Read o'er his *Eloise to Abelard* ;*
Which the ripe Maid, perusing in her bed,
Pores over, till the taper's light has fled,
And then, with soft, luxurious thoughts imprest,
To panting slumber sinks,—‘ and dreams the rest !’

Turn,—but, oh ! ‘ what a falling off !’—yet turn
To *modern Novelists*,—there ‘ *Read, and Burn,*’—
Where ardent minds are gravely led a dance
Through the lewd maze of amorous Romance ;
Turn to the Bardling who, in afternoons,
Warbles his publish'd lays to melting tunes ;

* Numerous celebrated Poets might be thus produce'd, in addition to *Pope*, the *Moralist*.

Trolls, while she languishes, his lines to Miss,
 Penn'd to entrance all Boarding-Schools in bliss ;
 And taints the female bosom,—little Lord
 Of luscious Love-Songs, and a Harpsichord:
 Here, Censurer, turn ; and pardon trivial sins
 Of Poetry's *Vagaries*, and *Broad Grins*.



Yet if my Muse, too sportive in her plan,
 Startle the moral *unaffected* man,
 (Who, leniently, will, oft, allow a joke,
 Which a Reviewing Methodist would choke,)
 To Him, chastise'd, I bow ; my freaks give o'er
 And contrite tell him—I will sin no more ;
 Sure, if my errors in contrition end,
 Contrition makes that Candid Man my Friend.

FINIS.













