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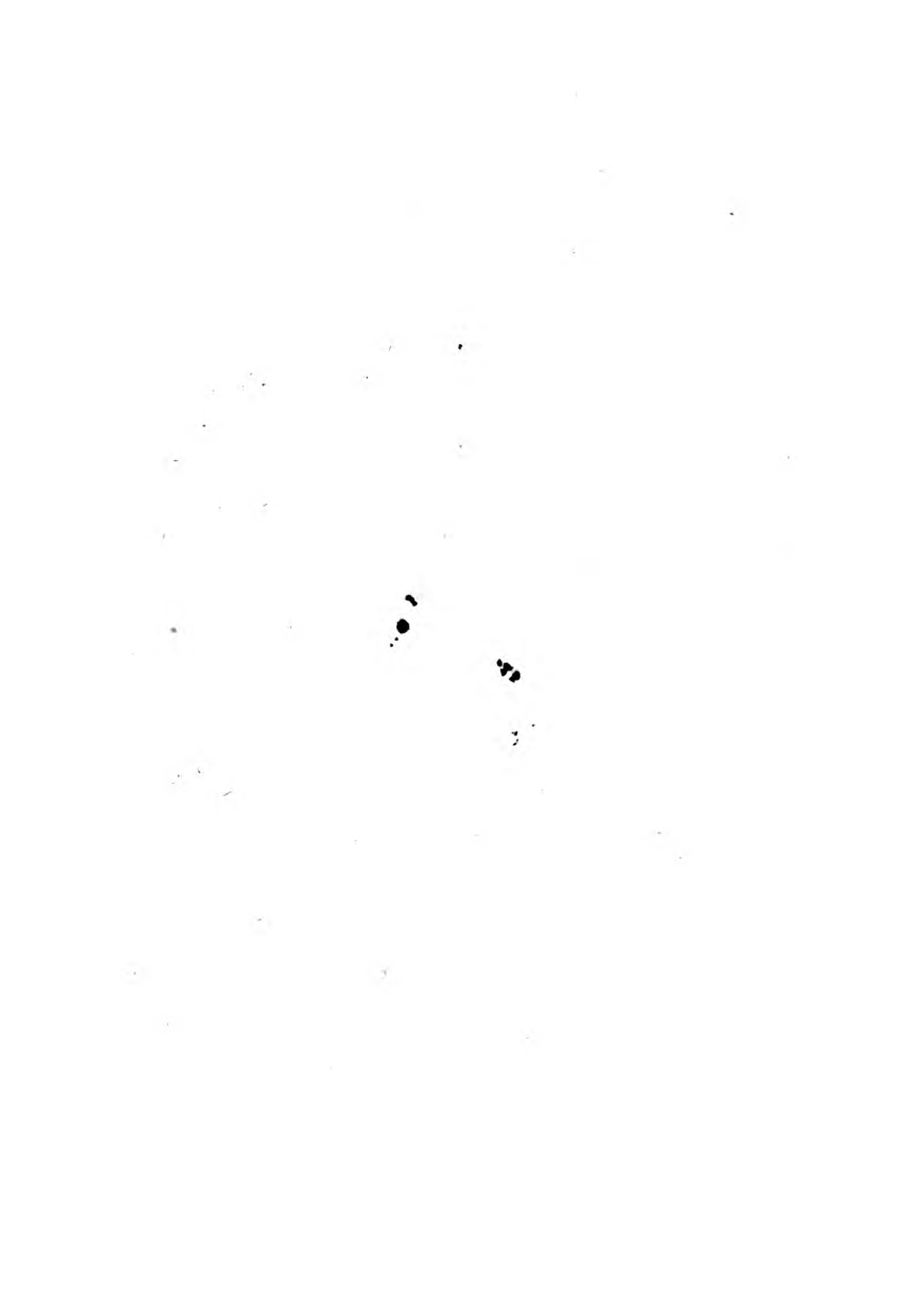


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THE
IMPOSTOR UNMASKED;

OR,

The New-Man of the People.



THE
IMPOSTOR UNMASKED;

OR, THE

New Man of the People;

WITH

ANECDOTES,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED,



Illustrative of the Character of the renowned and immaculate

BARDOLPHO.

INSCRIBED, WITHOUT PERMISSION,

To that superlatively honest and disinterested Man,

R. B. S—R—D—N, Esq.

"Let the galled Jade wince."

Shakespeare.

London:

Printed and sold by TIPPER and RICHARDS, Leadenhall-Street.

1806.

7.



ADVERTISEMENT.

ONE or two of the anecdotes here related have partially appeared in a book published ten years ago—the others have never till now been printed.

DEDICATION.

TO THE

Right Honourable R. B. Sh--r--d--n, Esq.

SIR,

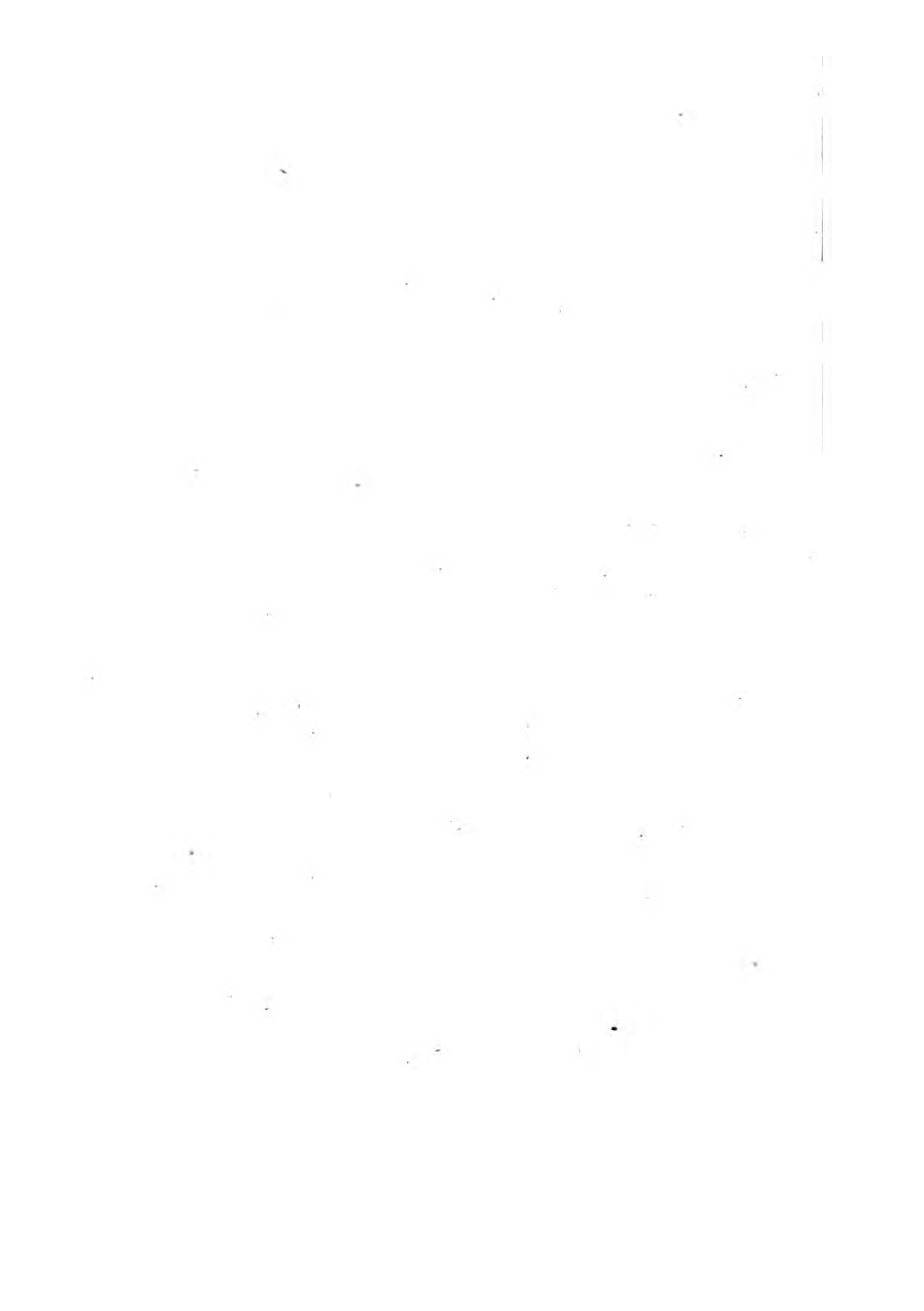
A CLOSE adherence to truth is seldom thought necessary in a dedicatory address; I shall, therefore, not apologize for inscribing the following pages to you, as the most immaculate of men.

I am,

SIR,

&c. &c. &c. &c.

PATRICIUS.



THE
IMPOSTOR UNMASKED.

THE swarthy Indian who pursues the ferocious tiger to his secret haunts, and hurls the barbed javelin to destroy him, encounters the most imminent danger, without a hope of being remunerated in proportion to the labour and hazard of his enterprise. If his aim prove false, he is instantly exposed to the desperate attack of the exasperated animal; and although, on the contrary, he transfix him to the earth, the skin of the beast is his paltry and only recompence. It is not, therefore, a base desire of reward which urges him to the fearful chace, but an ardour to exterminate a monster who might otherwise bring devastation and destruction, even to the threshold of his own domestic hut. The man who is neither the tool of a faction, nor the hireling of a minister, who is uninfluenced by party, and unwarped by prejudice, is precisely in a similar predicament, when he boldly ventures to pursue vice through all her mazy laby-

rinths, and attacks her with the shafts of satire and indignation in her strongest holds, where, armed with power, she would eagerly avail herself of any opportunity to glut her vengeance on her adversary: no mercenary in the cause of virtue, he seeks not for other compensation than will naturally result from a consciousness of the rectitude of his intentions.

The indignation of every honest breast has been aroused to the highest pitch by recent circumstances; the barriers which separated vice and virtue have been broken down by political fanaticism, and all distinction between them seems to have been totally annihilated: men have been praised for their purity who exist but by pollution, the creature of a faction has been extolled for his independance, and the hoary swindler for the integrity of his principles!

Let it not be imagined that the following pages are written for the purpose of influencing the electors of England in the choice of their representatives, any further than as their decision may tend to the encouragement of virtue, and the chastisement of vice; but it is most certainly the author's earnest desire to impress them, and all mankind, with the important fact,

that political integrity is incompatible with moral depravity.

Man is naturally disposed to right or wrong by the influence of his passions; when those passions are uncontrolled by the doctrines of religion, or the fear of public censure, the mind must preponderate on the side of vice—because the disregard of religious principles and public opinion, can only result from a deficiency of virtuous impulse. The same disposition, the same passions, and the same propensities govern the actions of a man, whether he be considered as a member of society at large, or solely in the character of a politician: and if he be influenced by them to commit the most flagrant acts of injustice and dishonesty in the former capacity, it is impossible that they should produce a contrary effect in the latter; for it is a self-evident absurdity to suppose that the same agents, acting upon the same subject, should produce opposite consequences.

The popularity of certain characters exists but in the absence of reflection, and may be attributed to the brilliancy of their talents, which dazzles the understanding of the multitude. Let it be considered, that this is not the splen-

dour of a sun which shines to cherish and invigorate, but the glare of a comet which blazes to destroy; then shall we no longer hear of the patriotism of a ———, nor the purity of a ———, save from the mouths of men whose tongues are prostituted to the purposes of a faction, or whose faculties are impaired by the mania of party prejudice: indeed the effects of this malady are almost incredible: we have recently beheld men of rank, sense, and some few of virtue in other respects, who labour under the fatal influence thereof, joining the ignorant and misled rabble in the shameful endeavour, to place those in public situations of the utmost responsibility, whom they would, on reflection, hesitate to trust with the custody of a single guinea. We are told it is necessary, at this momentous crisis, that the concentrated talents of the nation should be called into action; but those short-sighted politicians who tell us this would do well to reflect that national benefit can only result from those talents which are virtuously applied, and that when they flow from a corrupt source, it may be presumed that they will rather accelerate the destruction than contribute to the salvation of a country. The man whose ingenuity is exercised to cozen a tradesman, will not hesitate to defraud the public,

whenever he may have the power of doing so without danger of detection, and is therefore an improper person to be trusted with state affairs.

That the public may have an opportunity of deciding whether the foregoing observations are applicable to "the new man of the people," whom we will call Bardolpho, they are here presented with some well-authenticated anecdotes of that truly ingenious character.

Bardolpho is the son of a man who played his part with infinitely more respectability on the stage, than his son has hitherto done on the theatre of the world. By the advantages of a good education and a clear understanding the elder Bardolpho was enabled to maintain a rank in society from which he would have been otherwise excluded by the meanness of his origin: he beheld with rapture the dawning genius of his son, and fondly anticipated the joyful period when he should blaze forth the brightest luminary in the hemisphere of literature.

Bardolpho was at an early age sent to Harrow school, where he gave proofs of a certain species of ingenuity, which has since enabled him to live luxuriously without the assistance of that *base commodity* which most men find indispen-

sibly necessary to procure even the common comforts of life : he also advanced with astonishing rapidity in the paths of literature ; as a poet he soon became unrivalled, and as a scholar he was surpassed by few : in short, the fondest hopes of his father seemed destined to be realized. But, alas ! although the head was sound, the heart was rotten at the core, and innate profligacy of disposition, and political phrenzy contributed to blast the fairest promise that ever blossomed in the mind of man.

Soon after he quitted Harrow, Bardolpho, depending less upon the resources of his pocket than on *those of his mind*, visited the Wells of Clifton, where he contrived to appear in a style of elegance which absolutely astonished those who were acquainted with the state of his finances ; but the importunities of the Bristol tradesmen at length warned him that it was necessary to depart : conceiving, however, that a dashing appearance was indispensable to a gentleman who wished to cut a figure in the metropolis, he applied to his taylor, and desired to be furnished with a new suit of the most fashionable description. SNIP, who was a careful though a good-natured fellow, gently hinted that the payment of a bill already contracted would be considered a necessary preliminary to

a compliance with his request. Our hero affected to be much hurt that any person should doubt the rectitude of his principles, exerted all his powers of eloquence, and finally convinced the poor taylor that he was the most honest fellow in his majesty's dominions. Having thus far satisfactorily accomplished his wishes, he repaired to the dwelling of his boot-maker, who also refused to enter into any definitive treaty respecting a further supply, until the terms of former engagements had been strictly complied with: in vain was every figure of rhetoric here exhausted; the heart of Crispin resembled more the toughness of his leather than the soft texture of his wax, and neither trope, metaphor, nor allegory could melt him to compliance. In such a dilemma, a mind less fertile than Bardolpho's would have been at a loss how to act; but in his, difficulties of this kind only increased the vigour of invention. Finding all other means fail, he took the boot-maker by the hand, and candidly acknowledged the justice of his refusal, adding that he was extremely sorry it was not just then in his power to pay the whole of his bill, "But," continued he, "if you will make me a pair of boots precisely the same as those you last sent home, and let me have them by twelve o'clock to-morrow, I will not only pay you for them on delivery, but will

contrive to let you have one half the amount of what is now due to you."

Such an equitable proposition could not be rejected, and several hands were immediately employed to complete the order. Early the following morning Bardolpho called again, on the pretence of seeing if the boots were nearly ready; and being in a state of great forwardness, they were instantly shewn him: he examined them very minutely, approved highly of their shape, and having accurately measured them in his "mind's eye," requested the man to be punctual, and departed. He then proceeded to the shop of a dealer in ready-made articles of the same description, who, in divers handbills and advertisements, had apprized the public of the immense advantages that would result from becoming his customer: but as this cautious tradesman made it a rule to have the *quid pro quo*, on delivery, there could be no hopes of obtaining here a *pair* of boots on credit; nor, indeed, did our hero intend to do so: he, however, selected a pair which most nearly resembled those he had recently seen, and having ordered them to be sent home an hour later than he expected the others, he returned to his lodgings. At the appointed time Crispin attended: the first boot was pulled on with great

ease, and fitted admirably—the other, however, resisted, or rather *seemed* to resist, the repeated efforts of Bardolpho, who declared that it wanted stretching in the instep. The unsuspecting man was therefore prevailed upon to take it back for that purpose, and bring it again on the following morning. In the course of an hour the second pair of boots were brought by the ready-money vender of *superexcellent* articles; but these were also, as Bardolpho affirmed, of different sizes—only one of them fitted, and the man was sent away to get the other stretched. No sooner was he out of sight, than our hero, having obtained a boot from each, mounted his horse, and galloped away towards the capital, leaving the unfortunate tradesmen at once to deprecate and admire the ingenuity of his scheme.

The union of Bardolpho with a beautiful and amiable woman awhile diverted his attention from the pursuits of artifice; but his ardent disposition was not long restrained by the silken bonds of beauty; he discovered that money was as necessary to the married as to the single man, and forgetting, that "*The God of justice sanctifies no evil as a step towards good,*"* he con-

* See Mr. Sheridan's Tragedy of Pizarro.

sidered not the honesty, but the efficacy, of the means by which it might be obtained. A gentleman, by marriage nearly allied to Mrs. —, was persuaded to accompany him to a silversmith's in Coventry-street, where they ordered a considerable quantity of plate, which was sent to Mr. T——'s chambers in the Temple; but not being destined for ornamental purposes, it was the same evening conveyed to a certain pawnbroker's shop in Fleet-street, where it was pledged for about half its value: this circumstance coming to the ears of the silversmith, he immediately waited on Bardolpho, accused him of having acted like a swindler, and threatened to prosecute him and his friend for a fraud, some *poetical license* having been used to obtain possession of the articles without immediate payment; but the persuasive logic of Bardolpho was not to be resisted, and the yielding tradesman was finally induced to take the joint note of the parties, which having liberated them from all *serious* apprehensions, they scorned to remember when it was incumbent on them to provide for the payment thereof.

This gentleman may, perhaps, find some consolation in the idea, that he is not the only one of his profession who has been duped by Bardolpho. A person who, with the trade of a sil-

versmith, united the more active avocation of a sheriff's officer, was sent to levy an execution on his effects: our hero tendered his check, and received a discharge, which so pleased him, that he told this *taking* gentleman, he was determined to lay out an hundred pounds at his shop, as a reward for his civility. The man bowed, and instantly conducted him thither: he selected various articles of plate, sent them home, and gave another check in payment; but neither this nor the former was honoured by the bankers, and poor *Touch* had not only to lament the loss of his goods, but the additional mortification of paying the amount of the execution out of his own pocket.

A seat in parliament having secured the personal liberty of Bardolpho, he proceeded in his bold but dishonourable career with encreased alacrity, and so industrious was he in providing supplies for his extravagance, that his name having been accidentally mentioned at a club of tradesmen, it was discovered, on comparing notes, that, out of twenty-one members, fifteen had contributed divers wares and merchandizes towards his support, only one of whom had received any compensation in return, which he had obtained by having recourse to the powerful aid of Messieurs John Doe and Richard

Roe, who laid violent hands upon Bardolpho's carriage, at a moment when his amiable lady was stepping into it for the purpose of paying some morning visits; which additional shock, the delicate frame of Mrs. ———, (already weakened by the progress of disease and mental inquietude) was incapable of sustaining: from that hour the smile of hope forsook her lovely countenance, and in a few weeks her sufferings ceased for ever.

Bardolpho, like a tender husband, gloried in the good fortune of his wife, which had translated her from this world of sorrow to the regions of eternal felicity; and that all might witness his satisfaction and resignation, he repaired to the public theatre, before her cold remains were carried to their peaceful home.

The loss of his carriage made a very different impression on his mind; he inwardly deprecated the incompetency of that law which, while it protected the persons, left the property of British senators exposed to the ravages of hungry creditors, and resolved in future to live only in ready furnished houses, and never to ride but in hired equipages.

Bardolpho had long been in the habit of per-

suading the mercantile house of H—ts—k and Co. to enter into various speculations, which generally turned out solely to his own advantage; but they at length became more cautious than suited his intentions, he therefore sought by one great effort to restore their wonted confidence: he called at their 'counting-house, and assured them, in the most positive terms, that he had received private information which would insure an immense profit from a speculation in the funds: the partners, having recently experienced the fallacy of his prophecies, hesitated to embark again their shattered capital where there was so much danger of the whole being wrecked; and declared they would not risk another guinea unless they were informed from what source Bardolpho had obtained his information: he then told them, as a profound secret, that he had it from the Duchess of——, who was just told it by her brother, the first lord of the a——y*: This removed all doubts as to its authenticity: nine thousand

* Those who are acquainted with the prudence and circumspection of that truly excellent statesman Lord S., will easily perceive that this story was a fabrication of Bardolpho; but supposing it to have been otherwise, what must we think of the political integrity of a man who could thus betray the secrets of the nation for purposes of private lucre!

pounds were risked in the adventure, and the principal part thereof lost for ever.

An action, for a considerable sum, was afterwards brought against Bardolpho, by some persons implicated in this transaction, which he had the audacity to defend on the most dishonourable grounds, but when, on the day of trial, he perceived Mr. C—r, who had been solicitor to the house of H—ts—k and Co. enter Westminster-hall, his courage began to fail; he had hitherto no idea that this witness would be produced against him, and he knew his evidence must prove fatal; he therefore took the gentleman aside, and besought him, with the most fervent entreaties, not to betray what he had confidentially communicated respecting Lord S.; but the other replying that he should be on his oath, and must therefore declare all he knew of the circumstance, Bardolpho abruptly left him, and having found the plaintiff's attorney, immediately compromised the action; fully aware that if this breach of faith were recorded in a court of justice, no future minister could venture to place him in any confidential situation.

It is painful to behold beauty and innocence

united to debauchery and depravity, but when we find the union to be voluntary, our grief is changed to astonishment. Nature never cast the image of man in a more unlovely mould than when she formed Bardolpho; his countenance possesses all the characteristics of ugliness and bestial sensuality; in figure he is more ungraceful than a hog, and in his whole appearance scarcely less filthy and disgusting; but such is the fascination of his tongue, that he has persuaded a second lovely woman to unite her destiny with his. Nor has his persuasive eloquence been solely employed in the cause of honourable love, the wives of some of his most intimate friends are supposed to have yielded their virtue to its irresistible force.

“ Oh, Cupid! Cupid! thou art blind indeed!”

However susceptible the heart of Bardolpho may be to the impressions of beauty, his conduct towards Miss L—nw—d sufficiently evinces, that his admiration of the softer sex does not deter him from preying on their credulity and inexperience. This lady, the wonderful efforts of whose needle have created a new species of painting, was extremely anxious to copy a picture in his possession, which she

politely requested he would permit her to take home for that purpose. Bardolpho expatiated largely on the perfections of the painting, observed that it was not his own, and finally hinted that he could not consent to its removal unless its value were deposited in his hands, as a security for its safe return. Miss L. enquired how much would be deemed an equivalent, and was answered, about five hundred pounds; which sum she accordingly left, and the picture was delivered to her care. When she had completed her work it was punctually returned, and a restoration of the deposit requested; for the amount of which Bardolpho gave his check upon Messrs. H—y and Co., his *reputed* bankers, but on presentation they refused payment thereof, declaring, they had no effects in hand: nor has this injured lady yet obtained the restitution of her property.

The frauds practised by Bardolpho, as principal proprietor of a certain place of public amusement, are too notorious to require mentioning here; and if they were not so, they are too numerous to be comprised within the limits of a pamphlet. The fate of poor L—y is almost universally known, and is alone sufficient to inspire every honest breast with the most sovereign detestation of the wretch who

defrauded him of his all, and left him to procure a precarious existence from the alms of charity.

That which is gotten by fraud is speedily dissipated by profusion! The hall of Bardolpho is generally crowded with importuning and imploring creditors. Scarcely a butcher will now trust him with a joint of meat, nor a baker for a single loaf; and to such extremities was he frequently driven, before he got his present appointment*, that his family have been obliged to the generosity of a friend for their daily meals.

Last year, a certain wine merchant, the reputation of whose claret no *bon vivant* is unacquainted with, called in G— Street for payment of his bill, and was surprised to find that Bardolpho had left orders for him to be admitted. He was, at first, shown into a back parlour, where several other expecting duns were assem-

* The income of the lucrative situation he now holds, instead of being expended to satisfy his just debts, is squandered away in expensive entertainments; and in feasting the editors of newspapers, to obtain their venal support. The proprietors, however, of several of the most respectable public prints have, much to their honour, absented themselves from these degrading convocations.

bled, but in a few minutes he received a polite message, requesting his attendance up stairs. The little fellow, proud of this distinguished preference, and elated with the idea of getting his money, tripped lightly up to the drawing-room, and was received with the utmost condescension.

“ My dear ——,” exclaimed Bardolpho, “ I am glad to see you!—What is the amount of your bill?”

“ Ninety pounds, sir.”

“ Very well, you shall have the money.”

Then suddenly taking out his banker's book he began to write, but apparently recollecting himself, he cried—

“ Oh! by the bye, I hear you have some excellent claret?”

“ Capital, sir,” replied the wine merchant; “ I sent the P—e twelve dozen, only yesterday.”

“ I am glad to hear it. I have some friends to dine with me to-day—write an order for the

delivery of six dozen to my servant, who is going with a cart close by your vaults; you may also add six dozen of madeira, and the same quantity of your best port, and when you have cast up how much the whole will come to, I will give you a check upon my banker."

The order was immediately written, and Bardolpho hastened out of the room to give it to his man, who he declared was just going to start.

The wine merchant waited his return with great anxiety, and half an hour having past away without any sign thereof, he rang the bell. The servant, who had received his instructions, pretended that his master was engaged with a friend below stairs. Satisfied with this explanation, he waited patiently another half hour, when he again rang the bell, and with such violence that a maid servant, who was passing the door, opened it to see what was the matter.

"Pray, good woman, where is your master?" cried poor ———.

"Lard, sir," replied Molly, "master has been gone out an hour ago."

This was like a thunderclap to his ears; he rush'd down stairs, mounted his poney, and galloped off to his wine vaults; but, before he arrived, the wine was delivered, and on its journey to G—— Street.

When Bardolpho took possession of the house which is annexed to his present official situation, his predecessor requested him to take the furniture at a fair valuation, which was peculiarly adapted to the apartments, but he told him, he would not think of doing so, because in that case his creditors would take the liberty of seizing it, which even the art of the attorney, whom he keeps in constant pay, and who resides in his house, would not be able to prevent, and that he was, therefore, determined to have only hired furniture.

Thus have we given a short but correct sketch of Bardolpho's character in private life; and is there any one whose faculties are unimpaired, that will, on reflection, suppose such a man capable of acting with honour and integrity as a politician? The foundation is rotten, and the superstructure must be ruinous! Let us not then be misled by the *ignis fatuus* of his dazzling talents, nor hurried away by the stream of public prejudice.