

Oh! would thy bards but emulate thy fame,  
And rise more worthy, Albion, of thy name!  
What Athens was in science, Rome in power,  
What Tyre appear'd in her meridian hour,  
'Tis thine at once, fair Albion! to have been—  
Earth's chief dictatress, ocean's lovely queen:  
But Rome decay'd, and Athens strew'd the plain,  
And Tyre's proud piers lie shatter'd in the main;  
Like these, thy strength may sink, in ruin hurl'd,  
And Britain fall, the bulwark of the world.  
But let me cease, and dread Cassandra's fate,  
With warning ever scoff'd at, till too late;  
To themes less lofty still my lay confine,  
And urge thy bards to gain a name like thine.<sup>1</sup>

Then, hapless Britain! be thy rulers blest,  
The senate's oracles, the people's jest!  
Still hear thy motley orators dispense  
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of sense,  
While Canning's colleagues hate him for his wit,  
And old dame Portland<sup>2</sup> fills the place of Pitt.

Yet once again, adieu! ere this the sail  
That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale;  
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse height,  
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my sight:  
Thence shall I stray through beauty's native clime,<sup>3</sup>  
Where Kaff<sup>4</sup> is clad in rocks, and crown'd with snows  
sublime.

But should I back return, no tempting press<sup>5</sup>  
Shall drag my journal from the desk's recess:  
Let coxcombs, printing as they come from far,  
Snatch his own wreath of ridicule from Carr;<sup>6</sup>  
Let Aberdeen and Elgin<sup>7</sup> still pursue  
The shade of fame through regions of virtù;

<sup>1</sup> With this verse the satire originally ended.

<sup>2</sup> A friend of mine being asked, why his Grace of Portland was likened to an old woman? replied, "he supposed it was because he was past bearing." His Grace is now gathered to his grandmothers, where he sleeps as sound as ever; but even his sleep was better than his colleagues' waking. 1811.

<sup>3</sup> Georgia. <sup>4</sup> Mount Caucasus.

<sup>5</sup> These four lines originally stood,—  
"But should I back return, no letter'd sage  
Shall drag my common-place book on the stage;  
Let vain Valentinia\* rival luckless Carr,  
And equal him whose work he sought to mar."

<sup>6</sup> [In a letter written from Gibraltar to his friend Hodgson, Lord Byron says,— "I have seen Sir John Carr at Seville and Cadiz, and, like Swift's barber, have been down on my knees to beg he would not put me into black and white."]

<sup>7</sup> Lord Elgin would fain persuade us that all the figures, with and without noses, in his stoneshop, are the work of Phidias! "Credat Judæus!"

<sup>8</sup> [The original epithet was "classic." Lord Byron altered it in the fifth edition, and added this note:—"Rapid," indeed! He topographised and typographised King Priam's dominions in three days! I called him 'classic' before I saw the Troad,

\* Lord Valentinia (whose tremendous travels are forthcoming, with due decorations, graphical, topographical, typographical) deposed, on Sir John Carr's unlucky suit, that Mr. Dubois's satire prevented his purchase of the "Stranger in Ireland."—"Oh, fie, my lord! has your lordship no more feeling for a fellow-tourist?—but "two of a trade," they say, &c.

† [From the many tours he made, Sir John was called "The Jaunting Car." A wicked wit having severely lashed him in a publication, called "My Pocket Book; or Hints for a Ryght Merrie and Conceited Tour," he brought an action of damages against the publisher; but as the work contained only what the court deemed legitimate criticism, the knight was nonsuited. Edward Dubois, Esq., the author of this pleasant satire, has also published "The Wreath," consisting of translations from Sappho, Bion, and Moschus, "Old Nick," a satirical story, and an edition of the Decameron of Boccaccio.]

Waste useless thousands on their Phidian freaks,  
Misshapen monuments and maim'd antiques;  
And make their grand saloons a general mart  
For all the mutilated blocks of art.  
Of Dardan tours let dilettanti tell,  
I leave topography to rapid<sup>8</sup> Gell;<sup>9</sup>  
And, quite content, no more shall interpose  
To stun the public year—at least with prose.<sup>10</sup>

Thus far I've held my undisturb'd career,  
Prepared for rancour, steel'd 'gainst selfish fear:  
This thing of rhyme I ne'er disdain'd to own—  
Though not obtrusive, yet not quite unknown:  
My voice was heard again, though not so loud,  
My page, though nameless, never disavow'd;  
And now at once I tear the veil away:—  
Cheer on the pack! the quarry stands at bay,  
Unscared by all the din of Melbourne house,<sup>11</sup>  
By Lambe's resentment, or by Holland's spouse,  
By Jeffrey's harmless pistol, Hallam's rage,  
Edina's brawny sons and brimstone page.  
Our men in buckram shall have blows enough,  
And feel they too "are penetrable stuff:"  
And though I hope not hence unscathed to go,  
Who conquers me shall find a stubborn foe.  
The time hath been, when no harsh sound would fall  
From lips that now may seem imbued with gall;<sup>12</sup>  
Nor fools nor follies tempt me to despise  
The meanest thing that crawl'd beneath my eyes:  
But now, so callous grown, so changed since youth,  
I've learn'd to think, and sternly speak the truth;  
Learn'd to deride the critic's starch decree,  
And break him on the wheel he meant for me;  
To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,  
Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss:

but since have learned better than to tack to his name what don't belong to it."]

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Gell's Topography of Troy and Ithaca cannot fail to ensure the approbation of every man possessed of classical taste, as well for the information Mr. Gell conveys to the mind of the reader, as for the ability and research the respective works display.—["Since seeing the plain of Troy, my opinions are somewhat changed as to the above note. Gell's survey was hasty and superficial."—B. 1816.]

[Shortly after his return from Greece, in 1811, Lord Byron wrote a review of Mr. (now Sir William) Gell's works for the Monthly Review. In his Diary of 1821, there is this passage:—"In reading, I have just chanced upon an expression of Tom Campbell's;—speaking of Collins, he says that 'no reader cares any more about the characteristic manners of his eclogues than about the authenticity of the tale of Troy.' 'Tis false—we do care about 'the authenticity of the tale of Troy.' I have stood upon that plain, daily, for more than a month, in 1810; and if any thing diminished my pleasure, it was that the blackguard Bryant had impugned its veracity. It is true I read 'Homer Travestied,' because Hobhouse and others bored me with their learned localities, and I love quizzing. But I still venerated the grand original as the truth of history (in the material facts) and of place. Otherwise it would have given me no delight. Who will persuade me, when I reclined upon a mighty tomb, that it did not contain a hero?—its very magnitude proved this. Men do not labour over the ignoble and petty dead:—and why should not the dead be Homer's dead?"]

<sup>10</sup> [Lord Byron set out on his travels with the determination to keep no journal. In a letter to his friend Henry Drury, when on the point of sailing, he pleasantly says,— "Hobhouse has made wondrous preparations for a book on his return:—one hundred pens, two gallons of Japan ink, and several volumes of best blank, is no bad provision for a discerning public. I have laid down my pen, but have promised to contribute a chapter on the state of morals, &c. &c."]

<sup>11</sup> ["Singular enough, and din enough, God knows."—B. 1816.]

<sup>12</sup> [In this passage, hastily thrown off as it is, "we find," says Moore, "the strongest trace of that wounded feeling, which bleeds, as it were, through all his subsequent writings."]

Nay more, though all my rival rhymesters frown,  
I too can hunt a poetaster down;  
And, arm'd in proof, the gauntlet cast at once  
To Scotch marauder, and to southern dunce.  
Thus much I've dared; and my incondite lay  
Hath wrong'd these righteous times, let others say:  
This, let the world, which knows not how to spare,  
Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare.<sup>1</sup>

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I HAVE been informed, since the present edition went to the press, that my trusty and well-beloved cousins, the Edinburgh Reviewers, are preparing a most vehement critique on my poor, gentle, *unresisting* Muse, whom they have already so be-deviled with their ungodly ribaldry:

"Tantæne animis celestibus iræ!"

I suppose I must say of Jeffrey as Sir Andrew Aguecheek saith, "An I had known he was so cunning of fence, I had seen him damned ere I had fought him." What a pity it is that I shall be beyond the Bosphorus before the next number has passed the Tweed! But I yet hope to light my pipe with it in Persia.

My northern friends have accused me, with justice, of personality towards their great literary anthropophagus, Jeffrey; but what else was to be done with him and his dirty pack, who feed by "lying and slandering," and slake their thirst by "evil speaking?" I have adduced facts already well known, and of Jeffrey's mind I have stated my free opinion, nor has he thence sustained any injury;—what scavenger was ever soiled by being pelted with mud? It may be said that I quit England because I have censured there "persons of honour and wit about town;" but I am coming back again, and their

vengeance will keep hot till my return. Those who know me can testify that my motives for leaving England are very different from fears, literary or personal: those who do not, may one day be convinced. Since the publication of this thing, my name has not been concealed; I have been mostly in London, ready to answer for my transgressions, and in daily expectation of sundry cartels; but, alas! "the age of chivalry is over," or, in the vulgar tongue, there is no spirit now-a-days.

There is a youth ycleped Hewson Clarke (subaudi *esquire*), a sizer of Emanuel College, and, I believe, a denizen of Berwick-upon-Tweed, whom I have introduced in these pages to much better company than he has been accustomed to meet; he is, notwithstanding, a very sad dog, and for no reason that I can discover, except a personal quarrel with a bear, kept by me at Cambridge to sit for a fellowship, and whom the jealousy of his Trinity contemporaries prevented from success, has been abusing me, and, what is worse, the defenceless innocent above mentioned, in the "Satirist," for one year and some months. I am utterly unconscious of having given him any provocation; indeed, I am guiltless of having heard his name till coupled with the "Satirist." He has therefore no reason to complain, and I dare say that, like Sir Prettful Plagiary, he is rather pleased than otherwise. I have now mentioned all who have done me the honour to notice me and mine, that is, my bear and my book, except the editor of the "Satirist," who, it seems, is a gentleman—God wot! I wish he could impart a little of his gentility to his subordinate scribes. I hear that Mr. Jeringham is about to take up the cudgels for his Mæcenæ, Lord Carlisle. I hope not: he was one of the few, who, in the very short intercourse I had with him, treated me with kindness when a boy; and whatever he may say or do, "pour on, I will endure." I have nothing further to add, save a general note of thanksgiving to readers, purchasers, and publishers; and, in the words of Scott, I wish

"To all and each a fair good night,  
And rosy dreams and slumbers light."

## Hints from Horace:

BEING AN ALLUSION IN ENGLISH VERSE TO THE EPISTLE "AD PISONES, DE ARTE POETICA," AND INTENDED AS A SEQUEL TO "ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS."<sup>2</sup>

— "Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum  
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi."  
HOR. *De Arte Poet.*

"Rhymes are difficult things—they are stubborn things, sir."  
FIELDING'S *Amelia*.

Athens. Capuchin Convent, March 12. 1811.

Who would not laugh, if Lawrence, hired to grace  
His costly canvass with each flatter'd face,  
Abused his art, till Nature, with a blush,  
Saw cits grow centaurs underneath his brush?

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam  
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas,

<sup>1</sup> ["The greater part of this satire I most sincerely wish had never been written—not only on account of the injustice of much of the critical, and some of the personal part of it—but the tone and temper are such as I cannot approve."—BYRON. July 14. 1816. Diodati, Geneva.]

<sup>2</sup> [Authors are apt, it is said, to estimate their performances more according to the trouble they have cost themselves, than the pleasure they afford to the public; and it is only in this way that we can pretend to account for the extraordinary value which Lord Byron attached, even many long years after they were written, to these "Hints from Horace." The business of translating Horace has hitherto been a hopeless one;—and notwithstanding the brilliant cleverness of some passages, in both Pope's and Swift's *Imitations* of him, there had been, on the whole, very little to encourage any one to meddle seriously even with that less difficult department. It is, comparatively, an easy affair to transfer the effect, or some-

Or, should some limner join, for show or sale,  
A maid of honour to a mermaid's tail?  
Or low Dubost—as once the world has seen—  
Degrade God's creatures in his graphic spleen?

Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum  
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne;

thing like the effect, of the majestic declamations of Juvenal; but the Horatian satire is cast in a mould of such exquisite delicacy—uniting perfect ease with perfect elegance throughout—as has hitherto defied all the skill of the moderns. Lord Byron, however, having composed this piece at Athens, in 1811, and brought it home in the same desk with the two first cantos of "Childe Harold," appears to have, on his arrival in London, contemplated its publication as far more likely to increase his reputation than that of his original poem. Perhaps Milton's preference of the "Paradise Regained" over the "Paradise Lost" is not a more decisive example of the extent to which a great author may mistake the source of his greatness.

Lord Byron was prevented from publishing these lines, by a feeling, which, considering his high notion of their merit, does him honour. By accident, or nearly so, the "Harold" came out before the "Hints;"—and the reception of the

Not all that forced politeness, which defends  
Fools in their faults, could gag his grinning friends.<sup>1</sup>  
Believe me, Moschus<sup>2</sup>, like that picture seems  
The book which, sillier than a sick man's dreams,  
Displays a crowd of figures incomplete,  
Poetic nightmares, without head or feet.<sup>3</sup>

Poets and painters, as all artists<sup>4</sup> know,  
May shoot a little with a lengthen'd bow;  
We claim this mutual mercy for our task,  
And grant in turn the pardon which we ask;  
But make not monsters spring from gentle dams—  
Birds breed not vipers, tigers nurse not lambs.

A labour'd, long exordium, sometimes tends  
(Like patriot speeches) but to paltry ends;  
And nonsense in a lofty note goes down  
As pertness passes with a legal gown:  
Thus many a bard describes in pompous strain  
The clear brook babbling through the goodly plain:  
The groves of Granta, and her gothic halls, [walls;  
King's Coll., Cam's stream, stain'd windows, and old  
Or, in advent'rous numbers, neatly aims  
To paint a rainbow, or—the river Thames.<sup>5</sup>

You sketch a tree, and so perhaps may shine—  
But daub a shipwreck like an alehouse sign;  
You plan a vase—it dwindles to a pot;  
Then glide down Grub-street—fasting and forgot;

Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?  
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum  
Persimilem, cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ  
Fingentur species; ut nec pes, nec caput uni  
Reddatur formæ. Pictoribus atque poetis  
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.  
Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim:  
Sed non ut placidis coëtant immittia; non ut  
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.  
Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna professis  
Purpureus, latè qui splendeat, unus et alter  
Assutur pannus; cum lucus et ara Diane,  
Et proferantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,  
Aut fumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus.  
Sed nunc non erat his locus: et fortasse cupressum  
Scis simulare: quid hoc, si fractis enatat expes  
Navibus, ære dato qui pingitur? amphora cœpit  
Institui; currenre rota cur urceus exit?  
Denique sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum.

former was so flattering to Lord Byron, that it could scarcely fail to take off, for the time, the edge of his appetite for literary bitterness. In short, he found himself mixing constantly in society with persons who had—from good sense, or good-nature, or from both—overlooked the petulantcies of his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and felt, as he said, that he should be "heaping coals of fire on his head" if he were to persist in bringing forth a continuation of his juvenile lampoon. Nine years had passed ere he is found writing thus to Mr. Murray:—"Get from Mr. Hobhouse, and send me a proof of my 'Hints from Horace:' it has now the *nomum prematur in annum* complete for its production. I have a notion that, with some omissions of names and passages, it will do; and I could put my late observations for Pope amongst the notes. As far as versification goes, it is good; and, in looking back at what I wrote about that period, I am astonished to see how little I have trained on. I wrote better then than now; but that comes of my having fallen into the atrocious bad taste of the times." On hearing, however, that, in Mr. Hobhouse's opinion, the iambs would require "a good deal of slashing" to suit the times, the notion of printing them was once more abandoned. They were first published, therefore, in 1831, seven years after the poet's death.]

In an English newspaper, which finds its way abroad wherever there are Englishmen, I read an account of this dirty dauber's caricature of Mr. H— as a "beast," and the consequent action, &c. The circumstance is, probably, too well known to require further comment.—[The gentleman here alluded to was Thomas Hope, Esq., the author of "Anastasis," and one of the most munificent patrons of art this country ever possessed. Having, somehow, offended an un-

Laugh'd into Lethe by some quaint Review,  
Whose wit is never troublesome till—true.<sup>6</sup>

In fine, to whatsoever you aspire,  
Let it at least be simple and entire.

The greater portion of the rhyming tribe  
(Give ear, my friend, for thou hast been a scribe)  
Are led astray by some peculiar lure.  
I labour to be brief—become obscure;  
One falls while following elegance too fast;  
Another soars, inflated with bombast;  
Too low a third crawls on, afraid to fly,  
He spins his subject to satiety;  
Absurdly varying, he at last engraves  
Fish in the woods, and boars beneath the waves!

Unless your care's exact, your judgment nice,  
The flight from folly leads but into vice;  
None are complete, all wanting in some part,  
Like certain tailors, limited in art.  
For gallygaskins Slowshears is your man;  
But coats must claim another artisan.<sup>7</sup>  
Now this to me, I own, seems much the same  
As Vulcan's feet to bear Apollo's frame<sup>8</sup>;  
Or, with a fair complexion, to expose  
Black eyes, black ringlets, but—a bottle nose!

Dear authors! suit your topics to your strength,  
And ponder well your subject, and its length;

Maxima pars vatum, pater, et juvenes patre digni,  
Decipimur specie recti. Brevi esse laboro,  
Obscurus fio: sectantem levius nervi  
Deficient animique: professus grandia, turget:  
Serpit humi tutus nimum timidusque procellæ:  
Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,  
Delphinum sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum.  
In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, si caret arte.  
Emilium circa ludum faber inus et ungues  
Exprimet, et molles imitabitur ære capillos;  
Infelix operis summa, quia ponere totum  
Nesciet. Hunc ego me, si quid componere curem,  
Non magis esse velim, quam pravo vivere naso,  
Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.  
Sumite materiem vestris, qui scribitis, equam  
Viribus; et versate diu quid ferre recuset,  
Quid valeant humeri. Cui lecta poterit erit res,  
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.  
Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,

principled French painter, by name Dubost, that adventurer revenged himself by a picture called "Beauty and the Beast," in which Mr. Hope and his lady were represented according to the well-known fairy story. The picture had too much malice not to succeed; and, to the disgrace of John Bull, the exhibition of it is said to have fetched thirty pounds in a day. A brother of Mrs. Hope thrust his sword through the canvass; and M. Dubost had the consolation to get five pounds damages. The affair made much noise at the time; though Mr. Hope had not then placed himself on that seat of literary eminence, which he afterwards attained. Probably, indeed, no man's reputation in the world was ever so suddenly and completely altered, as his was by the appearance of his magnificent romance. He died in 1833.]

<sup>2</sup> ["Moschus."—In the original MS., "Hobhouse."]

<sup>3</sup> [The opening of the poem is, with reference to the original, ingenious.—MOORE.]

<sup>4</sup> ["All artists."—Originally, "We scribblers."]

<sup>5</sup> "Where pure description held the place of sense."—POPE.

<sup>6</sup> [This is pointed, and felicitously expressed.—MOORE.]

<sup>7</sup> Mere common mortals were commonly content with one tailor and with one bill, but the more particular gentlemen found it impossible to confide their lower garments to the makers of their body clothes. I speak of the beginning of 1809: what reform may have since taken place, I neither know, nor desire to know.

<sup>8</sup> ["As one leg perfect, and the other lame."—MS.]

Nor lift your load, before you're quite aware  
What weight your shoulders will, or will not, bear.  
But lucid Order, and Wit's siren voice,  
Await the poet, skilful in his choice;  
With native eloquence he soars along,  
Grace in his thoughts, and music in his song.

Let judgment teach him wisely to combine  
With future parts the now omitted line:  
This shall the author choose, or that reject,  
Precise in style, and cautious to select;  
Nor slight applause will candid pens afford  
To him who furnishes a wanting word.  
Then fear not, if 'tis needful, to produce  
Some term unknown, or obsolete in use,  
(As Pitt<sup>1</sup> has furnish'd us a word or two,  
Which lexicographers declined to do)  
So you indeed, with care,—(but be content  
To take this license rarely)—may invent.  
New words find credit in these latter days  
If neatly grafted on a Gallic phrase.  
What Chaucer, Spenser did, we scarce refuse  
To Dryden's or to Pope's maturer muse.  
If you can add a little, say why not,  
As well as William Pitt, and Walter Scott?  
Since they, by force of rhyme and force of lungs,  
Enrich'd our island's ill-united tongues;  
'T is then—and shall be—lawful to present  
Reform in writing, as in parliament.

As forests shed their foliage by degrees,  
So fade expressions which in season please;  
And we and ours, alas! are due to fate,  
And words and words but dwindle to a date.

Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici  
Pleraque differat, et presens in tempus omittat;  
Hoc amet, hoc spernat promissi carminis auctor.  
In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis:  
Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum  
Reddidit junctura novum. Si forte necesse est  
Indicis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,  
Fingere cinctus non exaudita Cethegis  
Continget; dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter;  
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si  
Græco fonte cadant, parve detorta. Quid autem  
Cæcilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum  
Virgilio Varioque? ego cur, acquirere pauca  
Si possum, invidior, cum lingua Catonis et Enni  
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum  
Nomina protulerit? Licuit, semperque licebit,  
Signatum præsentem nota producere nomen.  
Ut silvæ foliis pronos mutantur in annos;  
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit ætas,  
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata, vigentque.  
Debemur morti nos nostraque: sive receptus  
Terra Neptunus classes æquilonibus arceat,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Pitt was liberal in his additions to our parliamentary tongue; as may be seen in many publications, particularly the Edinburgh Review.

<sup>2</sup> Old ballads, old plays, and old women's stories are at present in as much request as old wine or new speeches. In fact, this is the millennium of black letter: thanks to our Hebers, Webers, and Scotts!—[There was considerable malice in thus putting *Weber*, a poor German hack, a mere amanuensis of Sir Walter Scott, between the two other names.]

<sup>3</sup> "Mac Flecknoe," the "Dunciad," and all Swift's lampooning ballads. Whatever their other works may be, these originated in personal feelings, and angry retort on unworthy rivals; and though the ability of these satires elevates the poetical, their poignancy detracts from the personal character of the writers.—[For particulars of Dryden's feud with his successor in the laureateship, Shadwell, whom he has immortalised under the name of Mac Flecknoe, and also as Og, in the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel;" and for the literary squabbles in which Swift and Pope were engaged, the reader must turn to the lives and works of these three great writers. See also Mr. D'Israeli's painfully interesting book on "The Quarrels of Authors."]

Though as a monarch nods, and commerce calls,  
Impetuous rivers stagnate in canals;  
Though swamps subdued, and marshes drain'd, sustain  
The heavy ploughshare and the yellow grain,  
And rising ports along the busy shore  
Protect the vessel from old Ocean's roar,  
All, all must perish; but, surviving last,  
The love of letters half preserves the past.  
True, some decay, yet not a few revive;<sup>2</sup>  
Though those shall sink, which now appear to thrive,  
As custom arbitrates, whose shifting sway  
Our life and language must alike obey.

The immortal wars which gods and angels wage,  
Are they not shown in Milton's sacred page?  
His strain will teach what numbers best belong  
To themes celestial told in epic song.

The slow, sad stanza will correctly paint  
The lover's anguish, or the friend's complaint.  
But which deserves the laurel—rhyme or blank?  
Which holds on Helicon the higher rank?  
Let squabbling critics by themselves dispute  
This point, as puzzling as a Chancery suit.

Satiric rhyme first sprang from selfish spleen.  
You doubt—see Dryden, Pope, St. Patrick's dean.<sup>3</sup>

Blank verse<sup>4</sup> is now, with one consent, allied  
To Tragedy, and rarely quits her side.  
Though mad Almanzor rhymed in Dryden's days,  
No sing-song hero rants in modern plays;  
While modest Comedy her verse foregoes  
For jest and pun<sup>5</sup> in very middling prose.

Regis opus; sterilisve diu palus, aptaque remis,  
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum:  
Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,  
Doctus iter melius; mortalia facta peribunt;  
Nedum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax.  
Multa renascuntur, quæ jam cecidere; cadentque  
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,  
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.  
Res gestæ regumque ducumque et tristia bella,  
Quo scribi possent numero monstravit Homerus.  
Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primum;  
Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.  
Quis tamen exiguis elegos emisit auctor,  
Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est.  
Archilochum proprio rabies armavit lambro;  
Hunc socci cepere pedem, grandesque cothurni,  
Alternis aptum sermonibus, et populares  
Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.  
Musa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque deorum,  
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,  
Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre.  
Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,

<sup>4</sup> [Like Dr. Johnson, Lord Byron maintained the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. "Blank verse," he says in his long lost letter to the editor of Blackwood's Magazine, "unless in the drama, no one except Milton ever wrote who could rhyme. I am aware that Johnson has said, after some hesitation, that he could not 'prevail upon himself to wish that Milton had been a rhymist.' The opinions of that truly great man, whom, like Pope, it is the present fashion to decry, will ever be received by me with that deference which time will restore to him from all; but, with all humility, I am not persuaded that the 'Paradise Lost' would not have been more nobly conveyed to posterity, not perhaps in heroic couplets,—although even they could sustain the subject, if well balanced,—but in the stanza of Spenser, or of Tasso, or in the terza rima of Dante, which the powers of Milton could easily have grafted on our language. The 'Seasons' of Thomson would have been better in rhyme, although still inferior to his 'Castle of Indolence;' and Mr. Southey's 'Joan of Arc' no worse.]"

<sup>5</sup> With all the vulgar applause and critical abhorrence of puns, they have Aristotle on their side; who permits them to orators, and gives them consequence by a grave disquisition.

Not that our Bens or Beaumonts show the worse,  
Or lose one point, because they wrote in verse.  
But so Thalia pleases to appear,  
Poor virgin! damn'd some twenty times a year!

Whate'er the scene, let this advice have weight:—  
Adapt your language to your hero's state.  
At times Melpomene forgets to groan,  
And brisk Thalia takes a serious tone;  
Nor unregarded will the act pass by  
Where angry Townly<sup>1</sup> lifts his voice on high.  
Again, our Shakspeare limits verse to kings,  
When common prose will serve for common things;  
And lively Hal resigns heroic ire,  
To "hollowing Hotspur"<sup>2</sup> and the sceptred sire.

'T is not enough, ye bards, with all your art,  
To polish poems;—they must touch the heart:  
Where'er the scene be laid, whate'er the song,  
Still let it bear the hearer's soul along;  
Command your audience or to smile or weep,  
Whiche'er may please you—any thing but sleep.  
The poet claims our tears; but, by his leave,  
Before I shed them, let me see him grieve.

If banish'd Romeo feign'd nor sigh nor tear,  
Lull'd by his languor, I should sleep or sneer.  
Sad words, no doubt, become a serious face,  
And men look angry in the proper place.  
At double meanings folks seem wondrous sly,  
And sentiment prescribes a pensive eye;  
For nature form'd at first the inward man,  
And actors copy nature—when they can.  
She bids the beating heart with rapture bound,  
Raised to the stars, or levell'd with the ground;

Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?  
Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo?  
Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult;  
Indignatur item privatis, ac prope socco  
Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyestæ.  
Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decenter.  
Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit,  
Iratæque Chremes tumido delitigat ore:  
Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.  
Telephus et Peleus, cum pauper et exsul, uterque  
Proficit ampullas et sesquipædalia verba,  
Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.  
Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia sunt,  
Et, quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunt.  
Ut ridentibus ardent, ita fletibus adflent  
Humani vultus: si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi; tunc tua me infortunia lædent.  
Telephe, vel Peleu, male si mandata loqueris,  
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo: tristia mœstum  
Vultum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;  
Ludentem, lasciva; severum, seria dictu.  
Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem

["Cicero also," says Addison, "has sprinkled several of his works with them; and, in his book on Oratory, quotes abundance of sayings as pieces of wit, which, upon examination, prove arrant puns. But the age in which the pun chiefly flourished was in the reign of James the First, who was himself a tolerable punster, and made very few bishops or privy councillors that had not some time or other signalled themselves by a clinch or a conundrum. The sermons of Bishop Andrews, and the tragedies of Shakspeare, are full of them. The sinner was punned into repentance by the former; as in the latter, nothing is more usual than to see a hero weeping and quibbling for a dozen lines together."]

<sup>1</sup> [In Vanbrugh's comedy of the "Provoked Husband."]

<sup>2</sup> "And in his ear I'll hollo Mortimer!"—1 *Henry IV.*

<sup>3</sup> ["Johnson. Pray, Mr. Bayes, who is that Drawcansir? Bayes. Why, Sir, a great hero, that frights his mistress, snubs up kings, baffles armies, and does what he will, without regard to numbers, good sense, or justice."—*Rehearsal.*]

And for expression's aid, 'tis said, or sung,  
She gave our mind's interpreter—the tongue,  
Who, worn with use, of late would fain dispense  
(At least in theatres) with common sense;  
O'erwhelm with sound the boxes, gallery, pit,  
And raise a laugh with any thing—but wit.

To skilful writers it will much import,  
Whence spring their scenes, from common life or court;

Whether they seek applause by smile or tear,  
To draw a "Lying Valet," or a "Lear,"  
A sage, or rakish youngster wild from school,  
A wandering "Peregrine," or plain "John Bull;"  
All persons please when nature's voice prevails,  
Scottish or Irish, born in Wilts or Wales.

Or follow common fame, or forge a plot.  
Who cares if mimic heroes lived or not?  
One precept serves to regulate the scene:—  
Make it appear as if it *might* have been.

If some Drawcansir<sup>3</sup> you aspire to draw,  
Present him raving and above all law:  
If female furies in your scheme are plann'd,  
Macbeth's fierce dame is ready to your hand;  
For tears and treachery, for good and evil,  
Constance, King Richard, Hamlet, and the Devil!  
But if a new design you dare essay,  
And freely wander from the beaten way,  
True to your characters, till all be past,  
Preserve consistency from first to last.

'T is hard to venture where our betters fail,  
Or lend fresh interest to a twice-told tale;

Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram;  
Aut ad humum morerore gravi deduct, et angit;  
Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.  
Si dicentes erunt fortunis absona dicta,  
Romani tollent equites peditesque cachinnum.  
Intererit multum, Davusne loquatur, an heros;  
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventa  
Fervidus; an matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;  
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;  
Colchus, an Assyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.  
Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge,  
Scriptor. Honoratum si forte reponis Achillem;  
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,  
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.  
Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,  
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes,  
Si quid inexperto scenæ committis, et audes  
Personam formare novam; servetur ad imum  
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.  
Difficile est proprie communia dicere\*; tuque  
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,  
Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.

\* "Difficile est proprie communia dicere."—Mde. Dacier, Mde. de Sévigné, Boileau, and others, have left their dispute on the meaning of this passage in a tract considerably longer than the poem of Horace. It is printed at the close of the eleventh volume of Madame de Sévigné's Letters, edited by Grouvelle, Paris, 1806. Presuming that all who can construe may venture an opinion on such subjects, particularly as so many who can not have taken the same liberty, I should have held my "farthing candle" as awkwardly as another, had not my respect for the wits of Louis the Fourteenth's Augustan siècle induced me to subjoin these illustrious authorities. 1st, Boileau: "Il est difficile de traiter des sujets qui sont à la portée de tout le monde d'une manière qui vous les rende propres, ce qui s'appelle s'approprier un sujet par le tour qu'on y donne." 2dly, Batteux: "Mais il est bien difficile de donner des traits propres et individuels aux êtres purement possibles." 3dly, Dacier: "Il est difficile de traiter convenablement ces caractères que tout le monde peut inventer." Mde. de Sévigné's opinion and translation, consisting of some thirty pages, I omit, particularly as M. Grouvelle observes, "La chose est bien remarquable, aucune de ces diverses in-

And yet, perchance, 'tis wiser to prefer  
A hackney'd plot, than choose a new, and err;  
Yet copy not too closely, but record,  
More justly, thought for thought than word for word,  
Nor trace your prototype through narrow ways,  
But only follow where he merits praise.

For you, young bard! whom luckless fate may lead  
To tremble on the nod of all who read,  
Ere your first score of cantos time unrolls,  
Beware—for God's sake, don't begin like Bowles!  
"Awake a louder and a loftier strain,"—  
And pray, what follows from his boiling brain?—

Publica materies privati juris erit, si  
Nec circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;  
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus  
Interpres, nec desilies imitator in arctum,  
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet, aut operis lex.  
Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclicus olim:  
"Fortunam Priami cantabo, et nobile bellum."  
Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatus?  
Parturiunt montes: nascetur ridiculus mus.

terpretations ne paraît être la véritable." But by way of comfort, it seems, fifty years afterwards, "Le lumineux Dumarsais" made his appearance, to set Horace on his legs again, "dissiper tous les nuages, et concilier tous les dissentiments;" and some fifty years hence, somebody, still more luminous, will doubtless start up and demolish Dumarsais and his system on this weighty affair, as if he were no better than Ptolemy and Tycho, or his comments of no more consequence than astronomical calculations on the present comet. I am happy to say, "la longueur de la dissertation" of M. D. prevents M. G. from saying any more on the matter. A better poet than Boileau, and at least as good a scholar as Sévigné, has said,

"A little learning is a dangerous thing."

And, by this comparison of comments, it may be perceived how a good deal may be rendered as perilous to the proprietors.—[Dr. Johnson gave the interpretation thus—"He means that it is difficult to appropriate to particular persons qualities which are common to all mankind, as Homer has done."—"It seems to result from the whole discussion," says Mr. Croker, "that, in the ordinary meaning of the words, the passage is obscure, and that, to make sense, we must either alter the words, or assign to them an unusual interpretation. All commentators are agreed, by the help of the context, what the general meaning must be; but no one seems able 'verbum verbo reddere fidus interpres.'" *Boswell*, vol. iii. p. 438.]—But, in our humble opinion, Boileau's translation is precisely that of this "fidus interpres."]

About two years ago a young man, named Townsend, was announced by Mr. Cumberland\* (in a review since deceased) as being engaged on an epic poem to be entitled "Armageddon." The plan and specimen promise much; but I hope neither to offend Mr. Townsend, nor his friends, by recommending to his attention the lines of Horace to which these rhymes allude. If Mr. Townsend succeeds in his undertaking, as there is reason to hope, how much will the world be indebted to Mr. Cumberland for bringing him before the public! But, till that eventful day arrives, it may be doubted whether the premature display of his plan (sublime as the ideas confessedly are) has not,—by raising expectation too high, or diminishing curiosity, by developing his argument,—rather incurred the hazard of injuring Mr. Townsend's future prospects. Mr. Cumberland (whose talents I shall not depreciate by the humble tribute of my praise) and

\* [On the original MS. we find,—"This note was written" [at Athens] "before the author was apprised of Mr. Cumberland's death." The old littérateur died in May 1811, and had the honour to be buried in Westminster Abbey, and to be eulogised, while the company stood round the grave, in the following manly style by the then dean, Dr. Vincent, his schoolfellow, and through life his friend.—"Good people! the person you see now deposited is Richard Cumberland, an author of no small merit: his writings were chiefly for the stage, but of strict moral tendency; they were not without faults, but they were not gross, abounding with oaths and libidinous expressions, as, I am shocked to observe, is the case of many of the present day. He wrote as much as any one of few wrote better; and his works will be held in the highest estimation, as long as the English language will be understood. He considered the theatre a school for moral improvement, and his remains are truly worthy of mingling

He sinks to Southey's level in a trice,  
Whose epic mountains never fail in mice!  
Not so of yore awoke your mighty sire  
The temper'd warblings of his master-lyre;  
Soft as the gentler breathing of the lute,  
"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit"  
He speaks, but, as his subject swells along,  
Earth, heaven, and Hades echo with the song.<sup>2</sup>  
Still to the midst of things he hastens on,  
As if we witness'd all already done;  
Leaves on his path whatever seems too mean  
To raise the subject, or adorn the scene;  
Gives, as each page improves upon the sight,  
Not smoke from brightness, but from darkness—light;

Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte!  
"Dic mihi, Musa, virum, captæ post tempora Trojæ,  
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes."  
Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem  
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,  
Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum Cyclope Charybdim.  
Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,  
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.  
Semper ad eventum festinat; et in medias res

Mr. Townsend must not suppose me actuated by unworthy motives in this suggestion. I wish the author all the success he can wish himself, and shall be truly happy to see epic poetry weighed up from the bathos where it lies sunken with Southey, Cottle, Cowley (Mrs. or Abraham), Ogilvy, Wilkie, Pye, and all the "dull of past and present days." Even if he is not a Milton, he may be better than Blackmore; if not a Homer, an Antimachus. I should deem myself presumptuous, as a young man, in offering advice, were it not addressed to one still younger. Mr. Townsend has the greatest difficulties to encounter: but in conquering them he will find employment; in having conquered them, his reward. I know too well "the scribbler's scoff, the critic's contumely;" and I am afraid time will teach Mr. Townsend to know them better. Those who succeed, and those who do not, must bear this alike, and it is hard to say which have most of it. I trust that Mr. Townsend's share will be from *envy*;—he will soon know mankind well enough not to attribute this expression to malice.—[This was penned at Athens. On his return to England Lord B. wrote to a friend:—"There is a sucking epic poet at Granta, a Mr. Townsend, protégé of the late Cumberland. Did you ever hear of him and his 'Armageddon'?" I think his plan (the man I don't know) borders on the sublime; though, perhaps, the anticipation of the 'Last Day' is a little too daring; at least, it looks like telling the Almighty what he is to do; and might remind an ill-natured person of the line—

"And fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

But I don't mean to cavil—only other folks will; and he may bring all the lambs of Jacob Behmen about his ears. However, I hope he will bring it to a conclusion, though Milton is in his way.—All Lord Byron's anticipations, with regard to this poem, were realised to the very letter. To gratify the curiosity which had been excited, Mr. Townsend, in 1815, was induced to publish eight out of the twelve books of which it was to consist. "In the benevolence of his heart, Mr. Cumberland," he says, "bestowed praise on me, certainly too abundantly and prematurely; but I hope that any deficiency on my part may be imputed to the true cause—my own inability to support a subject, under which the greatest mental powers must inevitably sink. My talents were neither equal to my own ambition, nor his zeal to serve me."

<sup>2</sup> [There is more of poetry in these verses upon Milton than in any other passage throughout the paraphrase.—MOORE.]

with the illustrious dead which surround us. Read his prose subjects on divinity! there you will find the true Christian spirit of the man who trusted in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May God forgive him his sins; and, at the resurrection of the just, receive him into everlasting glory!"

<sup>3</sup> The "London Review" set up in 1809, under Mr. Cumberland's editorial care, did not outlive many numbers. He spoke great things in the prospectus, about the distinguishing features of the journal: viz. its having the writer's name affixed to the articles. This plan has succeeded pretty well both in France and Germany, but has failed utterly as often as it has been tried in this country. It is needless, however, to go into any speculation on the principle *here*; for the "London Review," whether sent into the world with or without names, must soon have died of the original disease of dullness.]

And truth and fiction with such art compounds,  
We know not where to fix their several bounds.  
If you would please the public, deign to hear  
What soothes the many-headed monster's ear;  
If your heart triumph when the hands of all  
Applaud in thunder at the curtain's fall,  
Deserve those plaudits—study nature's page,  
And sketch the striking traits of every age;  
While varying man and varying years unfold  
Life's little tale, so oft, so vainly told:  
Observe his simple childhood's dawning days,  
His pranks, his prate, his playmates, and his plays;  
Till time at length the mannish tyro weans,  
And prurient vice outstrips his tardy teens!

Behold him Freshman! forced no more to groan  
O'er Virgil's<sup>1</sup> devilish verses and—his own;  
Prayers are too tedious, lectures too abstruse,  
He flies from Tavell's frown to "Fordham's Mews;"  
(Unlucky Tavell!<sup>2</sup> doom'd to daily cares  
By pugilistic pupils, and by bears,)<sup>3</sup>  
Fines, tutors, tasks, conventions threat in vain.  
Before hounds, hunters, and Newmarket plain.  
Rough with his elders, with his equals rash,  
Civil to sharpers, prodigal of cash;  
Constant to nought—save hazard and a whore,  
Yet cursing both—for both have made him sore;  
Unread (unless, since books beguile disease,  
The p—x becomes his passage to degrees);  
Fool'd, pillaged, dunn'd, he wastes his term away,  
And, unexpell'd perhaps, retires M. A.;  
Master of arts! as *hells* and *clubs*<sup>4</sup> proclaim,  
Where scarce a blackleg bears a brighter name!

Launch'd into life, extinct his early fire,  
He apes the selfish prudence of his sire;  
Marries for money, chooses friends for rank,  
Buys land, and shrewdly trusts not to the Bank;

Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit, et quæ  
Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit:  
Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,  
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet innum.  
Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi.  
Si plausoris egēs aulæ manentis, et usque  
Sessuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat;  
Etatis cuiusque notandi sunt tibi mores,  
Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.  
Reddere qui voces jam scit puer, et pede certo  
Signat humum; gessit paribus colludere, et iram  
Colligit ac ponit temere, et mutatur in horas.  
Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,  
Gaudet equis canibusque, et aprici gramine campi;  
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,  
Utilium tardus provisor, prodigius æris,  
Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix.  
Conversis studiis, ætas animusque virilis  
Quærit opes et amicitias, inservit honori;  
Commisisse cavet quod mox mutare laboret.

<sup>1</sup> Harvey, the *circulator* of the *circulation* of the blood, used to fling away Virgil in his ecstasy of admiration, and say, "the book had a devil." Now, such a character as I am copying would probably fling it away also, but rather wish that the devil had the book; not from dislike to the poet, but that a well-founded horror of hexameters. Indeed, the public school penance of "Long and Short" is enough to beget an antipathy to poetry for the residue of a man's life, and, perhaps, so far may be an advantage.

<sup>2</sup> "Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem." I dare say Mr. Tavell (to whom I mean no affront) will understand me; and it is no matter whether any one else does or no.—To the above events, "quæque ipse miserrima vidi, et quorum pars magna fui," all *times* and *terms* bear testimony.

<sup>3</sup> [The Rev. G. F. Tavell was a fellow and tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, during Lord Byron's residence, and owed this notice to the zeal with which he had protested

Sits in the Senate; gets a son and heir;  
Sends him to Harrow, for himself was there.  
Mute, though he votes, unless when call'd to cheer,  
His son's so sharp—he'll see the dog a peer!

Manhood declines—age palsies every limb;  
He quits the scene—or else the scene quits him;  
Scrapes wealth, o'er each departing penny grieves,  
And avarice seizes all ambition leaves;  
Counts cent per cent, and smiles, or vainly frets,  
O'er hoards diminish'd by young Hopeful's debts;  
Weights well and wisely what to sell or buy,  
Complete in all life's lessons—but to die;  
Peevish and spiteful, dotting, hard to please,  
Commending every time, save times like these;  
Crazed, querulous, forsaken, half forgot,  
Expires unwept—is buried—let him rot!

But from the Drama let me not digress,  
Nor spare my precepts, though they please you less.  
Though woman weep, and hardest hearts are stirr'd,  
When what is done is rather seen than heard,  
Yet many deeds preserved in history's page,  
Are better told than acted on the stage;  
The ear sustains what shocks the timid eye,  
And horror thus subsides to sympathy.  
True Briton all beside, I here am French—  
Bloodshed 't is surely better to retrench;  
The gladiatorial gore we teach to flow  
In tragic scene disgusts, though but in show;  
We hate the carnage while we see the trick,  
And find small sympathy in being sick.  
Not on the stage the regicide Macbeth  
Appals an audience with a monarch's death;  
To gaze when sable Hubert threatens to sear  
Young Arthur's eyes, can *ours* or *nature* bear?  
A halter'd heroine<sup>5</sup> Johnson sought to slay—  
We saved Irene, but half damn'd the play,

Multa senem conveniunt incommoda; vel quod  
Quærit, et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti;  
Vel quod res omnes timide gelideque ministrat,  
Dilator, spe longus, iners, avidusque futuri;  
Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti  
Se puero, castigator censorque minorum.  
Multa ferunt anni venientes comoda secum,  
Multa recedentes adiunt. Non forte seniles  
Mandantur juveni partes, pueroque viriles,  
Semper in adjunctis, ævoque morabimur aptis.  
Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur.  
Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ  
Ipse sibi tradit spectator. Non tamen intus  
Digna geri promes in scenam; multaque tolles  
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præsens.  
Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;  
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atræus;  
Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in angem.  
Quoddamque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

against some juvenile vagaries, sufficiently explained in Mr. Moore's Notices, vol. i. p. 210.]

<sup>4</sup> "Hell," a gaming-house so called, where you risk little, and are cheated a good deal. "Club," a pleasant purgatory, where you lose more, and are not supposed to be cheated at all.

<sup>5</sup> "Irene had to speak two lines with the bowstring round her neck; but the audience cried out 'Murder!' and she was obliged to go off the stage alive."—*Boswell's Johnson*. [These two lines were afterwards struck out, and Irene was carried off, to be put to death behind the scenes. "This shows," says Mr. Malone, "how ready modern audiences are to condemn, in a new play, what they have frequently endured very quietly in an old one. Rowe has made Moneses, in Tamerlane, die by the bowstring without offence." Davies assures us, in his Life of Garrick, that the strangling Irene, contrary to Horace's rule, *coram populo*, was suggested by Garrick. See Croker's Boswell, vol. i. p. 172.]

And (Heaven be praised!) our tolerating times  
Stint metamorphoses to pantomimes;  
And Lewis' self, with all his sprites, would quake  
To change Earl Osmond's negro to a snake!  
Because, in scenes exciting joy or grief,  
We loathe the action which exceeds belief:  
And yet, God knows! what may not authors do,  
Whose postscripts prate of dyeing "heroines blue?"<sup>1</sup>

Above all things, *Dan* Poet, if you can,  
Eke out your acts, I pray, with mortal man;  
Nor call a ghost, unless some cursed scrape  
Must open ten trap-doors for your escape.  
Of all the monstrous things I'd fain forbid,  
I loathe an opera worse than Dennis did;<sup>2</sup>  
Where good and evil persons, right or wrong,  
Rage, love, and aught but moralise, in song.  
Hail, last memorial of our foreign friends,  
Which Gaul allows, and still Hesperia lends!  
Napoleon's edicts no embargo lay  
On whores, spies, singers wisely shipp'd away.  
Our giant capital, whose squares are spread,  
Where rustics earn'd, and now may beg, their bread,

In all iniquity is grown so nice,  
It scorns amusements which are not of price.  
Hence the pert shopkeeper, whose throbbing ear  
Aches with orchestras which he pays to hear,  
Whom shame, not sympathy, forbids to snore,  
His anguish doubling by his own "encore;"  
Squeezed in "Fop's Alley," jostled by the beaux,  
Teased with his hat, and trembling for his toes;  
Scarce wrestles through the night, nor tastes of ease,  
Till the dropp'd curtain gives a glad release:  
Why this, and more, he suffers—can ye guess?—  
Because it costs him dear, and makes him dress!

Nec Deus interit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
Inciderit.

<sup>1</sup> In the postscript to the "Castle Spectre," Mr. Lewis tells us, that though blacks were unknown in England at the period of his action, yet he has made the anachronism to set off the scene; and if he could have produced the effect "by making his heroine blue,"—I quote him—"blue he would have made her!"

<sup>2</sup> [In 1706, Dennis, the critic, wrote an "Essay on the Operas after the Italian manner, which are about to be established on the English Stage;" in which he endeavoured to show, that it is a diversion of more pernicious consequence than the most licentious play that ever appeared upon the stage.]

<sup>3</sup> "The first theatrical representations, entitled 'Mysteries and Moralities,' were generally enacted at Christmas, by monks (as the only persons who could read), and latterly by the clergy and students of the universities. The dramatists personæ were usually Adam, Pater Cælestis, Faith, Vice, &c. &c.—See Warton's History of English Poetry. [These, to modern eyes, wild, uncouth, and generally profane performances, were thought to contribute so much to the information and instruction of the people, that one of the popes granted a pardon of one thousand days to every person who resorted peaceably to the plays acted in the Whitsunweek at Chester, beginning with the "Creation," and ending with the "General Judgment." These were performed at the expense of the different trading companies of that city. The "Creation" was performed by the drapers; the "Deluge" by the dyers; "Abraham, Melchisedec, and Lot" by the barbers; the "Purification" by the blacksmiths; the "Last Supper" by the bakers; the "Resurrection" by the skinners; and the "Ascension" by the tailors. In Mr. Payne Collier's work on English Dramatic Poetry, the reader will find an abstract of the several collections of these mystery-plays, which is not only interesting for the light it throws on the early days of our drama, but instructive and valuable for the curious information it preserves with respect to the strangely debased notions of Scripture history that prevailed, almost universally, before translations of the Bible were in common use. See also the Quarterly Review, vol. xlvi. p. 477.]

So prosper eunuchs from Etruscan schools;  
Give us but fiddlers, and they're sure of fools!  
Ere scenes were play'd by many a reverend clerk,<sup>3</sup>  
(What harm, if David danced before the ark?)<sup>4</sup>  
In Christmas revels, simple country folks  
Were pleased with morrice-mumm'ry, and coarse jokes.  
Improving years, with things no longer known,  
Produced blithe Punch and merry Madame Joan,  
Who still frisk on with feats so lowly low,  
'Tis strange Benvolio<sup>5</sup> suffers such a show;<sup>6</sup>  
Suppressing peer! to whom each vice gives place,  
Oaths, boxing, begging,—all, save rout and race.

Farce follow'd Comedy, and reach'd her prime,  
In ever-laughing Foote's fantastic time:  
Mad wag! who pardon'd none, nor spared the best,  
And turn'd some very serious things to jest.  
Nor church nor state escaped his public sneers,  
Arms nor the gown, priests, lawyers, volunteers.  
"Alas, poor Yorick!" now for ever mute!  
Whoever loves a laugh must sigh for Foote.

We smile, perforce, when histrionic scenes  
Ape the swoln dialogue of kings and queens,  
When "Chrononhotonthologos must die,"  
And Arthur struts in mimic majesty.

Moschus! with whom once more I hope to sit,  
And smile at folly, if we can't at wit;  
Yes, friend! for thee I'll quit my cynic cell,  
And bear Swift's motto, "Vive la bagatelle!"  
Which charm'd our days in each Ægean clime,  
As oft at home, with revelry and rhyme.<sup>7</sup>  
Then may Euphrosyne, who sped the past,  
Soothe thy life's scenes, nor leave thee in the last;  
But find in thine, like pagan Plato's bed,<sup>8</sup>  
Some merry manuscript of mimes, when dead.

Nec Deus interit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
Inciderit.

<sup>4</sup> [Here follows in the original MS.—

"Who did what Vestris—yet, at least,—cannot,  
And cut his kingly capers sans culotte."]

<sup>5</sup> Benvolio does not bet; but every man who maintains race-horses is a promoter of all the concomitant evils of the turf. Avoiding to bet is a little pharisaical. Is it an excusation? I think not. I never yet heard a bawd praised for chastity, because *she herself* did not commit fornication!

<sup>6</sup> [For Benvolio we have, in the original MS., "Earl Grosvenor;" and for the next couplet—

"Suppressing peer! to whom each vice gives place,  
Save gambling—for his Lordship loves a race."

But we cannot trace the exact propriety of the allusions. Lord Grosvenor, now Marquis of Westminster, no doubt distinguished himself by some attack on the Sunday newspapers, or the like, at the same time that he was known to keep a stud at Newmarket—but why a long note on a subject certainly insignificant, and perhaps mistaken?

<sup>7</sup> [In dedicating the fourth canto of "Childe Harold" to his fellow traveller Lord Byron describes him as "one to whom he was indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship; one whom he had long known, and accompanied far, whom he had found wakeful over his sickness and kind in his sorrow, glad in his prosperity and firm in his adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril;"—while Mr. Hobbouse, in describing a short tour to Negroponte, in which his noble friend was unable to accompany him, regrets the absence of a companion, "who, to quickness of observation and ingenuity of remark, united that gay good humour which keeps alive the attention under the pressure of fatigue, and softens the aspect of every difficulty and danger."]

<sup>8</sup> Under Plato's pillow a volume of the *Mimes* of Sophron was found the day he died.—*Vide* Barthélemi, De Pauw, or Diogenes Laërtius, if agreeable. De Pauw calls it a jest-book. Cumberland, in his Observer, terms it moral, like the sayings of Publius Syrus.

Now to the Drama let us bend our eyes,  
Where fetter'd by whig Walpole low she lies;<sup>1</sup>  
Corruption foil'd her, for she fear'd her glance;  
Decorum left her for an opera dance!  
Yet Chesterfield<sup>2</sup>, whose polish'd pen inveighs  
'Gainst laughter, fought for freedom to our plays;  
Uncheck'd by megrims of patrician brains,  
And damning dulness of lord chamberlains.  
Repeat that act<sup>3</sup>! again let Humour roam,  
Wild o'er the stage—we've time for tears at home;  
Let "Archer" plant the horns on "Sullen's" brows,  
And "Estifania" gull her "Copper"<sup>4</sup> spouse;  
The moral's scant—but that may be excused,  
Men go not to be lectured, but amused.  
He whom our plays dispose to good or ill  
Must wear a head in want of Willis' skill;<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [The following is a brief sketch of the origin of the Playhouse Bill:—In 1735, Sir John Barnard brought in a bill "to restrain the number of houses for playing of interludes, and for the better regulating of common players." The minister, Sir Robert Walpole, conceiving this to be a favourable opportunity of checking the abuse of theatrical representation, proposed to insert a clause to ratify and confirm, if not enlarge, the power of the Lord Chamberlain in licensing plays; and at the same time insinuated, that unless this addition was made the king would not pass it. But Sir John Barnard strongly objected to this clause; contending that the power of that officer was already too great, and had been often wantonly exercised. He therefore withdrew his bill, rather than establish by law a power in a single officer so much under the direction of the Crown. In the course, however, of the session of 1737, an opportunity offered, which Sir Robert did not fail to seize. The manager of Goodman's Fields Theatre having brought to him a farce called "The Golden Rump," which had been proffered for exhibition, the minister paid the profits which might have accrued from the performance, and detained the copy. He then made extracts of the most exceptionable passages, abounding in profaneness, sedition, and blasphemy, read them to the house, and obtained leave to bring in a bill to limit the number of playhouses; to subject all dramatic writings to the inspection of the Lord Chamberlain; and to compel the proprietors to take out a license for every production before it could appear on the stage.]

<sup>2</sup> His speech on the Licensing Act is one of his most eloquent efforts.—[Though the Playhouse Bill is generally said to have been warmly opposed in both Houses, this speech of the Earl of Chesterfield is the only trace of that opposition to be found in the periodical publications of the times. The following passage, which relates to the powers of the Lord Chamberlain, will show the style of the oration:—"The bill is not only an encroachment upon liberty, but it is likewise an encroachment on property. Wit, my Lords, is a sort of property; it is the property of those who have it, and too often the only property they have to depend on. Thank God! my Lords, we have a dependence of another kind; we have a much less precarious support, and, therefore, cannot feel the inconveniences of the bill now before us; but it is our duty to encourage and protect wit, whosever's property it may be. Those gentlemen who have any such property are all, I hope, our friends; do not let us subject them to any unnecessary or arbitrary restraint. I must own, I cannot easily agree to the laying of any tax upon wit; but by this bill it is to be heavily taxed, it is to be excised; for, if this bill passes, it cannot be retailed in a proper way without a permit: and the Lord Chamberlain is to have the honour of being chief gauger, supervisor, commissioner, judge, and jury. But, what is still more hard, though the poor author,—the proprietor, I should say,—cannot, perhaps, dine till he has found out and agreed with a purchaser, yet, before he can propose to seek for a purchaser, he must patiently submit to have his goods rummaged at this new excise-office; where they may be detained for fourteen days, and even then he may find them returned as prohibited goods; by which his chief and best market will be for ever shut against him, without the least shadow of reason, either from the laws of his country or the laws of the stage. These hardships, this hazard, which every gentleman will be exposed to who writes any thing for the stage, must certainly prevent every man of a generous and free spirit from attempting any thing in that way; and as the stage has always been the proper channel for wit and humour, therefore, my Lords, when I speak against this bill, I must think I plead the cause of wit, I plead the cause of humour, I plead the cause of the British stage, and of every gentleman of taste in the kingdom. The stage and the press, my Lords, are two of our out-ventures; if we remove them, if we hoodwink them, if we throw them in fetters, the enemy may surprise us. Therefore, I must

Ay, but Macheath's example—psha!—no more!  
It form'd no thieves—the thief was form'd before;<sup>6</sup>  
And, spite of puritans and Collier's curse,<sup>7</sup>  
Plays make mankind no better, and no worse.  
Then spare our stage, ye methodistic men!  
Nor burn damn'd Drury if it rise again.<sup>8</sup>  
But why to brain-scorch'd bigots thus appeal?  
Can heavenly mercy dwell with earthly zeal?  
For times of fire and faggot let them hope!  
Times dear alike to puritan or pope.  
As pious Calvin saw Servetus blaze,  
So would new sects on newer victims gaze.  
E'en now the songs of Solyra begin;  
Faith cants, perplex'd apologist of sin!  
While the Lord's servant chastens whom he loves,  
And Simeon<sup>9</sup> kicks, where Baxter only "shoves."<sup>10</sup>

look upon the bill now before us as a step for introducing arbitrary power into this kingdom."

<sup>3</sup> ["*Repeat that Act!*"]—After a lapse of nearly a century, the state of the laws affecting dramatic literature, and the performance of the drama, has again become the subject of parliamentary inquiry and report.]

<sup>4</sup> Michael Perez, the "Copper Captain," in "Rule a Wife and have a Wife."

<sup>5</sup> [Of this "skill," Reynolds, in his "Life and Times," records a remarkable instance. The doctor had, it seems, an "eye like Mars, to threaten and command." *Threaten*, in every sense of the word; for his numerous patients stood as much in awe of this formidable weapon as of bars, chains, or strait waistcoats. After a few weeks' attendance on the King, he allowed his Majesty a razor to shave himself, and a penknife to cut his nails. For this he was one evening charged by the other physicians, before a committee of the House of Commons, with rashness and imprudence. Mr. Burke was very severe on this point, and authoritatively demanded to know, "If the royal patient had become outrageous at the moment, what power the doctor possessed of instantaneously terrifying him into obedience?"—"Place the candles between us, Mr. Burke," replied the doctor, in an equally authoritative tone, "and I'll give you an answer. There, Sir! by the eye. I should have looked at him *thus*, Sir, *thus!*" Mr. Burke instantaneously averted his head; and, making no reply, evidently acknowledged this *basilik* authority. This story was often related by the doctor himself.]

<sup>6</sup> [Dr. Johnson was of the like opinion. Of the "Beggars' Opera" he says, in his *Life of Gay*:—"The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is, therefore, not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and housebreakers seldom frequent the playhouse, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage." On another occasion, the common question with regard to this opera having been introduced, he said,—"As to this matter, which has been very much contested, I myself am of opinion, that more influence has been ascribed to it than in reality it ever had; for I do not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at that representation."—See Croker's *Boswell*, vol. iii. p. 242.]

<sup>7</sup> Jerry Collier's controversy with Congreve, &c. on the subject of the drama, is too well known to require further comment.

<sup>8</sup> ["*If it rise again.*"]—When Lord Byron penned this couplet at Athens, he little imagined that he should so soon be called on to write an address to be spoken on the opening of New Drury, and become one of the committee for managing its concerns.]

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Simeon is the very bully of beliefs, and castigator of "good works." He is ably supported by John Stickle, a labourer in the same vineyard:—but I say no more, for, according to Johnny in full congregation, "*no hopes for them as laughs.*"—[The Rev. Charles Simeon, fellow of King's College, Cambridge,—a zealous Calvinist, who, in consequence of his zeal, has been engaged in sundry warm disputations with other divines of the university. Besides many single sermons, he has published "Helps to Composition, or 500 Skeleton Sermons," in five volumes; and "Horæ Homileticæ, or Discourses (in the form of skeletons) upon the whole Scripture," in eleven volumes.]

<sup>10</sup> "Baxter's Shove to heavy—a—d Christians"—the veritable title of a book once in good repute, and likely enough to be so again.—[Richard Baxter is described by Granger as "a man famous for weakness of body and strength of mind; for

Whom nature guides, so writes, that every dunce,  
Enraptured, thinks to do the same at once;  
But after inky thumbs and bitten nails,  
And twenty scatter'd quires, the coxcomb fails.

Let Pastoral be dumb; for who can hope  
To match the youthful eclogues of our Pope?  
Yet his and Phillips' faults, of different kind,  
For art too rude, for nature too refined,  
Instruct how hard the medium 'tis to hit  
'Twixt too much polish and too coarse a wit.

A vulgar scribbler, certes, stands disgraced  
In this nice age, when all aspire to taste;  
The dirty language, and the noisome jest,  
Which pleased in Swift of yore, we now detest;  
Proscribed not only in the world polite,  
But even too nasty for a city knight!

Peace to Swift's faults! his wit hath made them pass,  
Unmatch'd by all, save matchless Hudibras!  
Whose author is perhaps the first we meet,  
Who from our couplet lopp'd two final feet;  
Nor less in merit than the longer line,  
This measure moves a favourite of the Nine.  
Though at first view eight feet may seem in vain  
Form'd, save in ode, to bear a serious strain,  
Yet Scott has shown our wondering isle of late  
This measure shrinks not from a theme of weight,  
And, varied skilfully, surpasses far  
Heroic rhyme, but most in love and war,  
Where fluctuations, tender or sublime,  
Are curb'd too much by long-recurring rhyme.

But many a skilful judge abhors to see,  
What few admire—irregularity.  
This some vouchsafe to pardon; but 'tis hard  
When such a word contents a British bard.

And must the bard his glowing thoughts confine,  
Lest censure hover o'er some faulty line?  
Remove what'er a critic may suspect,  
To gain the paltry suffrage of *correct*?"

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quis  
Speret idem: sudet multum frustra que laboret  
Ausus idem: tantum series juncturaque pollet;  
Tantum de medio summis accedit honoris.

Silvis deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,  
Ne, velut innati trivis ac pene forenses,  
Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus unquam,  
Aut immunda crepent, ignominiosaque dicta.  
Offendunt enim, quibus est equus, et pater, et res:  
Nec, si quid fricti cicieris probat et nucis emtor,  
Æquis accipiunt amvis, donantque corona.

Syllaba longa brevi subjecta vocatur iambus,  
Pes citus: unde etiam trimetris accrescere jussit  
Nomen iambis, cum senos rederet ictus,  
Primus ad extremum similis sibi: non ita pridem,  
Tardior ut paulo graviore paterna recepit  
Spondeos stabiles in jura ut de sede secundâ  
Cederet aut quarta socialiter. Hic et in Acci  
Nobilibus trimetris appareret rarus, et Enni.  
In scenam missos magno cum pondere versus,  
Aut operæ celeris nimium curaque carentis,  
Aut ignorate premit artis crimine turpi.  
Non quisvis ridet immodulata poemata iudex;  
Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.

having the strongest sense of religion himself, and exciting a sense of it in the thoughtless and profligate; for preaching more sermons, engaging in more controversies, and writing more books, than any other non-conformist were never mended. Dr. Barrow says, that "his practical writings were never mended, his controversial seldom confuted." On Boswell's asking Johnson which of them he should read, the Doctor replied, "Any of them; they are all good."]

Or prune the spirit of each daring phrase,  
To fly from error, not to merit praise?

Ye, who seek finish'd models, never cease,  
By day and night, to read the works of Greece.  
But our good fathers never bent their brains  
To heathen Greek, content with native strains.  
The few who read a page, or used a pen,  
Were satisfied with Chaucer and old Ben;  
The jokes and numbers suited to their taste  
Were quaint and careless, any thing but chaste;  
Yet whether right or wrong the ancient rules,  
It will not do to call our fathers fools!  
Though you and I, who eruditely know  
To separate the elegant and low,  
Can also, when a hobbling line appears,  
Detect with fingers, in default of ears.

In sooth I do not know, or greatly care  
To learn, who our first English strollers were;  
Or if, till roofs received the vagrant art,  
Our Muse, like that of Thespis, kept a cart;  
But this is certain, since our Shakspeare's days,  
There's pomp enough, if little else, in plays;  
Nor will Melpomene ascend her throne  
Without high heels, white plume, and Bristol stone.

Old comedies still meet with much applause,  
Though too licentious for dramatic laws:  
At least, we moderns, wisely, 'tis confest,  
Curtail, or silence, the lascivious jest.

What'er their follies, and their faults beside,  
Our enterprising bards pass nought untried;  
Nor do they merit slight applause who choose  
An English subject for an English muse,  
And leave to minds which never dare invent  
French flippancy and German sentiment.  
Where is that living language which could claim  
Poetic more, as philosophic, fame,  
If all our bards, more patient of delay,  
Would stop, like Pope<sup>1</sup>, to polish by the way?

Iclicone vager, scribamque licenter, ut omnes  
Visuros peccata putem mea, tutus, et intra  
Spem venia cautus? vitavi denique culpam,  
Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Græca  
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.  
At vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros et  
Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque,  
Ne dicam stulte, mirati; si modo ego et vos  
Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,  
Legitimumque sonum digitis callemus et aure.  
Igotum tragicæ genus invenisse Camœnæ  
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis,  
Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fœcibus ora.  
Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ  
Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,  
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

Successit vetus his comœdia, non sine multa  
Laude; sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim  
Dignam lege regi; lex est accepta; chorusque  
Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.  
Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ;  
Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Græca  
Ausu deserere, et celebrare domestica facta,  
Vel qui prætextas, vel qui docuere togatas.  
Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis,

<sup>1</sup> ["They support Pope, I see, in the Quarterly."]—wrote Lord Byron in 1820, from Ravenna—"it is a sin and a shame, and a damnation, that Pope!! should require it: but he does. Those miserable mountebanks of the day, the poets, disgrace themselves, and deny God, in running down Pope, the most faultless of poets." Again, in the same year:—"I have at last lost all patience with the atrocious cant and nonsense about Pope with which our present \* \* \* s are overflowing, and am