

SAMUEL JOHNSON

THE WORKS OF SAMUEL
JOHNSON, LL.D. IN
ELEVEN VOLUMES,
VOLUME 06

Samuel Johnson

**The Works of Samuel Johnson,
LL.D. in Eleven Volumes, Volume 06**

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The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. in
Eleven Volumes, Volume 06 / Reviews,
Political Tracts, and Lives of Eminent Persons

LETTER ON DU HALDE'S HISTORY OF CHINA, 1738

There are few nations in the world more talked of, or less known, than the Chinese. The confused and imperfect account which travellers have given of their grandeur, their sciences, and their policy, have, hitherto, excited admiration, but have not been sufficient to satisfy even a superficial curiosity. I, therefore, return you my thanks for having undertaken, at so great an expense, to convey to English readers the most copious and accurate account, yet published, of that remote and celebrated people, whose antiquity, magnificence, power, wisdom, peculiar customs, and excellent constitution, undoubtedly deserve the attention of the publick.

As the satisfaction found in reading descriptions of distant countries arises from a comparison which every reader naturally makes, between the ideas which he receives from the relation, and those which were familiar to him before; or, in other words, between the countries with which he is acquainted, and that which the author displays to his imagination; so it varies according to the likeness or dissimilitude of the manners of the two nations. Any custom or law, unheard and unthought of before, strikes us with that surprise which is the effect of novelty; but a practice conformable to our own pleases us, because it flatters our self-love, by showing us that our opinions are approved by the general concurrence of mankind. Of these two pleasures, the first is more violent, the other more lasting; the first seems to partake more of instinct than reason, and is not easily to be explained, or defined; the latter has its foundation in good sense and reflection, and evidently depends on the same principles with most human passions.

An attentive reader will frequently feel each of these agreeable emotions in the perusal of Du Halde. He will find a calm, peaceful satisfaction, when he reads the moral precepts and wise instructions of the Chinese sages; he will find that virtue is in every place the same; and will look with new contempt on those wild reasoners, who affirm, that morality is merely ideal, and that the distinctions between good and ill are wholly chimerical.

But he will enjoy all the pleasure that novelty can afford, when he becomes acquainted with the Chinese government and constitution; he will be amazed to find that there is a country where nobility and knowledge are the same, where men advance in rank as they advance in learning, and promotion is the effect of virtuous industry; where no man thinks ignorance a mark of greatness, or laziness the privilege of high birth.

His surprise will be still heightened by the relations he will there meet with, of honest ministers, who, however incredible it may seem, have been seen more than once in that monarchy, and have adventured to admonish the emperours of any deviation from the laws of their country, or any error in their conduct, that has endangered either their own safety, or the happiness of their people. He will read of emperours, who, when they have been addressed in this manner, have neither stormed, nor threatened, nor kicked their ministers, nor thought it majestick to be obstinate in the wrong; but have, with a greatness of mind worthy of a Chinese monarch, brought their actions willingly to the test of reason, law, and morality, and scorned to exert their power in defence of that which they could not support by argument.

I must confess my wonder at these relations was very great, and had been much greater, had I not often entertained my imagination with an instance of the like conduct in a prince of England, on an occasion that happened not quite a century ago, and which I shall relate, that so remarkable an example of spirit and firmness in a subject, and of conviction and compliance in a prince, may not be forgotten. And I hope you will look upon this letter as intended to do honour to my country, and not to serve your interest by promoting your undertaking.

The prince, at the christening of his first son, had appointed a noble duke to stand as proxy for the father of the princess, without regard to the claim of a marquis, (heir apparent to a higher title,) to whom, as lord of the bedchamber, then in waiting, that honour properly belonged. —The marquis was wholly unacquainted with the affair, till he heard, at dinner, the duke's health drunk, by the name of the prince he was that evening to represent. This he took an opportunity, after dinner, of inquiring the reason of, and was informed, by the prince's treasurer, of his highness's intention. The marquis immediately declared, that he thought his right invaded, and his honour injured, which he could not bear without requiring satisfaction from the usurper of his privileges; nor would he longer serve a prince who paid no regard to his lawful pretensions. The treasurer could not deny that the marquis's claim was incontestable, and, by his permission, acquainted the prince with his resolution. The prince, thereupon, sending for the marquis, demanded, with a resentful and imperious air, how he could dispute his commands, and by what authority he presumed to control him in the management of his own family, and the christening of his own son. The marquis answered, that he did not encroach upon the prince's right, but only defended his own: that he thought his honour concerned, and, as he was a young man, would not enter the world with the loss of his reputation. The prince, exasperated to a very high degree, repeated his commands; but the marquis, with a spirit and firmness not to be depressed or shaken, persisted in his determination to assert his claim, and concluded with declaring that he would do himself the justice that was denied him; and that not the prince himself should trample on his character. He was then ordered to withdraw, and the duke coming to him, assured him, that the honour was offered him unasked; that when he accepted it, he was not informed of his lordship's claim, and that now he very willingly resigned it. The marquis very gracefully acknowledged the civility of the duke's expressions, and declared himself satisfied with his grace's conduct; but thought it inconsistent with his honour to accept the representation as a cession of the duke, or on any other terms than as his own acknowledged right. The prince, being informed of the whole conversation, and having, upon inquiry, found all the precedents on the marquis's side, thought it below his dignity to persist in an error, and, restoring the marquis to his right upon his own conditions, continued him in his favour, believing that he might safely trust his affairs in the hands of a man, who had so nice a sense of honour, and so much spirit to assert it.

REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE CONDUCT OF THE DUTCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH ¹

The universal regard, which is paid by mankind to such accounts of publick transactions as have been written by those who were engaged in them, may be, with great probability, ascribed to that ardent love of truth, which nature has kindled in the breast of man, and which remains even where every other laudable passion is extinguished. We cannot but read such narratives with uncommon curiosity, because we consider the writer as indubitably possessed of the ability to give us just representations, and do not always reflect, that, very often, proportionate to the opportunities of knowing the truth, are the temptations to disguise it.

Authors of this kind have, at least, an incontestable superiority over those whose passions are the same, and whose knowledge is less. It is evident that those who write in their own defence, discover often more impartiality, and less contempt of evidence, than the advocates which faction or interest have raised in their favour.

It is, however, to be remembered, that the parent of all memoirs, is the ambition of being distinguished from the herd of mankind, and the fear of either infamy or oblivion, passions which cannot but have some degree of influence, and which may, at least, affect the writer's choice of facts, though they may not prevail upon him to advance known falsehoods. He may aggravate or extenuate particular circumstances, though he preserves the general transaction; as the general likeness may be preserved in painting, though a blemish is hid or a beauty improved.

Every man that is solicitous about the esteem of others, is, in a great degree, desirous of his own, and makes, by consequence, his first apology for his conduct to himself; and when he has once deceived his own heart, which is, for the greatest part, too easy a task, he propagates the deceit in the world, without reluctance or consciousness of falsehood.

But to what purpose, it may be asked, are such reflections, except to produce a general incredulity, and to make history of no use? The man who knows not the truth cannot, and he who knows it, will not tell it; what then remains, but to distrust every relation, and live in perpetual negligence of past events; or, what is still more disagreeable, in perpetual suspense?

That by such remarks some incredulity is, indeed, produced, cannot be denied; but distrust is a necessary qualification of a student in history. Distrust quickens his discernment of different degrees of probability, animates his search after evidence, and, perhaps, heightens his pleasure at the discovery of truth; for truth, though not always obvious, is generally discoverable; nor is it any where more likely to be found than in private memoirs, which are generally published at a time when any gross falsehood may be detected by living witnesses, and which always contain a thousand incidents, of which the writer could not have acquired a certain knowledge, and which he has no reason for disguising.

Such is the account lately published by the dutchess of Marlborough, of her own conduct, by which those who are very little concerned about the character which it is principally intended to preserve or to retrieve, may be entertained and instructed. By the perusal of this account, the inquirer into human nature may obtain an intimate acquaintance with the characters of those whose names have crowded the latest histories, and discover the relation between their minds and their actions. The historian may trace the progress of great transactions, and discover the secret causes of important events. And, to mention one use more, the polite writer may learn an unaffected dignity of style, and an artful simplicity of narration.

¹ From the Gentleman's Magazine, 1742.

The method of confirming her relation, by inserting, at length, the letters that every transaction occasioned, has not only set the greatest part of the work above the danger of confutation, but has added to the entertainment of the reader, who has now the satisfaction of forming to himself the characters of the actors, and judging how nearly such, as have hitherto been given of them, agree with those which they now give of themselves.

Even of those whose letters could not be made publick, we have a more exact knowledge than can be expected from general histories, because we see them in their private apartments, in their careless hours, and observe those actions in which they indulged their own inclinations, without any regard to censure or applause.

Thus it is, that we are made acquainted with the disposition of king William, of whom it may be collected, from various instances, that he was arbitrary, insolent, gloomy, rapacious, and brutal; that he was, at all times, disposed to play the tyrant; that he had, neither in great things, nor in small, the manners of a gentleman; that he was capable of gaining money by mean artifices, and that he only regarded his promise when it was his interest to keep it.

There are, doubtless, great numbers who will be offended with this delineation of the mind of the immortal William, but they whose honesty or sense enables them to consider impartially the events of his reign, will now be enabled to discover the reason of the frequent oppositions which he encountered, and of the personal affronts which he was, sometimes, forced to endure. They will observe, that it is not always sufficient to do right, and that it is often necessary to add gracefulness to virtue. They will recollect how vain it is to endeavour to gain men by great qualities, while our cursory behaviour is insolent and offensive; and that those may be disgusted by little things, who can scarcely be pleased with great.

Charles the second, by his affability and politeness, made himself the idol of the nation, which he betrayed and sold. William the third was, for his insolence and brutality, hated by that people, which he protected and enriched:—had the best part of these two characters been united in one prince, the house of Bourbon had fallen before him.

It is not without pain, that the reader observes a shade encroaching upon the light with which the memory of queen Mary has been hitherto invested—the popular, the beneficent, the pious, the celestial queen Mary, from whose presence none ever withdrew without an addition to his happiness. What can be charged upon this delight of human kind? Nothing less than that *she wanted bowels*, and was insolent with her power; that she was resentful, and pertinacious in her resentment; that she descended to mean acts of revenge, when heavier vengeance was not in her power; that she was desirous of controlling where she had no authority, and backward to forgive, even when she had no real injury to complain of.

This is a character so different from all those that have been, hitherto, given of this celebrated princess, that the reader stands in suspense, till he considers the inconsistencies in human conduct, remembers that no virtue is without its weakness, and considers that queen Mary's character has, hitherto, had this great advantage, that it has only been compared with those of kings.

The greatest number of the letters inserted in this account, were written by queen Anne, of which it may be truly observed, that they will be equally useful for the, confutation of those who have exalted or depressed her character. They are written with great purity and correctness, without any forced expressions, affected phrases, or unnatural sentiments; and show uncommon clearness of understanding, tenderness of affection, and rectitude of intention; but discover, at the same time, a temper timorous, anxious, and impatient of misfortune; a tendency to burst into complaints, helpless dependance on the affection of others, and a weak desire of moving compassion. There is, indeed, nothing insolent or overbearing; but then there is nothing great, or firm, or regal; nothing that enforces obedience and respect, or which does not rather invite opposition and petulance. She seems born for friendship, not for government; and to be unable to regulate the conduct of others, otherwise than by her own example.

That this character is just, appears from the occurrences in her reign, in which the nation was governed, for many years, by a party whose principles she detested, but whose influence she knew not how to obviate, and to whose schemes she was subservient against her inclination.

The charge of tyrannising over her, which was made, by turns, against each party, proves that, in the opinion of both, she was easily to be governed; and though it may be supposed, that the letters here published were selected with some regard to respect and ceremony, it appears, plainly enough, from them, that she was what she has been represented, little more than the slave of the Marlborough family.

The inferiour characters, as they are of less importance, are less accurately delineated; the picture of Harley is, at least, partially drawn: all the deformities are heightened, and the beauties, for beauties of mind he certainly had, are entirely omitted.

REVIEW OF MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF AUGUSTUS;

BY THOMAS BLACKWELL, J.U.D

PRINCIPAL OF MARISCHAL COLLEGE,
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN ²

The first effect, which this book has upon the reader, is that of disgusting him with the author's vanity. He endeavours to persuade the world, that here are some new treasures of literature spread before his eyes; that something is discovered, which, to this happy day, had been concealed in darkness; that, by his diligence, time has been robbed of some valuable monument which he was on the point of devouring; and that names and facts, doomed to oblivion, are now restored to fame.

How must the unlearned reader be surprised, when he shall be told that Mr. Blackwell has neither digged in the ruins of any demolished city, nor found out the way to the library of Fez; nor had a single book in his hands, that has not been in the possession of every man that was inclined to read it, for years and ages; and that his book relates to a people, who, above all others, have furnished employment to the studious, and amusements to the idle; who have scarcely left behind them a coin or a stone, which has not been examined and explained a thousand times; and whose dress, and food, and household stuff, it has been the pride of learning to understand.

A man need not fear to incur the imputation of vicious diffidence or affected humility, who should have forborne to promise many novelties, when he perceived such multitudes of writers possessed of the same materials, and intent upon the same purpose. Mr. Blackwell knows well the opinion of Horace, concerning those that open their undertakings with magnificent promises; and he knows, likewise, the dictates of common sense and common honesty, names of greater authority than that of Horace, who direct, that no man should promise what he cannot perform.

I do not mean to declare, that this volume has nothing new, or that the labours of those who have gone before our author, have made his performance an useless addition to the burden of literature. New works may be constructed with old materials; the disposition of the parts may show contrivance; the ornaments interspersed may discover elegance.

It is not always without good effect, that men, of proper qualifications, write, in succession, on the same subject, even when the latter add nothing to the information given by the former; for the same ideas may be delivered more intelligibly or more delightfully by one than by another, or with attractions that may lure minds of a different form. No writer pleases all, and every writer may please some.

But, after all, to inherit is not to acquire; to decorate is not to make; and the man, who had nothing to do but to read the ancient authors, who mention the Roman affairs, and reduce them to common places, ought not to boast himself as a great benefactor to the studious world.

After a preface of boast, and a letter of flattery, in which he seems to imitate the address of Horace, in his "*vile potabis modicis Sabinum*"—he opens his book with telling us, that the "Roman republic, after the horrible proscription, was no more at *bleeding Rome*. The regal power of her consuls, the authority of her senate, and the majesty of her people, were now trampled under foot;

² Literary Magazine, vol. i. p. 41. 1756.

these [for those] divine laws and hallowed customs, that had been the essence of her constitution—were set at nought, and her best friends were lying exposed in their blood."

These were surely very dismal times to those who suffered; but I know not, why any one but a schoolboy, in his declamation, should whine over the commonwealth of Rome, which grew great only by the misery of the rest of mankind. The Romans, like others, as soon as they grew rich, grew corrupt, and, in their corruption, sold the lives and freedoms of themselves, and of one another.

"About this time, Brutus had his patience put to the *highest* trial: he had been married to Clodia; but whether the family did not please him, or whether he was dissatisfied with the lady's behaviour during his absence, he soon entertained thoughts of a separation. *This raised a good deal of talk*, and the women of the Clodian family inveighed bitterly against Brutus—but he married Portia, who was worthy of such a father as M. Cato, and such a husband as M. Brutus. She had a soul capable of an *exalted passion*, and found a proper object to raise and give it a sanction; she did not only love but adored her husband; his worth, his truth, his every shining and heroic quality, made her gaze on him like a god, while the endearing returns of esteem and tenderness she met with, brought her joy, her pride, her every wish to centre in her beloved Brutus."

When the reader has been awakened by this rapturous preparation, he hears the whole story of Portia in the same luxuriant style, till she breathed out her last, a little before the *bloody proscription*, and "Brutus complained heavily of his friends at Rome, as not having paid due attention to his lady in the declining state of her health."

He is a great lover of modern terms. His senators and their wives are *gentlemen and ladies*. In this review of Brutus's army, *who was under the command of gallant men, not braver officers than true patriots*, he tells us, "that Sextus, the questor, was *paymaster, secretary at war, and commissary general*; and that the *sacred discipline* of the Romans required the closest connexion, like that of father and son, to subsist between the general of an army and his questor. Cicero was *general of the cavalry*, and the next *general officer* was Flavius, *master of the artillery*, the elder Lentulus was *admiral*, and the younger *rode in the band of volunteers*; under these the tribunes, *with many others, too tedious to name*." Lentulus, however, was but a subordinate officer; for we are informed afterwards, that the Romans had made Sextus Pompeius lord high admiral in all the seas of their dominions. Among other affectations of this writer, is a furious and unnecessary zeal for liberty; or rather, for one form of government as preferable to another. This, indeed, might be suffered, because political institution is a subject in which men have always differed, and, if they continue to obey their lawful governours, and attempt not to make innovations, for the sake of their favourite schemes, they may differ for ever, without any just reproach from one another. But who can bear the hardy champion, who ventures nothing? who, in full security, undertakes the defence of the assassination of Cassar, and declares his resolution to speak plain? Yet let not just sentiments be overlooked: he has justly observed, that the greater part of mankind will be naturally prejudiced against Brutus, for all feel the benefits of private friendship; but few can discern the advantages of a well-constituted government ³.

We know not whether some apology may not be necessary for the distance between the first account of this book and its continuation. The truth is, that this work, not being forced upon our attention by much publick applause or censure, was sometimes neglected, and sometimes forgotten; nor would it, perhaps, have been now resumed, but that we might avoid to disappoint our readers by an abrupt desertion of any subject.

It is not our design to criticise the facts of this history, but the style; not the veracity, but the address of the writer; for, an account of the ancient Romans, as it cannot nearly interest any present reader, and must be drawn from writings that have been long known, can owe its value only to the language in which it is delivered, and the reflections with which it is accompanied. Dr. Blackwell,

³ The first part of this review closed here. What follows did not appear until seven months after. To which delay the writer alludes with provoking severity.

however, seems to have heated his imagination, so as to be much affected with every event, and to believe that he can affect others. Enthusiasm is, indeed, sufficiently contagious; but I never found any of his readers much enamoured of the *glorious Pompey, the patriot approv'd*, or much incensed against the *lawless Caesar*, whom this author, probably, stabs every day and night in his sleeping or waking dreams.

He is come too late into the world with his fury for freedom, with his Brutus and Cassius. We have all, on this side of the Tweed, long since settled our opinions: his zeal for Roman liberty and declamations against the violators of the republican constitution, only stand now in the reader's way, who wishes to proceed in the narrative without the interruption of epithets and exclamations. It is not easy to forbear laughter at a man so bold in fighting shadows, so busy in a dispute two thousand years past, and so zealous for the honour of a people, who, while they were poor, robbed mankind, and, as soon as they became rich, robbed one another. Of these robberies our author seems to have no very quick sense, except when they are committed by Caesar's party, for every act is sanctified by the name of a patriot.

If this author's skill in ancient literature were less generally acknowledged, one might sometimes suspect, that he had too frequently consulted the French writers. He tells us, that Archelaus, the Rhodian, made a speech to Cassius, and, *in so saying*, dropt some tears; and that Cassius, after the reduction of Rhodes, was *covered with glory*.—Deiotarus was a keen and happy spirit—the ingrate Castor kept his court.

His great delight is to show his universal acquaintance with terms of art, with words that every other polite writer has avoided and despised. When Pompey conquered the pirates, he destroyed fifteen hundred ships of the line.—The Xanthian parapets were tore down.—Brutus, suspecting that his troops were plundering, commanded the trumpets to sound to their colours.—Most people understood the act of attainder passed by the senate.—The Numidian troopers were unlikely in their appearance.—The Numidians beat up one quarter after another.—Salvidienus resolved to pass his men over, in boats of leather, and he gave orders for equipping a sufficient number of that sort of small craft.—Pompey had light, agile frigates, and fought in a strait, where the current and caverns occasion swirls and a roll.—A sharp out-look was kept by the admiral.—It is a run of about fifty Roman miles.—Brutus broke Lipella in the sight of the army.—Mark Antony garbled the senate. He was a brave man, well qualified for a commodore.

In his choice of phrases he frequently uses words with great solemnity, which every other mouth and pen has appropriated to jocularly and levity! The Rhodians gave up the contest, and, in poor plight, fled back to Rhodes.—Boys and girls were easily kidnapped.—Deiotarus was a mighty believer of augury.—Deiotarus destroyed his ungracious progeny.—The regularity of the Romans was their mortal aversion.—They desired the consuls to curb such heinous doings.—He had such a shrewd invention, that no side of a question came amiss to him.—Brutus found his mistress a coquettish creature.

He sometimes, with most unlucky dexterity, mixes the grand and the burlesque together; *the violation of faith, sir*, says Cassius, *lies at the door of the Rhodians by reite-rated acts of perfidy*.—The iron grate fell down, crushed those under it to death, and caught the rest as in a trap.—When the Xanthians heard the military shout, and saw the flame mount, they concluded there would be no mercy. It was now about sunset, and they had been at hot work since noon.

He has, often, words, or phrases, with which our language has hitherto had no knowledge.—One was a heart-friend to the republic—A deed was expedited.—The Numidians begun to reel, and were in hazard of falling into confusion.—The tutor embraced his pupil close in his arms.—Four hundred women were taxed, who have, no doubt, been the wives of the best Roman citizens.—Men not born to action are inconsequential in government.—Collectitious troops.—The foot, by their violent attack, began the fatal break in the Pharsaliac field.—He and his brother, with a politic, common to other countries, had taken opposite sides.

His epithets are of the gaudy or hyperbolic kind. The glorious news—eager hopes and dismal fears—bleeding Rome—divine laws and hallowed customs—merciless war—intense anxiety.

Sometimes the reader is suddenly ravished with a sonorous sentence, of which, when the noise is past, the meaning does not long remain. When Brutus set his legions to fill a moat, instead of heavy dragging and slow toil, they set about it with huzzas and racing, as if they had been striving at the Olympic games. They hurled impetuous down the huge trees and stones, and, with shouts, forced them into the water; so that the work, expected to continue half the campaign, was, with rapid toil, completed in a few days. Brutus's soldiers fell to the gate with resistless fury; it gave way, at last, with hideous crash.—This great and good man, doing his duty to his country, received a mortal wound, and glorious fell in the cause of Rome; may his memory be ever dear to all lovers of liberty, learning, and humanity! This promise ought ever to embalm his memory.—The queen of nations was torn by no foreign invader.—Rome fell a sacrifice to her own sons, and was ravaged by her unnatural offspring: all the great men of the state, all the good, all the holy, were openly murdered by the wickedest and worst.—Little islands cover the harbour of Brindisi, and form the narrow outlet from the numerous creeks that compose its capacious port.—At the appearance of Brutus and Cassius, a shout of joy rent the heavens from the surrounding multitudes.

Such are the flowers which may be gathered, by every hand, in every part of this garden of eloquence. But having thus freely mentioned our author's faults, it remains that we acknowledge his merit; and confess, that this book is the work of a man of letters, that it is full of events displayed with accuracy, and related with vivacity; and though it is sufficiently defective to crush the vanity of its author, it is sufficiently entertaining to invite readers.

REVIEW OF FOUR LETTERS FROM SIR ISAAC NEWTON TO DR BENTLEY,

Containing some arguments in proof of a Deity ⁴.

It will certainly be required, that notice should be taken of a book, however small, written on such a subject, by such an author. Yet I know not whether these letters will be very satisfactory; for they are answers to inquiries not published; and, therefore, though they contain many positions of great importance, are, in some parts, imperfect and obscure, by their reference to Dr. Bentley's letters.

Sir Isaac declares, that what he has done is due to nothing but industry and patient thought; and, indeed, long consideration is so necessary in such abstruse inquiries, that it is always dangerous to publish the productions of great men, which are not known to have been designed for the press, and of which it is uncertain, whether much patience and thought have been bestowed upon them. The principal question of these letters gives occasion to observe, how even the mind of Newton gains ground, gradually, upon darkness.

"As to your first query," says he, "it seems to me, that if the matter of our sun and planets, and all the matter of the universe, were evenly scattered, throughout all the heavens, and every particle had an innate gravity towards all the rest, and the whole space, throughout which this matter was scattered, was but finite, the matter on the outside of this space would, by its gravity, tend towards all the matter on the inside, and, by consequence, fall down into the middle of the whole space, and there compose one great spherical mass. But if the matter was evenly disposed throughout an infinite space, it could never convene into one mass, but some of it would convene into one mass, and some into another, so as to make an infinite number of great masses, scattered, at great distances, from one to another, throughout all that infinite space. And thus might the sun and fixed stars be formed, supposing the matter were of a lucid nature. But how the matter should divide itself into two sorts, and that part of it, which is fit to compose a shining body, should fall down into one mass, and make a sun, and the rest, which is fit to compose an opaque body, should coalesce, not into one great body, like the shining matter, but into many little ones; or, if the sun, at first, were an opaque body, like the planets, or the planets lucid bodies, like the sun, how he alone should be changed into a shining body, whilst all they continue opaque, or all they be changed into opaque ones, whilst he remains unchanged, I do not think more explicable by mere natural causes, but am forced to ascribe it to the counsel and contrivance of a voluntary agent."

The hypothesis of matter evenly disposed through infinite space, seems to labour with such difficulties, as makes it almost a contradictory supposition, or a supposition destructive of itself.

"Matter evenly disposed through infinite space," is either created or eternal; if it was created, it infers a creator; if it was eternal, it had been from eternity "evenly spread through infinite space;" or it had been once coalesced in masses, and, afterwards, been diffused. Whatever state was first must have been from eternity, and what had been from eternity could not be changed, but by a cause beginning to act, as it had never acted before, that is, by the voluntary act of some external power. If matter, infinitely and evenly diffused, was a moment without coalition, it could never coalesce at all by its own power. If matter originally tended to coalesce, it could never be evenly diffused through infinite space. Matter being supposed eternal, there never was a time, when it could be diffused before its conglobation, or conglobated before its diffusion.

This sir Isaac seems, by degrees, to have understood; for he says, in his second letter: "The reason why matter, evenly scattered through a finite space, would convene in the midst, you conceive

⁴ Literary Magazine, vol. i. p. 89. 1756. This review is justly reckoned one of the finest specimens of criticism in our language, and was read with such eagerness, when published in the Literary Magazine, that the author was induced to reprint it in a small volume by itself; a circumstance which appears to have escaped Mr. Boswell's research.

the same with me; but, that there should be a central particle, so accurately placed in the middle, as to be always equally attracted on all sides, and, thereby, continue without motion, seems to me a supposition fully as hard as to make the sharpest needle stand upright upon its point on a looking-glass. For, if the very mathematical centre of the central particle be not accurately in the very mathematical centre of the attractive power of the whole mass, the particle will not be attracted equally on all sides. And much harder is it to suppose all the particles, in an infinite space, should be so accurately poised, one among another, as to stand still in a perfect equilibrium. For I reckon this as hard as to make not one needle only, but an infinite number of them, (so many as there are particles in an infinite space,) stand accurately poised upon their points. Yet I grant it possible, at least, by a divine power; and, if they were once to be placed, I agree with you, that they would continue in that posture without motion, for ever, unless put into new motion by the same power. When, therefore, I said, that matter evenly spread through all space, would convene, by its gravity, into one or more great masses, I understand it of matter not resting in an accurate poise."

Let not it be thought irreverence to this great name, if I observe, that by "matter evenly spread" through infinite space, he now finds it necessary to mean "matter not evenly spread." Matter not evenly spread will, indeed, convene, but it will convene as soon as it exists. And, in my opinion, this puzzling question about matter, is only, how that could be that never could have been, or what a man thinks on when he thinks on nothing.

Turn matter on all sides, make it eternal, or of late production, finite or infinite, there can be no regular system produced, but by a voluntary and meaning agent. This the great Newton always asserted, and this he asserts in the third letter; but proves, in another manner, in a manner, perhaps, more happy and conclusive.

"The hypothesis of deriving the frame of the world, by mechanical principles, from matter evenly spread through the heavens, being inconsistent with my system, I had considered it very little, before your letter put me upon it, and, therefore, trouble you with a line or two more about it, if this comes not too late for your use.

"In my former, I represented, that the diurnal rotations of the planets could not be derived from gravity, but required a divine arm to impress them. And though gravity might give the planets a motion of descent towards the sun, either directly, or with some little obliquity, yet the transverse motions, by which they revolve in their several orbs, required the divine arm to impress them, according to the tangents of their orbs. I would now add, that the hypothesis of matter's being, at first, evenly spread through the heavens, is, in my opinion, inconsistent with the hypothesis of innate gravity, without a supernatural power to reconcile them, and, therefore, it infers a deity. For, if there be innate gravity, it is impossible now for the matter of the earth, and all the planets and stars, to fly up from them, and become evenly spread throughout all the heavens, without a supernatural power; and, certainly, that which can never be hereafter, without a supernatural power, could never be heretofore, without the same power."

REVIEW OF A JOURNAL OF EIGHT DAYS' JOURNEY,

From Portsmouth to Kingston upon Thames, through Southampton, Wiltshire, &c. with miscellaneous thoughts, moral and religious; in sixty-four letters: addressed to two ladies of the partie. To which is added, an Essay On Tea, considered as pernicious to health, obstructing industry, and impoverishing the nation; with an account of its growth, and great consumption in these kingdoms; with several political reflections; and thoughts on publick love: in thirty-two letters to two ladies. By Mr. H.

[From the Literary Magazine, vol. ii. No. xiii. 1757.]

Our readers may, perhaps, remember, that we gave them a short account of this book, with a letter, extracted from it, in November, 1756. The author then sent us an injunction, to forbear his work, till a second edition should appear: this prohibition was rather too magisterial; for an author is no longer the sole master of a book, which he has given to the publick; yet he has been punctually obeyed; we had no desire to offend him; and, if his character may be estimated by his book, he is a man whose failings may well be pardoned for his virtues.

The second edition is now sent into the world, corrected and enlarged, and yielded up, by the author, to the attacks of criticism. But he shall find in us, no malignity of censure. We wish, indeed, that, among other corrections, he had submitted his pages to the inspection of a grammarian, that the elegancies of one line might not have been disgraced by the improprieties of another; but, with us, to mean well is a degree of merit, which overbalances much greater errors than impurity of style.

We have already given, in our collections, one of the letters, in which Mr. Hanway endeavours to show, that the consumption of tea is injurious to the interest of our country. We shall now endeavour to follow him, regularly, through all his observations on this modern luxury; but, it can scarcely be candid not to make a previous declaration, that he is to expect little justice from the author of this extract, a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has, for twenty years, diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and, with tea, welcomes the morning.

He begins by refuting a popular notion, that bohea and green tea are leaves of the same shrub, gathered at different times of the year. He is of opinion, that they are produced by different shrubs. The leaves of tea are gathered in dry weather; then dried and curled over the fire, in copper pans. The Chinese use little green tea, imagining, that it hinders digestion, and excites fevers. How it should have either effect, is not easily discovered; and, if we consider the innumerable prejudices, which prevail concerning our own plants, we shall very little regard these opinions of the Chinese vulgar, which experience does not confirm.

When the Chinese drink tea, they infuse it slightly, and extract only the more volatile parts; but though this seems to require great quantities at a time, yet the author believes, perhaps, only because he has an inclination to believe it, that the English and Dutch use more than all the inhabitants of that extensive empire. The Chinese drink it, sometimes, with acids, seldom with sugar; and this practice our author, who has no intention to find anything right at home, recommends to his countrymen.

The history of the rise and progress of tea-drinking is truly curious. Tea was first imported, from Holland, by the earls of Arlington and Ossory, in 1666; from their ladies the women of quality learned its use. Its price was then three pounds a pound, and continued the same to 1707. In 1715, we began to use green tea, and the practice of drinking it descended to the lower class of the people. In 1720, the French began to send it hither by a clandestine commerce. From 1717 to 1726, we

imported, annually, seven hundred thousand pounds. From 1732 to 1742, a million and two hundred thousand pounds were every year brought to London; in some years afterwards three millions; and in 1755, near four millions of pounds, or two thousand tons, in which we are not to reckon that which is surreptitiously introduced, which, perhaps, is nearly as much. Such quantities are, indeed, sufficient to alarm us; it is, at least, worth inquiry, to know what are the qualities of such a plant, and what the consequences of such a trade.

He then proceeds to enumerate the mischiefs of tea, and seems willing to charge upon it every mischief that he can find. He begins, however, by questioning the virtues ascribed to it, and denies that the crews of the Chinese ships are preserved, in their voyage homewards, from the scurvy by tea. About this report I have made some inquiry, and though I cannot find that these crews are wholly exempt from scorbutick maladies, they seem to suffer them less than other mariners, in any course of equal length. This I ascribe to the tea, not as possessing any medicinal qualities, but as tempting them to drink more water, to dilute their salt food more copiously, and, perhaps, to forbear punch, or other strong liquors.

He then proceeds, in the pathetick strain, to tell the ladies how, by drinking tea, they injure their health, and, what is yet more dear, their beauty.

"To what can we ascribe the numerous complaints which prevail? How many sweet creatures of your sex languish with a weak digestion, low spirits, lassitudes, melancholy, and twenty disorders, which, in spite of the faculty, have yet no names, except the general one of nervous complaints? Let them change their diet, and, among other articles, leave off drinking tea, it is more than probable, the greatest part of them will be restored to health."

"Hot water is also very hurtful to the teeth. The Chinese do not drink their tea so hot as we do, and yet they have bad teeth. This cannot be ascribed entirely to sugar, for they use very little, as already observed; but we all know, that hot or cold things, which pain the teeth, destroy them also. If we drank less tea, and used gentle acids for the gums and teeth, particularly sour oranges, though we had a less number of French dentists, I fancy this essential part of beauty would be much better preserved.

"The women in the United Provinces, who sip tea from morning till night, are also as remarkable for bad teeth. They also look pallid, and many are troubled with certain feminine disorders, arising from a relaxed habit. The Portuguese ladies, on the other hand, entertain with sweetmeats, and yet they have very good teeth; but their food, in general, is more of a farinaceous and vegetable kind than ours. They also drink cold water, instead of sipping hot, and never taste any fermented liquors; for these reasons, the use of sugar does not seem to be at all pernicious to them."

"Men seem to have lost their stature and comeliness, and women their beauty. I am not young, but, methinks, there is not quite so much beauty in this land as there was. Your very chambermaids have lost their bloom, I suppose, by sipping tea. Even the agitations of the passions at cards are not so great enemies to female charms. What Shakespeare ascribes to the concealment of love, is, in this age, more frequently occasioned by the use of tea."

To raise the fright still higher, he quotes an account of a pig's tail, scalded with tea, on which, however, he does not much insist.

Of these dreadful effects, some are, perhaps, imaginary, and some may have another cause. That there is less beauty in the present race of females, than in those who entered the world with us, all of us are inclined to think, on whom beauty has ceased to smile; but our fathers and grandfathers made the same complaint before us; and our posterity will still find beauties irresistibly powerful.

That the diseases, commonly called nervous, tremours, fits, habitual depression, and all the maladies which proceed from laxity and debility, are more frequent than in any former time, is, I believe, true, however deplorable. But this new race of evils will not be expelled by the prohibition of tea. This general languor is the effect of general luxury, of general idleness. If it be most to be found among tea-drinkers, the reason is, that tea is one of the stated amusements of the idle and luxurious.

The whole mode of life is changed; every kind of voluntary labour, every exercise that strengthened the nerves, and hardened the muscles, is fallen into disuse. The inhabitants are crowded together in populous cities, so that no occasion of life requires much motion; every one is near to all that he wants; and the rich and delicate seldom pass from one street to another, but in carriages of pleasure. Yet we eat and drink, or strive to eat and drink, like the hunters and huntresses, the farmers and the housewives, of the former generation; and they that pass ten hours in bed, and eight at cards, and the greater part of the other six at the table, are taught to impute to tea all the diseases which a life, unnatural in all its parts, may chance to bring upon them.

Tea, among the greater part of those who use it most, is drunk in no great quantity. As it neither exhilarates the heart, nor stimulates the palate, it is commonly an entertainment merely nominal, a pretence for assembling to prattle, for interrupting business, or diversifying idleness. They, who drink one cup, and, who drink twenty, are equally punctual in preparing or partaking it; and, indeed, there are few but discover, by their indifference about it, that they are brought together not by the tea, but the tea-table. Three cups make the common quantity, so slightly impregnated, that, perhaps, they might be tinged with the Athenian cicuta, and produce less effects than these letters charge upon tea.

Our author proceeds to show yet other bad qualities of this hated leaf.

"Green tea, when made strong, even by infusion, is an emetick; nay, I am told, it is used as such in China; a decoction of it certainly performs this operation; yet, by long use, it is drunk by many without such an effect. The infusion also, when it is made strong, and stands long to draw the grosser particles, will convulse the bowels: even in the manner commonly used, it has this effect on some constitutions, as I have already remarked to you from my own experience.

"You see I confess my weakness without reserve; but those who are very fond of tea, if their digestion is weak, and they find themselves disordered, they generally ascribe it to any cause, except the true one. I am aware that the effect, just mentioned, is imputed to the hot water; let it be so, and my argument is still good: but who pretends to say, it is not partly owing to particular kinds of tea? perhaps, such as partake of copperas, which, there is cause to apprehend, is sometimes the case: if we judge from the manner in which it is said to be cured, together with its ordinary effects, there is some foundation for this opinion. Put a drop of strong tea, either green or bohea, but chiefly the former, on the blade of a knife, though it is not corrosive, in the same manner as vitriol, yet there appears to be a corrosive quality in it, very different from that of fruit, which stains the knife."

He afterwards quotes Paulli, to prove, that tea is a "desiccative, and ought not to be used after the fortieth year." I have, then, long exceeded the limits of permission, but I comfort myself, that all the enemies of tea cannot be in the right. If tea be a desiccative, according to Paulli, it cannot weaken the fibres, as our author imagines; if it be emetick, it must constrict the stomach, rather than relax it.

The formidable quality of tinging the knife, it has in common with acorns, the bark, and leaves of oak, and every astringent bark or leaf: the copperas, which is given to the tea, is really in the knife. Ink may be made of any ferruginous matter, and astringent vegetable, as it is generally made of galls and copperas.

From tea, the writer digresses to spirituous liquors, about which he will have no controversy with the Literary Magazine; we shall, therefore, insert almost his whole letter, and add to it one testimony, that the mischiefs arising, on every side, from this compendious mode of drunkenness, are enormous and insupportable; equally to be found among the great and the mean; filling palaces with disquiet, and distraction, harder to be borne, as it cannot be mentioned; and overwhelming multitudes with incurable diseases, and unpitied poverty.

"Though tea and gin have spread their baneful influence over this island, and his majesty's other dominions, yet, you may be well assured, that the governors of the Foundling Hospital will exert their utmost skill and vigilance, to prevent the children, under their care, from being poisoned, or enervated by one or the other. This, however, is not the case of workhouses: it is well known, to the shame of those who are charged with the care of them, that gin has been too often permitted to enter

their gates;—and the debauched appetites of the people, who inhabit these houses, has been urged as a reason for it.

"Desperate diseases require desperate remedies: if laws are rigidly executed against murderers in the highway, those who provide a draught of gin, which we see is murderous, ought not to be countenanced. I am now informed, that in certain hospitals, where the number of the sick used to be about 5600 in 14 years,

From 1704 to 1718, they increased to 8189; From 1718 to 1734, still augmented to 12,710; And from 1734 to 1749, multiplied to 38,147.

"What a dreadful spectre does this exhibit! nor must we wonder, when satisfactory evidence was given, before the great council of the nation, that near eight millions of gallons of distilled spirits, at the standard it is commonly reduced to for drinking, was actually consumed annually in drams! the shocking difference in the numbers of the sick, and, we may presume, of the dead also, was supposed to keep pace with gin; and the most ingenious and unprejudiced physicians ascribed it to this cause. What is to be done under these melancholy circumstances? shall we still countenance the distillery, for the sake of the revenue; out of tenderness to the few, who will suffer by its being abolished; for fear of the madness of the people; or that foreigners will run it in upon us? There can be no evil so great as that we now suffer, except the making the same consumption, and paying for it to foreigners in money, which I hope never will be the case.

"As to the revenue, it certainly may be replaced by taxes upon the necessaries of life, even upon the bread we eat, or, in other words, upon the land, which is the great source of supply to the public, and to individuals. Nor can I persuade myself, but that the people may be weaned from the habit of poisoning themselves. The difficulty of smuggling a bulky liquid, joined to the severity which ought to be exercised towards smugglers, whose illegal commerce is of so infernal a nature, must, in time, produce the effect desired. Spirituous liquors being abolished, instead of having the most undisciplined and abandoned poor, we might soon boast a race of men, temperate, religious, and industrious, even to a proverb. We should soon see the ponderous burden of the poor's rate decrease, and the beauty and strength of the land rejuvenate. Schools, workhouses, and hospitals, might then be sufficient to clear our streets of distress and misery, which never will be the case, whilst the love of poison prevails, and the means of ruin is sold in above one thousand houses in the city of London, in two thousand two hundred in Westminster, and one thousand nine hundred and thirty in Holborn and St. Giles's.

"But if other uses still demand liquid fire, I would really propose, that it should be sold only in quart bottles, sealed up, with the king's seal, with a very high duty, and none sold without being mixed with a strong emetic.

"Many become objects of charity by their intemperance, and this excludes others, who are such by the unavoidable accidents of life, or who cannot, by any means, support themselves. Hence it appears, that the introducing new habits of life, is the most substantial charity; and that the regulation of charity-schools, hospitals, and workhouses, not the augmentation of their number, can make them answer the wise ends, for which they were instituted.

"The children of beggars should be also taken from them, and bred up to labour, as children of the public. Thus the distressed might be relieved, at a sixth part of the present expense; the idle be compelled to work or starve; and the mad be sent to Bedlam. We should not see human nature disgraced by the aged, the maimed, the sickly, and young children, begging their bread; nor would

compassion be abused by those, who have reduced it to an art to catch the unwary. Nothing is wanting but common sense and honesty in the execution of laws.

"To prevent such abuse in the streets, seems more practicable than to abolish bad habits within doors, where greater numbers perish. We see, in many familiar instances, the fatal effects of example. The careless spending of time among servants, who are charged with the care of infants, is often fatal: the nurse frequently destroys the child! the poor infant, being left neglected, expires whilst she is sipping her tea! This may appear to you as rank prejudice, or jest; but, I am assured, from the most indubitable evidence, that many very extraordinary cases of this kind have really happened, among those whose duty does not permit of such kind of habits.

"It is partly from such causes, that nurses of the children of the public often forget themselves, and become impatient when infants cry; the next step to this is using extraordinary means to quiet them. I have already mentioned the term killing nurse, as known in some workhouses: Venice treacle, poppy water, and Godfrey's cordial, have been the kind instruments of lulling the child to his everlasting rest. If these pious women could send up an ejaculation, when the child expired, all was well, and no questions asked by the superiors. An ingenious friend of mine informs me, that this has been so often the case, in some workhouses, that Venice treacle has acquired the appellation of 'the Lord have mercy upon me,' in allusion to the nurses' hackneyed expression of pretended grief, when infants expire! Farewell."

I know not upon what observation Mr. Hanway founds his confidence in the governours of the Foundling Hospital, men of whom I have not any knowledge, but whom I entreat to consider a little the minds, as well as bodies, of the children. I am inclined to believe irreligion equally pernicious with gin and tea, and, therefore, think it not unseasonable to mention, that, when, a few months ago, I wandered through the hospital, I found not a child that seemed to have heard of his creed, or the commandments. To breed up children in this manner, is to rescue them from an early grave, that they may find employment for the gibbet; from dying in innocence, that they may perish by their crimes.

Having considered the effects of tea upon the health of the drinker, which, I think, he has aggravated in the vehemence of his zeal, and which, after soliciting them by this watery luxury, year after year, I have not yet felt, he proceeds to examine, how it may be shown to affect our interest; and first calculates the national loss, by the time spent in drinking tea. I have no desire to appear captious, and shall, therefore, readily admit, that tea is a liquor not proper for the lower classes of the people, as it supplies no strength to labour, or relief to disease, but gratifies the taste, without nourishing the body. It is a barren superfluity, to which those who can hardly procure what nature requires, cannot prudently habituate themselves. Its proper use is to amuse the idle, and relax the studious, and dilute the full meals of those who cannot use exercise, and will not use abstinence. That time is lost in this insipid entertainment cannot be denied; many trifle away, at the tea-table, those moments which would be better spent; but that any national detriment can be inferred from this waste of time, does not evidently appear, because I know not that any work remains undone, for want of hands. Our manufactures seem to be limited, not by the possibility of work, but by the possibility of sale.

His next argument is more clear. He affirms, that one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, in silver, are paid to the Chinese, annually, for three millions of pounds of tea, and, that for two millions more, brought clandestinely from the neighbouring coasts, we pay, at twenty-pence a pound, one hundred sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six pounds. The author justly conceives, that this computation will waken us; for, says he: "the loss of health, the loss of time, the injury of morals, are not very sensibly felt by some, who are alarmed when you talk of the loss of money." But he excuses the East India company, as men not obliged to be political arithmeticians, or to inquire so much, what the nation loses, as how themselves may grow rich. It is certain, that they, who drink tea, have no right to complain of those that import it; but if Mr. Hanway's computation be just, the importation, and the use of it, ought, at once, to be stopped by a penal law.

The author allows one slight argument in favour of tea, which, in my opinion, might be, with far greater justice, urged both against that and many other parts of our naval trade. "The tea-trade employs," he tells us, "six ships, and five or six hundred seamen, sent annually to China. It, likewise, brings in a revenue of three hundred and sixty thousand pounds, which, as a tax on luxury, may be considered as of great utility to the state." The utility of this tax I cannot find: a tax on luxury is no better than another tax, unless it hinders luxury, which cannot be said of the impost upon tea, while it is thus used by the great and the mean, the rich and the poor. The truth is, that, by the loss of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, we procure the means of shifting three hundred and sixty thousand, at best, only from one hand to another; but, perhaps, sometimes into hands by which it is not very honestly employed. Of the five or six hundred seamen, sent to China, I am told, that sometimes half, commonly a third part, perish in the voyage; so that, instead of setting this navigation against the inconveniencies already alleged, we may add to them, the yearly loss of two hundred men, in the prime of life; and reckon, that the trade of China has destroyed ten thousand men, since the beginning of this century.

If tea be thus pernicious, if it impoverishes our country, if it raises temptation, and gives opportunity to illicit commerce, which I have always looked on, as one of the strongest evidences of the inefficacy of our law, the weakness of our government, and the corruption of our people, let us, at once, resolve to prohibit it for ever.

"If the question was, how to promote industry most advantageously, in lieu of our tea-trade, supposing every branch of our commerce to be already fully supplied with men and money? If a quarter the sum, now spent in tea, were laid out, annually, in plantations, in making public gardens, in paving and widening streets, in making roads, in rendering rivers navigable, erecting palaces, building' bridges, or neat and convenient houses, where are now only huts; draining lands, or rendering those, which are now barren, of some use; should we not be gainers, and provide more for health, pleasure, and long life, compared with the consequences of the tea-trade?"

Our riches would be much better employed to these purposes; but if this project does not please, let us first resolve to save our money, and we shall, afterwards, very easily find ways to spend it.

REPLY TO A PAPER IN THE GAZETTEER OF MAY 26, 1757 ⁵

It is observed, in Le Sage's *Gil Bias*, that an exasperated author is not easily pacified. I have, therefore, very little hope of making my peace with the writer of the *Eight Days' Journey*; indeed so little, that I have long deliberated, whether I should not rather sit silently down, under his displeasure, than aggravate my misfortune, by a defence, of which my heart forbodes the ill success. Deliberation is often useless. I am afraid, that I have, at last, made the wrong choice, and that I might better have resigned my cause, without a struggle, to time and fortune, since I shall run the hazard of a new offence, by the necessity of asking him, why he is angry.

Distress and terrour often discover to us those faults, with which we should never have reproached ourselves in a happy state. Yet, dejected as I am, when I review the transaction between me and this writer, I cannot find, that I have been deficient in reverence. When his book was first printed, he hints, that I procured a sight of it before it was published. How the sight of it was procured, I do not now very exactly remember; but, if my curiosity was greater than my prudence, if I laid rash hands on the fatal volume, I have surely suffered, like him who burst the box, from which evil rushed into the world.

I took it, however, and inspected it, as the work of an author not higher than myself; and was confirmed in my opinion, when I found, that these letters were *not written to be printed*. I concluded, however, that, though not *written to be printed*, they were *printed to be read*, and inserted one of them in the collection of November last. Not many days after, I received a note, informing me, that I ought to have waited for a more correct edition. This injunction was obeyed. The edition appeared, and I supposed myself at liberty to tell my thoughts upon it, as upon any other book, upon a royal manifesto, or an act of parliament. But see the fate of ignorant temerity! I now find, but find too late, that, instead of a writer, whose only power is in his pen, I have irritated an important member of an important corporation; a man, who, as he tells us in his letters, puts horses to his chariot.

It was allowed to the disputant of old to yield up the controversy, with little resistance, to the master of forty legions. Those who know how weakly naked truth can defend her advocates, would forgive me, if I should pay the same respect to a governour of the foundlings. Yet the consciousness of my own rectitude of intention incites me to ask once again, how I have offended.

There are only three subjects upon which my unlucky pen has happened to venture: tea; the author of the journal; and the foundling-hospital.

Of tea, what have I said? That I have drank it twenty years, without hurt, and, therefore, believe it not to be poison; that, if it dries the fibres, it cannot soften them; that, if it constricts, it cannot relax. I have modestly doubted, whether it has diminished the strength of our men, or the beauty of our women; and whether it much hinders the progress of our woollen or iron manufactures; but I allowed it to be a barren superfluity, neither medicinal nor nutritious, that neither supplied strength nor cheerfulness, neither relieved weariness, nor exhilarated sorrow: I inserted, without charge or suspicion of falsehood, the sums exported to purchase it; and proposed a law to prohibit it for ever.

Of the author I unfortunately said, that his injunction was somewhat too magisterial. This I said, before I knew that he was a governour of the foundlings; but he seems inclined to punish this failure of respect, as the czar of Muscovy made war upon Sweden, because he was not treated with sufficient honours, when he passed through the country in disguise. Yet, was not this irreverence without extenuation. Something was said of the merit of *meaning well*, and the journalist was declared to be a man, *whose failings might well be pardoned for his virtues*. This is the highest praise which

⁵ From the *Literary Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 253.

human gratitude can confer upon human merit; praise that would have more than satisfied Titus or Augustus, but which I must own to be inadequate and penurious, when offered to the member of an important corporation.

I am asked, whether I meant to satirize the man, or criticise the writer, when I say, that "he believes, only, perhaps, because he has inclination to believe it, that the English and Dutch consume more tea than the vast empire of China." Between the writer and the man, I did not, at that time, consider the distinction. The writer I found not of more than mortal might, and I did not immediately recollect, that the man put horses to his chariot. But I did not write wholly without consideration. I knew but two causes of belief, evidence and inclination. What evidence the journalist could have of the Chinese consumption of tea, I was not able to discover. The officers of the East India company are excluded, they best know why, from the towns and the country of China; they are treated, as we treat gipsies and vagrants, and obliged to retire, every night, to their own hovel. What intelligence such travellers may bring, is of no great importance. And, though the missionaries boast of having once penetrated further, I think, they have never calculated the tea drunk by the Chinese. There being thus no evidence for his opinion, to what could I ascribe it but inclination.

I am yet charged, more heavily, for having said, that "he has no intention to find any thing right at home." I believe every reader restrained this imputation to the subject which produced it, and supposed me to insinuate only, that he meant to spare no part of the tea-table, whether essence or circumstance. But this line he has selected, as an instance of virulence and acrimony, and confutes it by a lofty and splendid panegyrick on himself. He asserts, that he finds many things right at home, and that he loves his oountrv almost to enthusiasm.

I had not the least doubt, that he found, in his country, many things to please him; nor did I suppose, that he desired the same inversion of every part of life, as of the use of tea. The proposal of drinking tea sour showed, indeed, such a disposition to practical paradoxes, that there was reason to fear, lest some succeeding letter should recommend the dress of the Picts, or the cookery of the Eskimaux. However, I met with no other innovations, and, therefore, was willing to hope, that he found something right at home.

But his love of his country seemed not to rise quite to enthusiasm, when, amidst his rage against tea, he made a smooth apology for the East India company, as men who might not think themselves obliged to be political arithmeticians. I hold, though no enthusiastick patriot, that every man, who lives and trades under the protection of a community, is obliged to consider, whether he hurts or benefits those who protect him; and that the most which can be indulged to private interest, is a neutral traffick, if any such can be, by which our country is not injured, though it may not be benefited.

But he now renews his declamation against tea, notwithstanding the greatness or power of those that have interest or inclination to support it. I know not of what power or greatness he may dream. The importers only have an interest in defending it. I am sure, they are not great, and, I hope, they are not powerful. Those, whose inclination leads them to continue this practice, are too numerous; but, I believe their power is such, as the journalist may defy, without enthusiasm. The love of our country, when it rises to enthusiasm, is an ambiguous and uncertain virtue: when a man is enthusiastick, he ceases to be reasonable; and, when he once departs from reason, what will he do, but drink sour tea? As the journalist, though enthusiastically zealous for his country, has, with regard to smaller things, the placid happiness of philosophical indifference, I can give him no disturbance, by advising him to restrain, even the love of his country, within due limits, lest it should, sometimes, swell too high, fill the whole capacity of his soul, and leave less room for the love of truth.

Nothing now remains, but that I review my positions concerning the foundling hospital. What I declared last month, I declare now, once more, that I found none of the children that appeared to have heard of the catechism. It is inquired, how I wandered, and how I examined. There is, doubtless, subtlety in the question; I know not well how to answer it. Happily, I did not wander alone; I attended some ladies, with another gentleman, who all heard and assisted the inquiry, with equal grief and

indignation. I did not conceal my observations. Notice was given of this shameful defect soon after, at my request, to one of the highest names of the society. This, I am now told, is incredible; but, since it is true, and the past is out of human power, the most important corporation cannot make it false. But, why is it incredible? Because, in the rules of the hospital, the children are ordered to learn the rudiments of religion. Orders are easily made, but they do not execute themselves. They say their catechism, at stated times, under an able master. But this able master was, I think, not elected before last February; and my visit happened, if I mistake not, in November. The children were shy, when interrogated by a stranger. This may be true, but the same shiness I do not remember to have hindered them from answering other questions; and I wonder, why children, so much accustomed to new spectators, should be eminently shy.

My opponent, in the first paragraph, calls the inference that I made from this negligence, a hasty conclusion: to the decency of this expression I had nothing to object; but, as he grew hot in his career, his enthusiasm began to sparkle; and, in the vehemence of his postscript, he charges my assertions, and my reasons for advancing them, with folly and malice. His argumentation, being somewhat enthusiastical, I cannot fully comprehend, but it seems to stand thus: my insinuations are foolish or malicious, since I know not one of the governours of the hospital; for, he that knows not the governours of the hospital, must be very foolish or malicious.

He has, however, so much kindness for me, that he advises me to consult my safety, when I talk of corporations. I know not what the most important corporation can do, becoming manhood, by which my safety is endangered. My reputation is safe, for I can prove the fact; my quiet is safe, for I meant well; and for any other safety, I am not used to be very solicitous.

I am always sorry, when I see any being labouring in vain; and, in return for the journalist's attention to my safety, I will confess some compassion for his tumultuous resentment; since all his invectives fume into the air, with so little effect upon me, that I still esteem him, as one that has the *merit of meaning well*; and still believe him to be a man, whose *failings may be justly pardoned for his virtues* ⁶.

⁶ And of such a man, it is to be regretted, that Dr. Johnson was, by whatever motive, induced to speak with acrimony; but, it is probable, that he took up the subject, at first, merely to give play to his fancy. This answer, however, to Mr. Hanway's letter, is, as Mr. Boswell has remarked, the only instance, in the whole course of his life, when he condescended to oppose any thing that was written against him. C.

REVIEW ⁷ OF AN ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS AND GENIUS OF POPE

This is a very curious and entertaining miscellany of critical remarks and literary history. Though the book promises nothing but observations on the writings of Pope, yet no opportunity is neglected of introducing the character of any other writer, or the mention of any performance or event, in which learning is interested. From Pope, however, he always takes his hint, and to Pope he returns again from his digressions. The facts, which he mentions, though they are seldom anecdotes, in a rigorous sense, are often such as are very little known, and such as will delight more readers than naked criticism.

As he examines the works of this great poet, in an order nearly chronological, he necessarily begins with his pastorals, which, considered as representations of any kind of life, he very justly censures; for there is in them a mixture of Grecian and English, of ancient and modern images. Windsor is coupled with Hybla, and Thames with Pactolus. He then compares some passages, which Pope has imitated, or translated, with the imitation, or version, and gives the preference to the originals, perhaps, not always upon convincing arguments.

Theocritus makes his lover wish to be a bee, that he might creep among the leaves that form the chaplet of his mistress. Pope's enamoured swain longs to be made the captive bird that sings in his fair one's bower, that she might listen to his songs, and reward him with her kisses. The critick prefers the image of Theocritus, as more wild, more delicate, and more uncommon.

It is natural for a lover to wish, that he might be any thing that could come near to his lady. But we more naturally desire to be that which she fondles and caresses, than that which she would avoid, at least would neglect. The snperior delicacy of Theocritus I cannot discover, nor can, indeed, find, that either in the one or the other image there is any want of delicacy. Which of the two images was less common in the time of the poet who used it, for on that consideration the merit of novelty depends, I think it is now out of any critick's power to decide.

He remarks, I am afraid, with too much justice, that there is not a single new thought in the pastorals; and, with equal reason, declares, that their chief beauty consists in their correct and musical versification, which has so influenced the English ear, as to render every moderate rhymer harmonious.

In his examination of the Messiah, he justly observes some deviations from the inspired author, which weaken the imagery, and dispirit the expression.

On Windsor Forest, he declares, I think without proof, that descriptive poetry was by no means the excellence of Pope; he draws this inference from the few images introduced in this poem, which would not equally belong to any other place. He must inquire, whether Windsor forest has, in reality, any thing peculiar.

The Stag-chase is not, he says, so full, so animated, and so circumstantiated, as Somerville's. Barely to say, that one performance is not so good as another, is to criticise with little exactness. But Pope has directed, that we should, in every work, regard the author's end. The stag-chase is the main subject of Somerville, and might, therefore, be properly dilated into all its circumstances; in Pope, it is only incidental, and was to be despatched in a few lines.

He makes a just observation, "that the description of the external beauties of nature, is usually the first effort of a young genius, before he hath studied nature and passions. Some of Milton's most early, as well as mos't exquisite pieces, are his Lycidas, l' Allegro, and il Penseroso, if we may except his ode on the Nativity of Christ, which is, indeed, prior in order of time, and in which a penetrating

⁷ From the Literary Magazine, 1756.

critick might have observed the seeds of that boundless imagination, which was, one day, to produce the *Paradise Lost*."

Mentioning Thomson, and other descriptive poets, he remarks, that writers fail in their copies, for want of acquaintance with originals, and justly ridicules those who think they can form just ideas of valleys, mountains, and rivers, in a garret in the Strand. For this reason, I cannot regret, with this author, that Pope laid aside his design of writing American pastorals; for, as he must have painted scenes, which he never saw, and manners, which he never knew, his performance, though it might have been a pleasing amusement of fancy, would have exhibited no representation of nature or of life.

After the pastorals, the critick considers the lyric poetry of Pope, and dwells longest on the ode on St. Cecilia's day, which he, like the rest of mankind, places next to that of Dryden, and not much below it. He remarks, after Mr. Spence, that the first stanza is a perfect concert: the second he thinks a little flat; he justly commends the fourth, but without notice of the best line in that stanza, or in the poem:

"Transported demi-gods stood round,
And men grew heroes at the sound."

In the latter part of the ode, he objects to the stanza of triumph:

"Thus song could prevail," &c.

as written in a measure ridiculous and burlesque, and justifies his answer, by observing, that Addison uses the same numbers in the scene of Rosamond, between Grideline and sir Trusty:

"How unhappy is he," &c.

That the measure is the same in both passages, must be confessed, and both poets, perhaps, chose their numbers properly; for they both meant to express a kind of airy hilarity. The two passions of merriment and exultation are, undoubtedly, different; they are as different as a gambol and a triumph, but each is a species of joy; and poetical measures have not, in any language, been so far refined, as to provide for the subdivisions of passion. They can only be adapted to general purposes; but the particular and minuter propriety must be sought only in the sentiment and language. Thus the numbers are the same in Colin's Complaint, and in the ballad of Darby and Joan, though, in one, sadness is represented, and, in the other, tranquillity; so the measure is the same of Pope's *Unfortunate Lady*, and the *Praise of Voiture*.

He observes, very justly, that the odes, both of Dryden and Pope, conclude, unsuitably and unnaturally, with epigram.

He then spends a page upon Mr. Handel's musick to Dryden's ode, and speaks of him with that regard which he has generally obtained among the lovers of sound. He finds something amiss in the air "With ravished ears," but has overlooked, or forgotten, the grossest fault in that composition, which is that in this line:

"Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,"

He has laid much stress upon the two latter words, which are merely words of connexion, and ought, in musick, to be considered as parenthetical.

From this ode is struck out a digression on the nature of odes, and the comparative excellence of the ancients and moderns. He mentions the chorus which Pope wrote for the duke of Buckingham; and thence takes occasion to treat of the chorus of the ancients. He then comes to another ode, of

"The dying Christian to his Soul;" in which, finding an apparent imitation of Flatman, he falls into a pleasing and learned speculation, on the resembling passages to be found in different poets.

He mentions, with great regard, Pope's ode on Solitude, written when he was but twelve years old, but omits to mention the poem on Silence, composed, I think, as early, with much greater elegance of diction, musick of numbers, extent of observation, and force of thought. If he had happened to think on Baillet's chapter of *Enfans célèbres*, he might have made, on this occasion, a very entertaining dissertation on early excellence.

He comes next to the Essay on Criticism, the stupendous performance of a youth, not yet twenty years old; and, after having detailed the felicities of condition, to which he imagines Pope to have owed his wonderful prematurity of mind, he tells us, that he is well informed this essay was first written in prose. There is nothing improbable in the report, nothing, indeed, but what is more likely than the contrary; yet I⁸ cannot forbear to hint to this writer, and all others, the danger and weakness of trusting too readily to information. Nothing but experience could evince the frequency of false information, or enable any man to conceive, that so many groundless reports should be propagated, as every man of eminence may hear of himself. Some men relate what they think, as what they know; some men, of confused memories and habitual inaccuracy, ascribe to one man, what belongs to another; and some talk on, without thought or care. A few men are sufficient to broach falsehoods, which are afterwards innocently diffused by successive relaters.

He proceeds on, examining passage after passage of this essay; but we must pass over all these criticisms, to which we have not something to add or to object, or where this author does not differ from the general voice of mankind. We cannot agree with him in his censure of the comparison of a student advancing in science, with a traveller passing the Alps, which is, perhaps, the best simile in our language; that, in which the most exact resemblance is traced between things, in appearance, utterly unrelated to each other. That the last line conveys no new *idea*, is not true; it makes particular, what was before general. Whether the description, which he adds from another author, be, as he says, more full and striking than that of Pope, is not to be inquired. Pope's description is relative, and can admit no greater length than is usually allowed to a simile, nor any other particulars than such as form the correspondence.

Unvaried rhymes, says this writer, highly disgust readers of a good ear. It is, surely, not the ear, but the mind that is offended. The fault, arising from the use of common rhymes, is, that by reading the past line, the second may be guessed, and half the composition loses the grace of novelty.

On occasion of the mention of an alexandrine, the critick observes, that "the alexandrine may be thought a modern measure, but that *Robert of Gloucester's Wife* is an alexandrine, with the addition of two syllables; and that Sternhold and Hopkins translated the Psalms in the same measure of fourteen syllables, though they are printed otherwise."

This seems not to be accurately conceived or expressed: an alexandrine, with the addition of two syllables, is no more an alexandrine, than with the detraction of two syllables. Sternhold and Hopkins did, generally, write in the alternate measure of eight and six syllables; but Hopkins commonly rhymed the first and third; Sternhold, only the second and fourth: so that Sternhold may be considered, as writing couplets of long lines; but Hopkins wrote regular stanzas. From the practice of printing the long lines of fourteen syllables in two short lines, arose the license of some of our poets, who, though professing to write in stanzas, neglect the rhymes of the first and third lines.

Pope has mentioned Petronius, among the great names of criticism, as the remarker justly observes, without any critical merit. It is to be suspected, that Pope had never read his book, and mentioned him on the credit of two or three sentences which he had often seen quoted, imagining,

⁸ In all the papers and criticisms Dr. Johnson wrote for the Literary Magazine, he frequently departs from the customary we of anonymous writers. This, with his inimitable style, soon pointed him out, as the principal person concerned in that publication.

that where there was so much, there must necessarily be more. Young men, in haste to be renowned, too frequently talk of books which they have scarcely seen.

The revival of learning, mentioned in this poem, affords an opportunity of mentioning the chief periods of literary history, of which this writer reckons five: that of Alexander, of Ptolemy Philadelphus, of Augustus, of Leo the tenth, of queen Anne.

These observations are concluded with a remark, which deserves great attention: "In no polished nation, after criticism has been much studied, and the rules of writing established, has any very extraordinary book ever appeared."

The Rape of the Lock was always regarded, by Pope, as the highest production of his genius. On occasion of this work, the history of the comick-heroick is given; and we are told, that it descended from Fassoni to Boileau, from Boileau to Garth, and from Garth to Pope. Garth is mentioned, perhaps, with too much honour; but all are confessed to be inferiour to Pope. There is, in his remarks on this work, no discovery of any latent beauty, nor any thing subtle or striking; he is, indeed, commonly right, but has discussed no difficult question.

The next pieces to be considered are, the Verses to the Memory of an unfortunate Lady, the Prologue to Cato, and Epilogue to Jane Shore. The first piece he commends. On occasion of the second, he digresses, according to his custom, into a learned dissertation on tragedies, and compares the English and French with the Greek stage. He justly censures Cato, for want of action and of characters; but scarcely does justice to the sublimity of some speeches, and the philosophical exactness in the sentiments. "The simile of mount Atlas, and that of the Numidian traveller, smothered in the sands, are, indeed, in character," says the critick, "but sufficiently obvious." The simile of the mountain is, indeed, common; but that of the traveller, I do not remember. That it is obvious is easy to say, and easy to deny. Many things are obvious, when they are taught.

He proceeds to criticise the other works of Addison, till the epilogue calls his attention to Rowe, whose character he discusses in the same manner, with sufficient freedom and sufficient candour.

The translation of the epistle of Sappho to Phaon is next considered; but Sappho and Ovid are more the subjects of this disquisition, than Pope. We shall, therefore, pass over it to a piece of more importance, the epistle of Eloisa to Abelard, which may justly be regarded, as one of the works on which the reputation of Pope will stand in future times.

The critick pursues Eloisa through all the changes of passion, produces the passages of her letters, to which any allusion is made, and intersperses many agreeable particulars and incidental relations. There is not much profundity of criticism, because the beauties are sentiments of nature, which the learned and the ignorant feel alike. It is justly remarked by him, that the wish of Eloisa, for the happy passage of Abelard into the other world, is formed according to the ideas of mystick devotion.

These are the pieces examined in this volume: whether the remaining part of the work will be one volume, or more, perhaps the writer himself cannot yet inform us ⁹. This piece is, however, a complete work, so far as it goes; and the writer is of opinion, that he has despatched the chief part of his task; for he ventures to remark, that the reputation of Pope, as a poet, among posterity, will be principally founded on his Windsor Forest, Rape of the Lock, and Eloisa to Abelard; while the facts and characters, alluded to in his late writings, will be forgotten and unknown, and their poignancy and propriety little relished; for wit and satire are transitory and perishable, but nature and passion are eternal.

He has interspersed some passages of Pope's life, with which most readers will be pleased. When Pope was yet a child, his father, who had been a merchant in London, retired to Binfield. He was taught to read by an aunt; and learned to write, without a master, by copying printed books. His

⁹ The second volume of Dr. Warton's Essay was not published until the year 1782.

father used to order him to make English verses, and would oblige him to correct and retouch them over and over, and, at last, could say, "These are good rhymes."

At eight years of age, he was committed to one Taverner, a priest, who taught him the rudiments of the Latin and Greek. At this time, he met with Ogleby's Homer, which seized his attention; he fell next upon Sandys's Ovid, and remembered these two translations, with pleasure, to the end of his life.

About ten, being at school, near Hyde-park corner, he was taken to the playhouse, and was so struck with the splendour of the drama, that he formed a kind of play out of Ogleby's Homer, intermixed with verses of his own. He persuaded the head boys to act this piece, and Ajax was performed by his master's gardener. They were habited according to the pictures in Ogleby. At twelve, he retired, with his father, to Windsor forest, and formed himself by study in the best English poets.

In this extract, it was thought convenient to dwell chiefly upon such observations, as relate immediately to Pope, without deviating, with the author, into incidental inquiries. We intend to kindle, not to extinguish, curiosity, by this slight sketch of a work, abounding with curious quotations and pleasing disquisitions. He must be much acquainted with literary history, both of remote and late times, who does not find, in this essay, many things which he did not know before; and, if there be any too learned to be instructed in facts or opinions, he may yet properly read this book, as a just specimen of literary moderation.

REVIEW OF A FREE ENQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF EVIL ¹⁰

This is a treatise, consisting of six letters, upon a very difficult and important question, which, I am afraid, this author's endeavours will not free from the perplexity which has entangled the speculatists of all ages, and which must always continue while *we see* but *in part*. He calls it a *Free Enquiry*, and, indeed, his *freedom* is, I think, greater than his modesty. Though he is far from the contemptible arrogance, or the impious licentiousness of Bolingbroke, yet he decides, too easily, upon questions out of the reach of human determination, with too little consideration of mortal weakness, and with too much vivacity for the necessary caution.

In the first letter, on evil in general, he observes, that, "it is the solution of this important question, whence came *evil*? alone, that can ascertain the moral characteristic of God, without which there is an end of all distinction between good and evil." Yet he begins this inquiry by this declaration: "That there is a supreme being, infinitely powerful, wise, and benevolent, the great creator and preserver of all things, is a truth so clearly demonstrated, that it shall be here taken for granted." What is this, but to say, that we have already reason to grant the existence of those attributes of God, which the present inquiry is designed to prove? The present inquiry is, then, surely made to no purpose. The attributes, to the demonstration of which the solution of this great question is necessary, have been demonstrated, without any solution, or by means of the solution of some former writer.

He rejects the Manichean system, but imputes to it an absurdity, from which, amidst all its absurdities, it seems to be free, and adopts the system of Mr. Pope. "That pain is no evil, if asserted with regard to the individuals who suffer it, is downright nonsense; but if considered as it affects the universal system, is an undoubted truth, and means only, that there is no more pain in it, than what is necessary to the production of happiness. How many soever of these evils, then, force themselves into the creation, so long as the good preponderates, it is a work well worthy of infinite wisdom and benevolence; and, notwithstanding the imperfections of its parts, the whole is, most undoubtedly, perfect." And, in the former part of the letter, he gives the principle of his system in these words: "Omnipotence cannot work contradictions; it can only effect all possible things. But so little are we acquainted with the whole system of nature, that we know not what are possible, and what are not; but if we may judge from that constant mixture of pain with pleasure, and inconveniency with advantage, which we must observe in every thing around us, we have reason to conclude, that, to endue created beings with perfection, that is, to produce good, exclusive of evil, is one of those impossibilities, which even infinite power cannot accomplish."

This is elegant and acute, but will by no means calm discontent, or silence curiosity; for, whether evil can be wholly separated from good or not, it is plain, that they may be mixed, in various degrees, and, as far as human eyes can judge, the degree of evil might have been less, without any impediment to good.

The second letter, on the evils of imperfection, is little more than a paraphrase of Pope's epistles, or, yet less than a paraphrase, a mere translation of poetry into prose. This is, surely, to attack difficulty with very disproportionate abilities, to cut the Gordian knot with very blunt instruments. When we are told of the insufficiency of former solutions, why is one of the latest, which no man can have forgotten, given us again? I am told, that this pamphlet is not the effort of hunger; what can it be, then, but the product of vanity? and yet, how can vanity be gratified by plagiarism or transcription?

¹⁰ This Enquiry, published in 1757, was the production of Soame Jenyns, esq. who never forgave the author of the review. It is painful to relate, that, after he had suppressed his resentment during Dr. Johnson's life, he gave it vent, in a petulant and illiberal mock-epitaph, which would not have deserved notice, had it not been admitted into the edition of his works, published by Mr. Cole. When this epitaph first appeared in the newspapers, Mr. Boswell answered it by another upon Mr. Jenyns, equal, at least, in illiberality.

When this speculatist finds himself prompted to another performance, let him consider, whether he is about to disburden his mind, or employ his fingers; and, if I might venture to offer him a subject, I should wish, that he would solve this question: Why he, that has nothing to write, should desire to be a writer?

Yet is not this letter without some sentiments, which, though not new, are of great importance, and may be read, with pleasure, in the thousandth repetition.

"Whatever we enjoy, is purely a free gift from our creator; but, that we enjoy no more, can never, sure, be deemed an injury, or a just reason to question his infinite benevolence. All our happiness is owing to his goodness; but, that it is no greater, is owing only to ourselves; that is, to our not having any inherent right to any happiness, or even to any existence at all. This is no more to be imputed to God, than the wants of a beggar to the person who has relieved him: that he had something, was owing to his benefactor; but that he had no more, only to his own original poverty."

Thus far he speaks what every man must approve, and what every wise man has said before him. He then gives us the system of subordination, not invented, for it was known, I think, to the Arabian metaphysicians, but adopted by Pope, and, from him, borrowed by the diligent researches of this great investigator.

"No system can possibly be formed, even in imagination, without a subordination of parts. Every animal body must have different members, subservient to each other; every picture must be composed of various colours, and of light and shade; all harmony must be formed of trebles, tenours, and bases; every beautiful and useful edifice must consist of higher and lower, more and less magnificent apartments. This is in the very essence of all created things, and, therefore, cannot be prevented, by any means whatever, unless by not creating them at all."

These instances are used, instead of Pope's oak and weeds, or Jupiter and his satellites; but neither Pope, nor this writer, have much contributed to solve the difficulty. Perfection, or imperfection, of unconscious beings has no meaning, as referred to themselves; the base and the treble are equally perfect; the mean and magnificent apartments feel no pleasure or pain from the comparison. Pope might ask the weed, why it was less than the oak? but the weed would never ask the question for itself. The base and treble differ only to the hearer, meanness and magnificence only to the inhabitant. There is no evil but must inhere in a conscious being, or be referred to it; that is, evil must be felt, before it is evil. Yet, even on this subject, many questions might be offered, which human understanding has not yet answered, and which the present haste of this extract will not suffer me to dilate.

He proceeds to an humble detail of Pope's opinion: "The universe is a system, whose very essence consists in subordination; a scale of beings descending, by insensible degrees, from infinite perfection to absolute nothing; in which, though we may justly expect to find perfection in the whole, could we possibly comprehend it; yet would it be the highest absurdity to hope for it in all its parts, because the beauty and happiness of the whole depend altogether on the just inferiority of its parts; that is, on the comparative imperfections of the several beings of which it is composed.

"It would have been no more an instance of God's wisdom to have created no beings, but of the highest and most perfect order, than it would be of a painter's art to cover his whole piece with one single colour, the most beautiful he could compose. Had he confined himself to such, nothing could have existed but demi-gods, or archangels, and, then, all inferior orders must have been void and uninhabited; but as it is, surely, more agreeable to infinite benevolence, that all these should be filled up with beings capable of enjoying happiness themselves, and contributing to that of others, they must, necessarily, be filled with inferior beings; that is, with such as are less perfect, but from whose existence, notwithstanding that less perfection, more felicity, upon the whole, accrues to the universe, than if no such had been created. It is, moreover, highly probable, that there is such a connexion between all ranks and orders, by subordinate degrees, that they mutually support each

other's existence, and every one, in its place, is absolutely necessary towards sustaining the whole vast and magnificent fabric.

"Our pretences for complaint could be of this only, that we are not so high in the scale of existence as our ignorant ambition may desire; a pretence which must eternally subsist, because, were we ever so much higher, there would be still room for infinite power to exalt us; and, since no link in the chain can be broke, the same reason for disquiet must remain to those who succeed to that chasm, which must be occasioned by our preferment. A man can have no reason to repine, that he is not an angel; nor a horse, that he is not a man; much less, that, in their several stations, they possess not the faculties of another; for this would be an insufferable misfortune."

This doctrine of the regular subordination of beings, the scale of existence, and the chain of nature, I have often considered, but always left the inquiry in doubt and uncertainty.

That every being not infinite, compared with infinity, must be imperfect, is evident to intuition; that, whatever is imperfect must have a certain line which it cannot pass, is equally certain. But the reason which determined this limit, and for which such being was suffered to advance thus far, and no farther, we shall never be able to discern. Our discoverers tell us, the creator has made beings of all orders, and that, therefore, one of them must be such as man; but this system seems to be established on a concession, which, if it be refused, cannot be extorted.

Every reason which can be brought to prove, that there are beings of every possible sort, will prove, that there is the greatest number possible of every sort of beings; but this, with respect to man, we know, if we know any thing, not to be true.

It does not appear, even to the imagination, that of three orders of being, the first and the third receive any advantage from the imperfection of the second, or that, indeed, they may not equally exist, though the second had never been, or should cease to be; and why should that be concluded necessary, which cannot be proved even to be useful?

The scale of existence, from infinity to nothing, cannot possibly have being. The highest being not infinite, must be, as has been often observed, at an infinite distance below infinity. Cheyne, who, with the desire inherent in mathematicians to reduce every thing to mathematical images, considers all existence as a cone; allows that the basis is at an infinite distance from the body; and in this distance between finite and infinite, there will be room, for ever, for an infinite series of indefinable existence.

Between the lowest positive existence and nothing, wherever we suppose positive existence to cease, is another chasm infinitely deep; where there is room again for endless orders of subordinate nature, continued for ever and for ever, and yet infinitely superiour to nonexistence.

To these meditations humanity is unequal. But yet we may ask, not of our maker, but of each other, since, on the one side, creation, wherever it stops, must stop infinitely below infinity, and on the other, infinitely above nothing, what necessity there is, that it should proceed so far, either way, that beings so high or so low should ever have existed? We may ask; but, I believe, no created wisdom can give an adequate answer.

Nor is this all. In the scale, wherever it begins or ends, are infinite vacuities. At whatever distance we suppose the next order of beings to be above man, there is room for an intermediate order of beings between them; and if for one order, then for infinite orders; since every thing that admits of more or less, and consequently all the parts of that which admits them, may be infinitely divided. So that, as far as we can judge, there may be room in the vacuity between any two steps of the scale, or between any two points of the cone of being, for infinite exertion of infinite power.

Thus it appears, how little reason those, who repose their reason upon the scale of being, have to triumph over them who recur to any other expedient of solution, and what difficulties arise, on every side, to repress the rebellions of presumptuous decision: "Qui pauca considerat, facile pronunciat." In our passage through the boundless ocean of disquisition, we often take fogs for land, and, after having long toiled to approach them, find, instead of repose and harbours, new storms of objection, and fluctuations of uncertainty.

We are next entertained with Pope's alleviations of those evils which we are doomed to suffer.

"Poverty, or the want of riches, is generally compensated by having more hopes, and fewer fears, by a greater share of health, and a more exquisite relish of the smallest enjoyments, than those who possess them are usually blessed with. The want of taste and genius, with all the pleasures that arise from them, are commonly recompensed by a more useful kind of common sense, together with a wonderful delight, as well as success, in the busy pursuits of a scrambling world. The sufferings of the sick are greatly relieved by many trifling gratifications, imperceptible to others, and, sometimes, almost repaid by the inconceivable transports occasioned by the return of health and vigour. Folly cannot be very grievous, because imperceptible; and I doubt not but there is some truth in that rant of a mad poet, that there is a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know. Ignorance, or the want of knowledge and literature, the appointed lot of all born to poverty and the drudgeries of life, is the only opiate capable of infusing that insensibility, which can enable them to endure the miseries of the one, and the fatigues of the other. It is a cordial, administered by the gracious hand of providence, of which they ought never to be deprived by an ill-judged and improper education. It is the basis of all subordination, the support of society, and the privilege of individuals; and I have ever thought it a most remarkable instance of the divine wisdom, that, whereas in all animals, whose individuals rise little above the rest of their species, knowledge is instinctive; in man, whose individuals are so widely different, it is acquired by education; by which means the prince and the labourer, the philosopher and the peasant, are, in some measure, fitted for their respective situations."

Much of these positions is, perhaps, true; and the whole paragraph might well pass without censure, were not objections necessary to the establishment of knowledge. Poverty is very gently paraphrased by want of riches. In that sense, almost every man may, in his own opinion, be poor. But there is another poverty, which is want of competence of all that can soften the miseries of life, of all that can diversify attention, or delight imagination. There is yet another poverty, which is want of necessaries, a species of poverty which no care of the publick, no charity of particulars, can preserve many from feeling openly, and many secretly.

That hope and fear are inseparably, or very frequently, connected with poverty and riches, my surveys of life have not informed me. The milder degrees of poverty are, sometimes, supported by hope; but the more severe often sink down in motionless despondence. Life must be seen, before it can be known. This author and Pope, perhaps, never saw the miseries which they imagine thus easy to be borne. The poor, indeed, are insensible of many little vexations, which sometimes imbitter the possessions, and pollute the enjoyments, of the rich. They are not pained by casual incivility, or mortified by the mutilation of a compliment; but this happiness is like that of a malefactor, who ceases to feel the cords that bind him, when the pincers are tearing his flesh.

That want of taste for one enjoyment is supplied by the pleasures of some other, may be fairly allowed; but the compensations of sickness I have never found near to equivalence, and the transports of recovery only prove the intenseness of the pain.

With folly, no man is willing to confess himself very intimately acquainted, and, therefore, its pains and pleasures are kept secret. But what the author says of its happiness, seems applicable only to fatuity, or gross dulness; for that inferiority of understanding, which makes one man, without any other reason, the slave, or tool, or property of another, which makes him sometimes useless, and sometimes ridiculous, is often felt with very quick sensibility. On the happiness of madmen, as the case is not very frequent, it is not necessary to raise a disquisition, but I cannot forbear to observe, that I never yet knew disorders of mind increase felicity: every madman is either arrogant and irascible, or gloomy and suspicious, or possessed by some passion, or notion, destructive to his quiet. He has always discontent in his look, and malignity in his bosom. And, if he had the power of choice, he would soon repent who should resign his reason to secure his peace.

Concerning the portion of ignorance necessary to make the condition of the lower classes of mankind safe to the publick, and tolerable to themselves, both morals and policy exact a nicer inquiry

than will be very soon or very easily made. There is, undoubtedly, a degree of knowledge which will direct a man to refer all to providence, and to acquiesce in the condition with which omniscient goodness has determined to allot him; to consider this world as a phantom, that must soon glide from before his eyes, and the distresses and vexations that encompass him, as dust scattered in his path, as a blast that chills him for a moment, and passes off for ever.

Such wisdom, arising from the comparison of a part with the whole of our existence, those that want it most cannot possibly obtain from philosophy; nor, unless the method of education, and the general tenour of life are changed, will very easily receive it from religion. The bulk of mankind is not likely to be very wise or very good; and I know not, whether there are not many states of life, in which all knowledge, less than the highest wisdom, will produce discontent and danger. I believe it may be sometimes found, that a *little learning* is, to a poor man, a *dangerous thing*. But such is the condition of humanity, that we easily see, or quickly feel the wrong, but cannot always distinguish the right. Whatever knowledge is superfluous, in irremediable poverty, is hurtful, but the difficulty is to determine when poverty is irremediable, and at what point superfluity begins. Gross ignorance every man has found equally dangerous with perverted knowledge. Men, left wholly to their appetites and their instincts, with little sense of moral or religious obligation, and with very faint distinctions of right and wrong, can never be safely employed, or confidently trusted; they can be honest only by obstinacy, and diligent only by compulsion or caprice. Some instruction, therefore, is necessary, and much, perhaps, may be dangerous.

Though it should be granted, that those who are *born to poverty and drudgery*, should not be *deprived*, by an *improper education*, of the *opiate of ignorance*; even this concession will not be of much use to direct our practice, unless it be determined, who are those that are *born to poverty*. To entail irreversible poverty upon generation after generation, only because the ancestor happened to be poor, is, in itself, cruel, if not unjust, and is wholly contrary to the maxims of a commercial nation, which always suppose and promote a rotation of property, and offer every individual a chance of mending his condition by his diligence. Those, who communicate literature to the son of a poor man consider him, as one not born to poverty, but to the necessity of deriving a better fortune from himself. In this attempt, as in others, many fail and many succeed. Those that fail, will feel their misery more acutely; but since poverty is now confessed to be such a calamity, as cannot be borne without the opiate of insensibility, I hope the happiness of those whom education enables to escape from it, may turn the balance against that exacerbation which the others suffer.

I am always afraid of determining on the side of envy or cruelty. The privileges of education may, sometimes, be improperly bestowed, but I shall always fear to withhold them, lest I should be yielding to the suggestions of pride, while I persuade myself that I am following the maxims of policy; and, under the appearance of salutary restraints, should be indulging the lust of dominion, and that malevolence which delights in seeing others depressed.

Pope's doctrine is, at last, exhibited in a comparison, which, like other proofs of the same kind, is better adapted to delight the fancy than convince the reason.

"Thus the universe resembles a large and well-regulated family, in which all the officers and servants, and even the domestic animals, are subservient to each other, in a proper subordination: each enjoys the privileges and perquisites peculiar to his place, and, at the same time, contributes, by that just subordination, to the magnificence and happiness of the whole."

The magnificence of a house is of use or pleasure always to the master, and sometimes to the domesticks. But the magnificence of the universe adds nothing to the supreme being; for any part of its inhabitants, with which human knowledge is acquainted, an universe much less spacious or splendid would have been sufficient; and of happiness it does not appear, that any is communicated from the beings of a lower world to those of a higher.

The inquiry after the cause of natural evil is continued in the third letter, in which, as in the former, there is mixture of borrowed truth, and native folly, of some notions, just and trite, with others uncommon and ridiculous.

His opinion of the value and importance of happiness is certainly just, and I shall insert it; not that it will give any information to any reader, but it may serve to show, how the most common notion may be swelled in sound, and diffused in bulk, till it shall, perhaps, astonish the author himself.

"Happiness is the only thing of real value in existence, neither riches, nor power, nor wisdom, nor learning, nor strength, nor beauty, nor virtue, nor religion, nor even life itself, being of any importance, but as they contribute to its production. All these are, in themselves, neither good nor evil: happiness alone is their great end, and they are desirable only as they tend to promote it."

Success produces confidence. After this discovery of the value of happiness, he proceeds, without any distrust of himself, to tell us what has been hid from all former inquirers.

"The true solution of this important question, so long and so vainly searched for by the philosophers of all ages and all countries, I take to be, at last, no more than this, that these real evils proceed from the same source as those imaginary ones of imperfection, before treated of, namely, from that subordination, without which no created system can subsist; all subordination implying imperfection, all imperfection evil, and all evil some kind of inconveniency or suffering: so that there must, be particular inconveniencies and sufferings annexed to every particular rank of created beings by the circumstances of things, and their modes of existence.

"God, indeed, might have made us quite other creatures, and placed us in a world quite differently constituted; but then we had been no longer men, and whatever beings had occupied our stations in the universal system, they must have been liable to the same inconveniencies."

In all this, there is nothing that can silence the inquiries of curiosity, or culm the perturbations of doubt. Whether subordination implies imperfection may be disputed. The means respecting themselves may be as perfect as the end. The weed, as a weed, is no less perfect than the oak, as an oak. That *imperfection implies evil, and evil suffering*, is by no means evident. Imperfection may imply privative evil, or the absence of some good, but this privation produces no suffering, but by the help of knowledge. An infant at the breast is yet an imperfect man, but there is no reason for belief, that he is unhappy by his immaturity, unless some positive pain be superadded. When this author presumes to speak of the universe, I would advise him a little to distrust his own faculties, however large and comprehensive. Many words, easily understood on common occasions, become uncertain and figurative, when applied to the works of omnipotence. Subordination, in human affairs, is well understood; but, when it is attributed to the universal system, its meaning grows less certain, like the petty distinctions of locality, which are of good use upon our own globe, but have no meaning with regard to infinite space, in which nothing is *high* or *low*. That, if man, by exaltation to a higher nature, were exempted from the evils which he now suffers, some other being must suffer them; that, if man were not man, some other being must be man, is a position arising from his established notion of the scale of being. A notion to which Pope has given some importance, by adopting it, and of which I have, therefore, endeavoured to show the uncertainty and inconsistency. This scale of being I have demonstrated to be raised by presumptuous imagination, to rest on nothing at the bottom, to lean on nothing at the top, and to have vacuities, from step to step, through which any order of being may sink into nihility without any inconvenience, so far as we can judge, to the next rank above or below it. We are, therefore, little enlightened by a writer who tells us, that any being in the state of man must suffer what man suffers, when the only question that requires to be resolved is: Why any being is in this state. Of poverty and labour he gives just and elegant representations, which yet do not remove the difficulty of the first and fundamental question, though supposing the present state of man necessary, they may supply some motives to content.

"Poverty is what all could not possibly have been exempted from, not only by reason of the fluctuating nature of human possessions, but because the world could not subsist without it; for, had

all been rich, none could have submitted to the commands of another, or the necessary drudgeries of life; thence all governments must have been dissolved, arts neglected, and lands uncultivated, and so an universal penury have overwhelmed all, instead of now and then pinching a few. Hence, by the by, appears the great excellence of charity, by which men are enabled, by a particular distribution of the blessings and enjoyments of life, on proper occasions, to prevent that poverty, which, by a general one, omnipotence itself could never have prevented; so that, by enforcing this duty, God, as it were, demands our assistance to promote universal happiness, and to shut out misery at every door, where it strives to intrude itself.

"Labour, indeed, God might easily have excused us from, since, at his command, the earth would readily have poured forth all her treasures, without our inconsiderable assistance; but, if the severest labour cannot sufficiently subdue the malignity of human nature, what plots and machinations, what wars, rapine, and devastation, what profligacy and licentiousness, must have been the consequences of universal idleness! So that labour ought only to be looked upon, as a task kindly imposed upon us by our indulgent creator, necessary to preserve our health, our safety, and our innocence."

I am afraid, that "the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning." If God *could easily have excused us from labour*, I do not comprehend why *he could not possibly have exempted all from poverty*. For poverty, in its easier and more tolerable degree, is little more than necessity of labour; and, in its more severe and deplorable state, little more than inability for labour. To be poor is to work for others, or to want the succour of others, without work. And the same exuberant fertility, which would make work unnecessary, might make poverty impossible.

Surely, a man who seems not completely master of his own opinion, should have spoken more cautiously of omnipotence, nor have presumed to say what it could perform, or what it could prevent. I am in doubt, whether those, who stand highest in the *scale of being*, speak thus confidently of the dispensations of their maker:

"For fools rush in, where angels fear to tread."

Of our inquietudes of mind, his account is still less reasonable: "Whilst men are injured, they must be inflamed with anger; and, whilst they see cruelties, they must be melted with pity; whilst they perceive danger, they must be sensible of fear." This is to give a reason for all evil, by showing, that one evil produces another. If there is danger, there ought to be fear; but, if fear is an evil, why should there be danger? His vindication of pain is of the same kind: pain is useful to alarm us, that we may shun greater evils, but those greater evils must be pre-supposed, that the fitness of pain may appear.

Treating on death, he has expressed the known and true doctrine with sprightliness of fancy, and neatness of diction. I shall, therefore, insert it. There are truths which, as they are always necessary, do not grow stale by repetition

"Death, the last and most dreadful of all evils,
is so far from being one, that it is the infallible
cure for all others.

To die, is landing on some silent shore,
Where billows never beat, nor tempests roar.
Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 'tis o'er.

GARTH.

For, abstracted from the sickness and sufferings usually attending it, it is no more than the expiration of that term of life God was pleased to bestow on us, without any claim or merit on our

part. But was it an evil ever so great, it could not be remedied, but by one much greater, which is, by living for ever; by which means, our wickedness, unrestrained by the prospect of a future state, would grow so insupportable, our sufferings so intolerable by perseverance, and our pleasures so tiresome by repetition, that no being in the universe could be so completely miserable, as a species of immortal men. We have no reason, therefore, to look upon death as an evil, or to fear it as a punishment, even without any supposition of a future life: but, if we consider it, as a passage to a more perfect state, or a remove only in an eternal succession of still-improving states, (for which we have the strongest reasons,) it will then appear a new favour from the divine munificence; and a man must be as absurd to repine at dying, as a traveller would be, who proposed to himself a delightful tour through various unknown countries, to lament, that he cannot take up his residence at the first dirty inn, which he baits at on the road.

"The instability of human life, or of the changes of its successive periods, of which we so frequently complain, are no more than the necessary progress of it to this necessary conclusion; and are so far from being evils, deserving these complaints, that they are the source of our greatest pleasures, as they are the source of all novelty, from which our greatest pleasures are ever derived. The continual succession of seasons in the human life, by daily presenting to us new scenes, render it agreeable, and, like those of the year, afford us delights by their change, which the choicest of them could not give us by their continuance. In the spring of life, the gilding of the sunshine, the verdure of the fields, and the variegated paintings of the sky, are so exquisite in the eyes of infants, at their first looking abroad into a new world, as nothing, perhaps, afterwards can equal: the heat and vigour of the succeeding summer of youth, ripens for us new pleasures, the blooming maid, the nightly revel, and the jovial chase: the serene autumn of complete manhood feasts us with the golden harvests of our worldly pursuits: nor is the hoary winter of old age destitute of its peculiar comforts and enjoyments, of which the recollection and relation of those past, are, perhaps, none of the least: and, at last, death opens to us a new prospect, from whence we shall, probably, look back upon the diversions and occupations of this world, with the same contempt we do now on our tops and hobby horses, and with the same surprise, that they could ever so much entertain or engage us."

I would not willingly detract from the beauty of this paragraph; and, in gratitude to him who has so well inculcated such important truths, I will venture to admonish him, since the chief comfort of the old is the recollection of the past, so to employ his time and his thoughts, that, when the imbecility of age shall come upon him, he may be able to recreate its languors, by the remembrance of hours spent, not in presumptuous decisions, but modest inquiries; not in dogmatical limitations of omnipotence, but in humble acquiescence, and fervent adoration. Old age will show him, that much of the book, now before us, has no other use than to perplex the scrupulous, and to shake the weak, to encourage impious presumption, or stimulate idle curiosity.

Having thus despatched the consideration of particular evils, he comes, at last, to a general reason, for which *evil* may be said to be *our good*. He is of opinion, that there is some inconceivable benefit in pain, abstractedly considered; that pain, however inflicted, or wherever felt, communicates some good to the general system of being, and, that every animal is, some way or other, the better for the pain of every other animal. This opinion he carries so far, as to suppose, that there passes some principle of union through all animal life, as attraction is communicated to all corporeal nature; and, that the evils suffered on this globe, may, by some inconceivable means, contribute to the felicity of the inhabitants of the remotest planet.

How the origin of evil is brought nearer to human conception, by any *inconceivable* means, I am not able to discover. We believed, that the present system of creation was right, though we could not explain the adaptation of one part to the other, or for the whole succession of causes and consequences. Where has this inquirer added to the little knowledge that we had before? He has told us of the benefits of evil, which no man feels, and relations between distant parts of the universe,

which he cannot himself conceive. There was enough in this question inconceivable before, and we have little advantage from a new inconceivable solution.

I do not mean to reproach this author for not knowing what is equally hidden from learning and from ignorance. The shame is, to impose words, for ideas, upon ourselves or others. To imagine, that we are going forward, when we are only turning round. To think, that there is any difference between him that gives no reason, and him that gives a reason, which, by his own confession, cannot be conceived.

But, that he may not be thought to conceive nothing but things inconceivable, he has, at last, thought on a way, by which human sufferings may produce good effects. He imagines, that as we have not only animals for food, but choose some for our diversion, the same privilege may be allowed to some beings above us, *who may deceive, torment, or destroy us, for the ends, only, of their own pleasure or utility*. This he again finds impossible to be conceived, *but that impossibility lessens not the probability of the conjecture, which, by analogy, is so strongly confirmed*. I cannot resist the temptation of contemplating this analogy, which, I think, he might have carried further, very much to the advantage of his argument. He might have shown, that these "hunters, whose game is man," have many sports analogous to our own. As we drown whelps and kittens, they amuse themselves, now and then, with sinking a ship, and stand round the fields of Blenheim, or the walls of Prague, as we encircle a cockpit. As we shoot a bird flying, they take a man in the midst of his business or pleasure, and knock him down with an apoplexy. Some of them, perhaps, are virtuosi, and delight in the operations of an asthma, as a human philosopher in the effects of the air-pump. To swell a man with a tympany is as good sport as to blow a frog. Many a merry bout have these frolick beings at the vicissitudes of an ague, and good sport it is to see a man tumble with an epilepsy, and revive and tumble again, and all this he knows not why. As they are wiser and more powerful than we, they have more exquisite diversions; for we have no way of procuring any sport so brisk and so lasting, as the paroxysms of the gout and stone, which, undoubtedly, must make high mirth, especially if the play be a little diversified with the blunders and puzzles of the blind and deaf. We know not how far their sphere of observation may extend. Perhaps, now and then, a merry being may place himself in such a situation, as to enjoy, at once, all the varieties of an epidemical disease, or amuse his leisure with the tossings and contortions of every possible pain, exhibited together.

One sport the merry malice of these beings has found means of enjoying, to which we have nothing equal or similar. They now and then catch a mortal, proud of his parts, and flattered either by the submission of those who court his kindness, or the notice of those who suffer him to court theirs. A head, thus prepared for the reception of false opinions, and the projection of vain designs, they easily fill with idle notions, till, in time, they make their plaything an author; their first diversion commonly begins with an ode or an epistle, then rises, perhaps, to a political irony, and is, at last, brought to its height, by a treatise of philosophy. Then begins the poor animal to entangle himself in sophisms, and flounder in absurdity, to talk confidently of the scale of being, and to give solutions which himself confesses impossible to be understood. Sometimes, however, it happens, that their pleasure is without much mischief. The author feels no pain, but while they are wondering at the extravagance of his opinion, and pointing him out to one another, as a new example of human folly, he is enjoying his own applause and that of his companions, and, perhaps, is elevated with the hope of standing at the head of a new sect.

Many of the books which now crowd the world, may be justly suspected to be written for the sake of some invisible order of beings, for surely they are of no use to any of the corporeal inhabitants of the world. Of the productions of the last bounteous year, how many can be said to serve any purpose of use or pleasure! The only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it; and how will either of those be put more in our power, by him who tells us, that we are puppets, of which some creature, not much wiser than ourselves, manages the wires! That a set of beings, unseen and unheard, are hovering about us, trying experiments upon our sensibility, putting

us in agonies, to see our limbs quiver; torturing us to madness, that they may laugh at our vagaries; sometimes obstructing the bile, that they may see how a man looks, when he is yellow; sometimes breaking a traveller's bones, to try how he will get home; sometimes wasting a man to a skeleton, and sometimes killing him fat, for the greater elegance of his hide.

This is an account of natural evil, which though, like the rest, not quite new, is very entertaining, though I know not how much it may contribute to patience. The only reason why we should contemplate evil is, that we may bear it better; and I am afraid nothing is much more placidly endured, for the sake of making others sport.

The first pages of the fourth letter are such, as incline me both to hope and wish that I shall find nothing to blame in the succeeding part. He offers a criterion of action, on account of virtue and vice, for which I have often contended, and which must be embraced by all who are willing to know, why they act, or why they forbear to give any reason of their conduct to themselves or others.

"In order to find out the true origin of moral evil, it will be necessary, in the first place, to enquire into its nature and essence; or, what it is that constitutes one action evil, and another good. Various have been the opinions of various authors on this criterion of virtue; and this variety has rendered that doubtful, which must, otherwise, have been clear and manifest to the meanest capacity. Some, indeed, have denied, that there is any such thing, because different ages and nations have entertained different sentiments concerning it; but this is just as reasonable, as to assert, that there are neither sun, moon, nor stars, because astronomers have supported different systems of the motions and magnitudes of these celestial bodies. Some have placed it in conformity to truth, some to the fitness of things, and others to the will of God: but all this is merely superficial: they resolve us not, why truth, or the fitness of things, are either eligible or obligatory, or why God should require us to act in one manner rather than another. The true reason of which can possibly be no other than this, because some actions produce happiness, and others misery; so that all moral good and evil are nothing more than the production of natural. This alone it is that makes truth preferable to falsehood, this, that determines the fitness of things, and this that induces God to command some actions, and forbid others. They who extol the truth, beauty, and harmony of virtue, exclusive of its consequences, deal but in pompous nonsense; and they, who would persuade us, that good and evil are things indifferent, depending wholly on the will of God, do but confound the nature of things, as well as all our notions of God himself, by representing him capable of willing contradictions; that is, that we should be, and be happy, and, at the same time, that we should torment and destroy each other; for injuries cannot be made benefits, pain cannot be made pleasure, and, consequently, vice cannot be made virtue, by any power whatever. It is the consequences, therefore, of all human actions that must stamp their value. So far as the general practice of any action tends to produce good, and introduce happiness into the world, so far we may pronounce it virtuous; so much evil as it occasions, such is the degree of vice it contains. I say the general practice, because we must always remember, in judging by this rule, to apply it only to the general species of actions, and not to particular actions; for the infinite wisdom of God, desirous to set bounds to the destructive consequences, which must, otherwise, have followed from the universal depravity of mankind, has so wonderfully contrived the nature of things, that our most vitious actions may, sometimes, accidentally and collaterally, produce good. Thus, for instance, robbery may disperse useless hoards to the benefit of the public; adultery may bring heirs, and good humour too, into many families, where they would otherwise have been wanting; and murder, free the world from tyrants and oppressors. Luxury maintains its thousands, and vanity its ten thousands. Superstition and arbitrary power contribute to the grandeur of many nations, and the liberties of others are preserved by the perpetual contentions of avarice, knavery, selfishness, and ambition; and thus the worst of vices, and the worst of men, are often compelled, by providence, to serve the most beneficial purposes, contrary to their own malevolent tendencies and inclinations; and thus private vices become public benefits, by the force only of accidental circumstances. But this impeaches not the truth of the criterion of virtue, before mentioned, the only solid foundation on which any true

system of ethics can be built, the only plain, simple, and uniform rule, by which we can pass any judgment on our actions; but by this we may be enabled, not only to determine which are good, and which are evil, but, almost mathematically, to demonstrate the proportion of virtue or vice which belongs to each, by comparing them with the degrees of happiness or misery which they occasion. But, though the production of happiness is the essence of virtue, it is by no means the end; the great end is the probation of mankind, or the giving them an opportunity of exalting or degrading themselves, in another state, by their behaviour in the present. And thus, indeed, it answers two most important purposes: those are, the conservation of our happiness, and the test of our obedience; or, had not such a test seemed necessary to God's infinite wisdom, and productive of universal good, he would never have permitted the happiness of men, even in this life, to have depended on so precarious a tenure, as their mutual good behaviour to each other. For it is observable, that he, who best knows our formation, has trusted no one thing of importance to our reason or virtue: he trusts only to our appetites for the support of the individual, and the continuance of our species; to our vanity, or compassion, for our bounty to others; and to our fears, for the preservation of ourselves; often to our vices, for the support of government, and, sometimes, to our follies, for the preservation of our religion. But, since some test of our obedience was necessary, nothing, sure, could have been commanded for that end, so fit, and proper, and, at the same time, so useful, as the practice of virtue; nothing could have been so justly rewarded with happiness, as the production of happiness, in conformity to the will of God. It is this conformity, alone, which adds merit to virtue, and constitutes the essential difference between morality and religion. Morality obliges men to live honestly and soberly, because such behaviour is most conducive to public happiness, and, consequently, to their own; religion, to pursue the same course, because conformable to the will of their creator. Morality induces them to embrace virtue, from prudential considerations; religion, from those of gratitude and obedience. Morality, therefore, entirely abstracted from religion, can have nothing meritorious in it; it being but wisdom, prudence, or good economy, which, like health, beauty, or riches, are rather obligations conferred upon us by God, than merits in us towards him; for, though we may be justly punished for injuring ourselves, we can claim no reward for self-preservation; as suicide deserves punishment and infamy, but a man deserves no reward or honours for not being guilty of it. This I take to be the meaning of all those passages in our scriptures, in which works are represented to have no merit without faith; that is, not without believing in historical facts, in creeds, and articles, but, without being done in pursuance of our belief in God, and in obedience to his commands. And now, having mentioned scripture, I cannot omit observing, that the christian is the only religious or moral institution in the world, that ever set, in a right light, these two material points, the essence and the end of virtue, that ever founded the one in the production of happiness, that is, in universal benevolence, or, in their language, charity to all men; the other, in the probation of man, and his obedience to his creator. Sublime and magnificent as was the philosophy of the ancients, all their moral systems were deficient in these two important articles. They were all built on the sandy foundations of the innate beauty of virtue, or enthusiastic patriotism; and their great point in view was the contemptible reward of human glory; foundations, which were, by no means, able to support the magnificent structures which they erected upon them; for the beauty of virtue, independent of its effects, is unmeaning nonsense; patriotism, which injures mankind in general, for the sake of a particular country, is but a more extended selfishness, and really criminal; and all human glory, but a mean and ridiculous delusion.

"The whole affair, then, of religion and morality, the subject of so many thousand volumes, is, in short, no more than this: the supreme being, infinitely good, as well as powerful, desirous to diffuse happiness by all possible means, has created innumerable ranks and orders of beings, all subservient to each other by proper subordination. One of these is occupied by man, a creature endued with such a certain degree of knowledge, reason, and freewill, as is suitable to his situation, and placed, for a time, on this globe, as in a school of probation and education. Here he has an opportunity given him of improving or debasing his nature, in such a manner, as to render himself fit for a rank of

higher perfection and happiness, or to degrade himself to a state of greater imperfection and misery; necessary, indeed, towards carrying on the business of the universe, but very grievous and burdensome to those individuals who, by their own misconduct, are obliged to submit to it. The test of this his behaviour is doing good, that is, cooperating with his creator, as far as his narrow sphere of action will permit, in the production of happiness. And thus the happiness and misery of a future state will be the just reward or punishment of promoting or preventing happiness in this. So artificially, by this means, is the nature of all human virtue and vice contrived, that their rewards and punishments are woven, as it were, in their very essence; their immediate effects give us a foretaste of their future, and their fruits, in the present life, are the proper samples of what they must unavoidably produce in another. We have reason given us to distinguish these consequences, and regulate our conduct; and, lest that should neglect its post, conscience also is appointed, as an instinctive kind of monitor, perpetually to remind us both of our interest and our duty."

"Si sic omnia dixisset!" To this account of the essence of vice and virtue, it is only necessary to add, that the consequences of human actions being sometimes uncertain, and sometimes remote, it is not possible, in many cases, for most men, nor in all cases, for any man, to determine what actions will ultimately produce happiness, and, therefore, it was proper that revelation should lay down a rule to be followed, invariably, in opposition to appearances, and, in every change of circumstances, by which we may be certain to promote the general felicity, and be set free from the dangerous temptation of *doing evil that good may come*. Because it may easily happen, and, in effect, will happen, very frequently, that our own private happiness may be promoted by an act injurious to others, when yet no man can be obliged, by nature, to prefer, ultimately, the happiness of others to his own; therefore, to the instructions of infinite wisdom, it was necessary that infinite power should add penal sanctions. That every man, to whom those instructions shall be imparted, may know, that he can never, ultimately, injure himself by benefiting others, or, ultimately, by injuring others benefit himself; but that, however the lot of the good and bad may be huddled together in the seeming confusion of our present state, the time shall undoubtedly come, when the most virtuous will be most happy.

I am sorry, that the remaining part of this letter is not equal to the first. The author has, indeed, engaged in a disquisition, in which we need not wonder if he fails, in the solution of questions on which philosophers have employed their abilities from the earliest times,

"And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost."

He denies, that man was created *perfect*, because the system requires subordination, and because the power of losing his perfection, of "rendering himself wicked and miserable, is the highest imperfection imaginable." Besides, the regular gradations of the scale of being required, somewhere, "such a creature as man, with all his infirmities about him; and the total removal of those would be altering his nature, and, when he became perfect, he must cease to be man."

I have already spent some considerations on the *scale of being*, of which, yet, I am obliged to renew the mention, whenever a new argument is made to rest upon it; and I must, therefore, again remark, that consequences cannot have greater certainty than the postulate from which they are drawn, and that no system can be more hypothetical than this, and, perhaps, no hypothesis more absurd.

He again deceives himself with respect to the perfection with which *man* is held to be originally vested. "That man came perfect, that is, endued with all possible perfection, out of the hands of his creator, is a false notion derived from the philosophers.—The universal system required subordination, and, consequently, comparative imperfection." That *man was ever endued with all possible perfection*, that is, with all perfection, of which the idea is not contradictory, or destructive of itself, is, undoubtedly, *false*. But it can hardly be called *a false notion*, because no man ever thought it, nor can it be derived from the *philosophers*; for, without pretending to guess what philosophers he

may mean, it is very safe to affirm, that no philosopher ever said it. Of those who now maintain that *man* was once perfect, who may very easily be found, let the author inquire, whether *man* was ever omniscient, whether he was ever omnipotent; whether he ever had even the lower power of archangels or angels. Their answers will soon inform him, that the supposed perfection of *man* was not absolute, but respective; that he was perfect, in a sense consistent enough with subordination, perfect, not as compared with different beings, but with himself in his present degeneracy; not perfect, as an angel, but perfect, as man.

From this perfection, whatever it was, he thinks it necessary that man should be debarred, because pain is necessary to the good of the universe; and the pain of one order of beings extending its salutary influence to innumerable orders above and below, it was necessary that man should suffer; but, because it is not suitable to justice, that pain should be inflicted on innocence, it was necessary that man should be criminal.

This is given as a satisfactory account of the original of moral evil, which amounts only to this, that God created beings, whose guilt he foreknew, in order that he might have proper objects of pain, because the pain of part is, no man knows how or why, necessary to the felicity of the whole.

The perfection which man once had, may be so easily conceived, that, without any unusual strain of imagination, we can figure its revival. All the duties to God or man, that are neglected, we may fancy performed; all the crimes, that are committed, we may conceive forborne. Man will then be restored to his moral perfections; and into what head can it enter, that, by this change, the universal system would be shaken, or the condition of any order of beings altered for the worse?

He comes, in the fifth letter, to political, and, in the sixth, to religious evils. Of political evil, if we suppose the origin of moral evil discovered, the account is by no means difficult; polity being only the conduct of immoral men in publick affairs. The evils of each particular kind of government are very clearly and elegantly displayed, and, from their secondary causes, very rationally deduced; but the first cause lies still in its ancient obscurity. There is, in this letter, nothing new, nor any thing eminently instructive; one of his practical deductions, that "from government, evils cannot be eradicated, and their excess only can be prevented," has been always allowed; the question, upon which all dissension arises, is, when that excess begins, at what point men shall cease to bear, and attempt to remedy.

Another of his precepts, though not new, well deserves to be transcribed, because it cannot be too frequently impressed.

"What has here been said of their imperfections and abuses, is, by no means, intended as a defence of them: every wise man ought to redress them to the utmost of his power; which can be effected by one method only, that is, by a reformation of manners; for, as all political evils derive their original from moral, these can never be removed, until those are first amended. He, therefore, who strictly adheres to virtue and sobriety in his conduct, and enforces them by his example, does more real service to a state, than he who displaces a minister, or dethrones a tyrant: this gives but a temporary relief, but that exterminates the cause of the disease. No immoral man, then, can possibly be a true patriot; and all those who profess outrageous zeal for the liberty and prosperity of their country, and, at the same time, infringe her laws, affront her religion, and debauch her people, are but despicable quacks, by fraud or ignorance increasing the disorders they pretend to remedy."

Of religion he has said nothing but what he has learned, or might have learned, from the divines; that it is not universal, because it must be received upon conviction, and successively received by those whom conviction reached; that its evidences and sanctions are not irresistible, because it was intended to induce, not to compel; and that it is obscure, because we want faculties to comprehend it. What he means by his assertion, that it wants policy, I do not well understand; he does not mean to deny, that a good christian will be a good governour, or a good subject; and he has before justly observed, that the good man only is a patriot.

Religion has been, he says, corrupted by the wickedness of those to whom it was communicated, and has lost part of its efficacy, by its connexion with temporal interest and human passion.

He justly observes, that from all this no conclusion can be drawn against the divine original of christianity, since the objections arise not from the nature of the revelation, but of him to whom it is communicated.

All this is known, and all this is true; but why, we have not yet discovered. Our author, if I understand him right, pursues the argument thus: the religion of man produces evils, because the morality of man is imperfect; his morality is imperfect, that he may be justly a subject of punishment; he is made subject to punishment, because the pain of part is necessary to the happiness of the whole; pain is necessary to happiness, no mortal can tell why, or how.

Thus, after having clambered, with great labour, from one step of argumentation to another, instead of rising into the light of knowledge, we are devolved back into dark ignorance; and all our effort ends in belief, that for the evils of life there is some good reason, and in confession, that the reason cannot be found. This is all that has been produced by the revival of Chrysippus's untractableness of matter, and the Arabian scale of existence. A system has been raised, which is so ready to fall to pieces of itself, that no great praise can be derived from its destruction. To object, is always easy, and, it has been well observed by a late writer, that "the hand which cannot build a hovel, may demolish a temple ¹¹."

¹¹ New Practice of Physick.

REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, FOR IMPROVING OF

NATURAL KNOWLEDGE, FROM ITS FIRST RISE;

In which the most considerable papers communicated to the society, which have, hitherto, not been published, are inserted, in their proper order, as a supplement to the Philosophical Transactions. By Thomas Birch, D. D. secretary to the Royal society, 2 vols. 4to.

This book might, more properly, have been entitled by the author, a diary than a history, as it proceeds regularly from day to day, so minutely, as to number over the members present at each committee, and so slowly, that two large volumes contain only the transactions of the eleven first years from the institution of the society.

I am, yet, far from intending to represent this work as useless. Many particularities are of importance to one man, though they appear trifling to another; and it is always more safe to admit copiousness, than to affect brevity. Many informations will be afforded by this book to the biographer. I know not where else it can be found, but here, and in Ward, that Cowley was doctor in physick. And, whenever any other institution, of the same kind, shall be attempted, the exact relation of the progress of the Royal society may furnish precedents.

These volumes consist of an exact journal of the society; of some papers delivered to them, which, though registered and preserved, had been never printed; and of short memoirs of the more eminent members, inserted at the end of the year in which each died.

The original of the society is placed earlier in this history than in that of Dr. Sprat. Theodore Haak, a German of the Palatinate, in 1645, proposed, to some inquisitive and learned men, a weekly meeting, for the cultivation of natural knowledge. The first associates, whose names ought, surely, to be preserved, were Dr. Wilkins, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Goddard, Dr. Ent, Dr. Glisson, Dr. Merret, Mr. Foster of Gresham, and Mr. Haak. Sometime afterwards, Wilkins, Wallis, and Goddard, being removed to Oxford, carried on the same design there by stated meetings, and adopted into their society Dr. Ward, Dr. Bathurst, Dr. Petty, and Dr. Willis.

The Oxford society coming to London, in 1659, joined their friends, and augmented their number, and, for some time, met in Gresham college. After the restoration, their number was again increased, and on the 28th of November, 1660, a select party happening to retire for conversation, to Mr. Rooke's apartment in Gresham college, formed the first plan of a regular society. Here Dr. Sprat's history begins, and, therefore, from this period, the proceedings are well known ¹².

¹² From the Literary Magazine, 1756.

REVIEW OF THE GENERAL HISTORY OP POLYBIUS, IN FIVE BOOKS, TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK, BY MR. HAMPTON

This appears to be one of the books, which will long do honour to the present age. It has been, by some remarker, observed, that no man ever grew immortal by a translation; and, undoubtedly, translations into the prose of a living language must be laid aside, whenever the language changes, because the matter being always to be found in the original, contributes nothing to the preservation of the form superinduced by the translator. But such versions may last long, though they can scarcely last always; and there is reason to believe that this will grow in reputation, while the English tongue continues in its present state.

The great difficulty of a translator is to preserve the native form of his language, and the unconstrained manner of an original writer. This Mr. Hampton seems to have attained, in a degree of which there are few examples. His book has the dignity of antiquity, and the easy flow of a modern composition.

It were, perhaps, to be desired, that he had illustrated, with notes, an author which must have many difficulties to an English reader, and, particularly, that he had explained the ancient art of war; but these omissions may be easily supplied, by an inferiour hand, from the antiquaries and commentators.

To note omissions, where there is so much performed, would be invidious, and to commend is unnecessary, where the excellence of the work may be more easily and effectually shown, by exhibiting a specimen ¹³.

¹³ From the Literary Magazine, 1756.

REVIEW OF MISCELLANIES ON MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,

IN PROSE AND VERSE; BY ELIZABETH HARRISON

This volume, though only one name appears upon the first page, has been produced by the contribution of many hands, and printed by the encouragement of a numerous subscription, both which favours seem to be deserved by the modesty and piety of her on whom they were bestowed.

The authors of the essays in prose seem, generally, to have imitated, or tried to imitate, the copiousness and luxunance of Mrs. Rowe; this, however, is not all their praise, they have laboured to add to her brightness of imagery, her purity of sentiments. The poets have had Dr. Watts before their eyes, a writer who, if he stood not in the first class of genius, compensated that defect, by a ready application of his powers to the promotion of piety. The attempt to employ the ornaments of romance in the decoration of religion was, I think, first made by Mr. Boyle's *Martyrdom of Theodora*; but Boyle's philosophical studies did not allow him time for the cultivation of style, and the completion of the great design was reserved for Mrs. Rowe. Dr. Watts was one of the first who taught the dissenters to write and speak like other men, by showing them, that elegance might consist with piety. They would have both clone honour to a better society, for they had that charity which might well make their failings forgotten, and with which the whole Christian world might wish for communion. They were pure from all the heresies of an age, to which every opinion is become a favourite, that the universal church has, hitherto, detested.

This praise the general interest of mankind requires to be given to writers who please, and do not corrupt, who instruct, and do not weary. But to them all human eulogies are vain, whom, I believe applauded by angels and numbered with the just ¹⁴.

¹⁴ From the *Literary Magazine*, 1756.—There are other reviews of books by Dr. Johnson, in this magazine, but, in general, very short, and consisting chiefly of a few introductory remarks, and an extract. That on Mrs. Harrison's *Miscellanies* maybe accounted somewhat interesting, from the notice of Dr. Watts.

ACCOUNT OF A BOOK ENTITLED AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ENQUIRY

Into the evidence produced by the earls of MORAY and MORTON against

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS ¹⁵

With an examination of the reverend Dr. Robertson's Dissertation, and Mr. Hume's History, with respect to that evidence ¹⁶.

We live in an age, in which there is much talk of independence, of private judgment, of liberty of thought, and liberty of press. Our clamorous praises of liberty sufficiently prove that we enjoy it; and if, by liberty, nothing else be meant, than security from the persecutions of power, it is so fully possessed by us, that little more is to be desired, except that one should talk of it less, and use it better.

But a social being can scarcely rise to complete independence; he that has any wants, which others can supply, must study the gratification of them, whose assistance he expects; this is equally true, whether his wants be wants of nature, or of vanity. The writers of the present time are not always candidates for preferment, nor often the hirelings of a patron. They profess to serve no interest, and speak with loud contempt of sycophants and slaves.

There is, however, a power, from whose influence neither they, nor their predecessors, have ever been free. Those, who have set greatness at defiance, have yet been the slaves of fashion. When an opinion has once become popular, very few are willing to oppose it. Idleness is more willing to credit than inquire; cowardice is afraid of controversy, and vanity of answer; and he that writes merely for sale, is tempted to court purchasers by flattering the prejudices of the publick.

It has now been fashionable, for near half a century, to defame and vilify the house of Stuart, and to exalt and magnify the reign of Elizabeth. The Stuarts have found few apologists, for the dead cannot pay for praise; and who will, without reward, oppose the tide of popularity? yet there remains, still, among us, not wholly extinguished, a zeal for truth, a desire of establishing right, in opposition to fashion. The author, whose work is now before us, has attempted a vindication of Mary of Scotland, whose name has, for some years, been generally resigned to infamy, and who has been considered, as the murderer of her husband, and condemned by her own letters.

Of these letters, the author of this vindication confesses the importance to be such, that, "if they be genuine, the queen was guilty; and, if they be spurious, she was innocent." He has, therefore, undertaken to prove them spurious, and divided his treatise into six parts.

In the first is contained the history of the letters from their discovery by the earl of Morton, their being produced against queen Mary, and their several appearances in England, before queen Elizabeth and her commissioners, until they were finally delivered back again to the earl of Morton.

The second contains a short abstract of Mr. Goodall's arguments for proving the letters to be spurious and forged; and of Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume's objections, by way of answer to Mr. Goodall, with critical observations on these authors.

The third contains an examination of the arguments of Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume, in support of the authenticity of the letters.

¹⁵ Written by Mr. Tytler, of Edinburgh.

¹⁶ Printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, October, 1760.

The fourth contains an examination of the confession of Nicholas Hubert, commonly called *French Paris*, with observations, showing the same to be a forgery.

The fifth contains a short recapitulation, or summary, of the arguments on both sides of the question.

The last is an historical collection of the direct or positive evidence still on record, tending to show what part the earls of Murray and Morton, and secretary Lethington, had in the murder of the lord Darnley.

The author apologizes for the length of this book, by observing, that it necessarily comprises a great number of particulars, which could not easily be contracted: the same plea may be made for the imperfection of our extract, which will naturally fall below the force of the book, because we can only select parts of that evidence, which owes its strength to its concatenation, and which will be weakened, whenever it is disjointed.

The account of the seizure of these controverted letters is thus given by the queen's enemies.

"That in the castell of Edinburgh, thair was left be the erle of Bothwell, before his fleeing away, and was send for be ane George Dalglish, his servand, who was taken be the erle of Mortoun, ane small gylt coffer, not fully ane fute lang, garnisht in sindrie places with the roman letter F. under ane king's crowne; wharin were certane letteris and writings weel knawin, and be aithis to be affirmit to have been written with the quene of Scottis awn hand to the erle."

The papers in the box were said to be eight letters, in French, some love-sonnets in French also, and a promise of marriage by the queen to Bothwell.

To the reality of these letters our author makes some considerable objections, from the nature of things; but, as such arguments do not always convince, we will pass to the evidence of facts.

On June 15, 1567, the queen delivered herself to Morton, and his party, who imprisoned her.

June 20, 1567, Dalglish was seized, and, six days after, was examined by Morton; his examination is still extant, and there is no mention of this fatal box.

Dec. 4, 1567, Murray's secret council published an act, in which is the first mention of these letters, and in which they are said to be *written and subscrivit with her awin hand*. Ten days after, Murray's first parliament met, and passed an act, in which they mention *previe letters written halelie* [wholly] *with her awin hand*. The difference between *written and subscribed*, and *wholly written*, gives the author just reason to suspect, first, a forgery, and then a variation of the forgery. It is, indeed, very remarkable, that the first account asserts more than the second, though the second contains all the truth; for the letters, whether *written* by the queen or not, were not *subscribed*. Had the second account differed from the first only by something added, the first might have contained truth, though not all the truth; but as the second corrects the first by diminution, the first cannot be cleared from falsehood.

In October, 1568, these letters were shown at York to Elisabeth's commissioners, by the agents of Murray, but not in their publick character, as commissioners, but by way of private information, and were not, therefore, exposed to Mary's commissioners. Mary, however, hearing that some letters were intended to be produced against her, directed her commissioners to require them for her inspection, and, in the mean time, to declare them *false and feigned, forged and invented*, observing, that there were many that could counterfeit her hand.

To counterfeit a name is easy, to counterfeit a hand, through eight letters very difficult. But it does not appear that the letters were ever shown to those who would desire to detect them; and, to the English commissioners, a rude and remote imitation might be sufficient, since they were not shown as judicial proofs; and why they were not shown as proofs, no other reason can be given, than they must have then been examined, and that examination would have detected the forgery.

These letters, thus timorously and suspiciously communicated, were all the evidence against Mary; for the servants of Bothwell, executed for the murder of the king, acquitted the queen, at the hour of death. These letters were so necessary to Murray, that he alleges them, as the reason of the

queen's imprisonment, though he imprisoned her on the 16th, and pretended not to have intercepted the letters before the 20th of June.

Of these letters, on which the fate of princes and kingdoms was suspended, the authority should have been put out of doubt; yet that such letters were ever found, there is no witness but Morton who accused the queen, and Crawford, a dependent on Lennox, another of her accusers. Dalgleish, the bearer, was hanged without any interrogatories concerning them; and Hulet, mentioned in them, though then in prison, was never called to authenticate them, nor was his confession produced against Mary, till death had left him no power to disown it.

Elizabeth, indeed, was easily satisfied; she declared herself ready to receive the proofs against Mary, and absolutely refused Mary the liberty of confronting her accusers, and making her defence. Before such a judge, a very little proof would be sufficient. She gave the accusers of Mary leave to go to Scotland, and the box and letters were seen no more. They have been since lost, and the discovery, which comparison of writing might have made, is now no longer possible. Hume has, however, endeavoured to palliate the conduct of Elizabeth, but "his account," says our author, "is contradicted, almost in every sentence, by the records, which, it appears, he has himself perused."

In the next part, the authenticity of the letters is examined; and it seems to be proved, beyond contradiction, that the French letters, supposed to have been written by Mary, are translated from the Scotch copy, and, if originals, which it was so much the interest of such numbers to preserve, are wanting, it is much more likely that they never existed, than that they have been lost.

The arguments used by Dr. Robertson, to prove the genuineness of the letters, are next examined. Robertson makes use, principally, of what he calls the *internal evidence*, which, amounting, at most, to conjecture, is opposed by conjecture equally probable.

In examining the confession of Nicholas Hubert, or French Paris, this new apologist of Mary seems to gain ground upon her accuser. Paris is mentioned, in the letters, as the bearer of them to Bothwell; when the rest of Bothwell's servants were executed, clearing the queen in the last moment, Paris, instead of suffering his trial, with the rest, at Edinburgh, was conveyed to St. Andrew's, where Murray was absolute; put into a dungeon of Murray's citadel; and, two years after, condemned by Murray himself, nobody knew how. Several months after his death, a confession in his name, without the regular testifications, was sent to Cecil, at what exact time, nobody can tell.

Of this confession, Leslie, bishop of Ross, openly denied the genuineness, in a book printed at London, and suppressed by Elizabeth; and another historian of that time declares, that Paris died without any confession; and the confession itself was never shown to Mary, or to Mary's commissioners. The author makes this reflection:

"From the violent presumptions that arise from their carrying this poor ignorant stranger from Edinburgh, the ordinary seat of justice; their keeping him hid from all the world, in a remote dungeon, and not producing him, with their other evidences, so as he might have been publicly questioned; the positive and direct testimony of the author of Crawford's manuscript, then living, and on the spot at the time; with the publick affirmation of the bishop of Ross, at the time of Paris's death, that he had vindicated the queen with his dying breath; the behaviour of Murray, Morton, Buchanan, and even of Hay, the attester of this pretended confession, on that occasion; their close and reserved silence, at the time when they must have had this confession of Paris in their pocket; and their publishing every other circumstance that could tend to blacken the queen, and yet omitting this confession, the only direct evidence of her supposed guilt; all this duly and dispassionately considered, I think, one may safely conclude, that it was judged not fit to expose, so soon, to light this piece of evidence against the queen; which a cloud of witnesses, living, and present at Paris's execution, would, surely, have given clear testimony against, as a notorious imposture."

Mr. Hume, indeed, observes: "It is in vain, at present, to seek for improbabilities in Nicholas Hubert's dying confession, and to magnify the smallest difficulties into a contradiction. It was certainly a regular judicial paper, given in regularly and judicially, and ought to have been canvassed at the

time, if the persons, whom it concerned, had been assured of their innocence." To which our author makes a reply, which cannot be shortened without weakening it:

"Upon what does this author ground his sentence? Upon two very plain reasons, first, that the confession was a judicial one, that is, taken in presence, or by authority of a judge. And secondly, that it was regularly and judicially given in; that must be understood during the time of the conferences before queen Elizabeth and her council, in presence of Mary's commissioners; at which time she ought to have canvassed it," says our author, "if she knew her innocence.

"That it was not a judicial confession, is evident: the paper itself does not bear any such mark; nor does it mention, that it was taken in presence of any person, or by any authority whatsoever; and, by comparing it with the judicial examinations of Dalgleish, Hay, and Hepburn, it is apparent, that it is destitute of every formality, requisite in a judicial evidence. In what dark corner, then, this strange production was generated, our author may endeavour to find out, if he can.

"As to his second assertion, that it was regularly and judicially given in, and, therefore, ought to have been canvassed, by Mary during the conferences; we have already seen, that this, likewise, is not fact: the conferences broke up in February, 1569: Nicholas Hubert was not hanged till August thereafter, and his dying confession, as Mr. Hume calls it, is only dated the 10th of that month. How, then, can this gentleman gravely tell us, that this confession was judicially given in, and ought to have been, at that very time, canvassed by queen Mary and her commissioners? Such positive assertions, apparently contrary to fact, are unworthy the character of an historian, and may, very justly, render his decision, with respect to evidences of a higher nature, very dubious. In answer, then, to Mr. Hume: As the queen's accusers did not choose to produce this material witness, Paris, whom they had alive and in their hands, nor any declaration or confession, from him, at the critical and proper time for having it canvassed by the queen, I apprehend our author's conclusion may fairly be used against himself; that it is in vain, at present, to support the improbabilities and absurdities in a confession, taken in a clandestine way, nobody knows how, and produced, after Paris's death, by nobody knows whom, and, from every appearance, destitute of every formality, requisite and common to such sort of evidence: for these reasons, I am under no sort of hesitation to give sentence against Nicholas Hubert's confession, as a gross imposture and forgery."

The state of the evidence relating to the letters is this:

Morton affirms, that they were taken in the hands of Dalgleish. His examination of Dalgleish is still extant, and he appears never to have been once interrogated concerning the letters.

Morton and Murray affirm, that they were written by the queen's hand; they were carefully concealed from Mary and her commissioners, and were never collated by one man, who could desire to disprove them.

Several of the incidents mentioned in the letters are confirmed by the oath of Crawford, one of Lennox's defendants, and some of the incidents are so minute, as that they could scarcely be thought on by a forger. Crawford's testimony is not without suspicion. Whoever practises forgery, endeavours to make truth the vehicle of falsehood.

Of a prince's life very minute incidents are known; and if any are too slight to be remarked, they may be safely feigned, for they are, likewise, too slight to be contradicted. But there are still more reasons for doubting the genuineness of these letters. They had no date of time or place, no seal, no direction, no superscription.

The only evidences that could prove their authenticity were Dalgleish and Paris; of which Dalgleish, at his trial, was never questioned about them; Paris was never publicly tried, though he was kept alive through the time of the conference.

The servants of Bothwell, who were put to death for the king's murder, cleared Mary with their last words.

The letters were first declared to be subscribed, and were then produced without subscription.

They were shown, during the conferences at York, privately, to the English commissioners, but were concealed from the commissioners of Mary.

Mary always solicited the perusal of these letters, and was always denied it.

She demanded to be heard, in person, by Elizabeth, before the nobles of England and the ambassadours of other princes, and was refused.

When Mary persisted in demanding copies of the letters, her commissioners were dismissed with their box to Scotland, and the letters were seen no more.

The French letters, which, for almost two centuries, have been considered as originals, by the enemies of Mary's memory, are now discovered to be forgeries, and acknowledged to be translations, and, perhaps, French translations of a Latin translation. And the modern accusers of Mary are forced to infer, from these letters, which now exist, that other letters existed formerly, which have been lost, in spite of curiosity, malice, and interest.

The rest of this treatise is employed in an endeavour to prove, that Mary's accusers were the murderers of Darnly: through this inquiry it is not necessary to follow him; only let it be observed, that, if these letters were forged by them, they may easily be thought capable of other crimes. That the letters were forged, is now made so probable, that, perhaps, they will never more be cited as testimonies.

MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE:

Or, an essay on an ancient prophetic inscription, in monkish rhyme, lately discovered near Lynn, in Norfolk. By Probus Britannicus ¹⁷.

In Norfolk, near the town of Lynn, in a field, which an ancient tradition of the country affirms to have been once a deep lake, or meer, and which appears, from authentick records, to have been called, about two hundred years ago, *Palus*, or the marsh, was discovered, not long since, a large square stone, which is found, upon an exact inspection, to be a kind of coarse marble of a substance not firm enough to admit of being polished, yet harder than our common quarries afford, and not easily susceptible of injuries from weather or outward accidents.

It was brought to light by a farmer, who, observing his plough obstructed by something, through which the share could not make its way, ordered his servants to remove it. This was not effected without some difficulty, the stone being three feet four inches deep, and four feet square in the superficies; and, consequently, of a weight not easily manageable. However, by the application of levers, it was, at length, raised, and conveyed to a corner of the field, where it lay, for some months, entirely unregarded; nor, perhaps, had we ever been made acquainted with this venerable relick of antiquity, had not our good fortune been greater than our curiosity.

A gentleman, well known to the learned world, and distinguished by the patronage of the Maecenas of Norfolk, whose name, was I permitted to mention it, would excite the attention of my reader, and add no small authority to my conjectures, observing, as he was walking that way, that the clouds began to gather, and threaten him with a shower, had recourse, for shelter, to the trees under which this stone happened to lie, and sat down upon it, in expectation of fair weather. At length he began to amuse himself, in his confinement, by clearing the earth from his seat with the point of his cane; and had continued this employment some time, when he observed several traces of letters, antique and irregular, which, by being very deeply engraven, were still easily distinguishable.

This discovery so far raised his curiosity, that, going home immediately, he procured an instrument proper for cutting out the clay, that filled up the spaces of the letters; and, with very little labour, made the inscription legible, which is here exhibited to the publick:

POST-GENITIS

Cum lapidem hunc, magni
Qui nunc jacet incola stagni,
Vel pede equus tanget,
Vel arator vomere franget,
Sentiet aegra metus,
Effundet patria fletus,
Littoraque ut fluctu,
Resonabunt oppida luctu:
Nam foecunda rubri
Serpent per prata colubri,
Gramina vastantes,
Flores fructusque vorantes.
Omnia foedantes,

¹⁷ First printed in the year 1739.

Vitiantes, et spoliantes;
Quanquam haud pugnaces,
Ibunt per cuncta minaces,
Fures absque timore,
Et pingues absque labore.
Horrida dementes
Rapiet discordia gentes;
Plurima tunc leges
Mutabit, plurima reges
Natio; conversa
In rabiem tunc contremet ursa

MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE

Cynthia, tunc latis
Florebunt lilia pratis;
Nec fremere audebit
Leo, sed violare timebit,
Omnia consuetus
Populari pascua lætus.
Ante oculos natos
Calceatos et cruciatos
Jam feret ignavus,
Vetitaque libidine pravus.
En quoque quod mirum,
Quod dicas denique dirum,
Sanguinem equus sugit,
Neque bellua victa remugit!

These lines he carefully copied, accompanied, in his letter of July 19, with the following translation.

TO POSTERITY

Whene'er this stone, now hid beneath the lake,
The horse shall trample, or the plough shall break,
Then, O my country! shalt thou groan distrest,
Grief swell thine eyes, and terrour chill thy breast.
Thy streets with violence of woe shall sound,
Loud as the billows bursting on the ground.
Then through thy fields shall scarlet reptiles stray,
And rapine and pollution mark their way.
Their hungry swarms the peaceful vale shall fright,
Still fierce to threaten, still afraid to fight;
The teeming year's whole product shall devour,
Insatiate pluck the fruit, and crop the flow'r;

Shall glutton on the industrious peasants' spoil,
Rob without fear, and fatten without toil;
Then o'er the world shall discord stretch her wings;
Kings change their laws, and kingdoms change their kings.
The bear, enrag'd, th' affrighted moon shall dread;
The lilies o'er the vales triumphant spread;
Nor shall the lion, wont of old to reign
Despotick o'er the desolated plain,
Henceforth th' inviolable bloom invade,
Or dare to murmur in the flow'ry glade;
His tortur'd sons shall die before his face,
While he lies melting in a lewd embrace;
And, yet more strange! his veins a horse shall drain,
Nor shall the passive coward once complain.

I make not the least doubt, but that this learned person has given us, as an antiquary, a true and uncontrovertible representation of the writer's meaning; and, am sure, he can confirm it by innumerable quotations from the authors of the middle age, should he be publickly called upon by any man of eminent rank in the republick of letters; nor will he deny the world that satisfaction, provided the animadverter proceeds with that sobriety and modesty, with which it becomes every learned man to treat a subject of such importance.

Yet, with all proper deference to a name so justly celebrated, I will take the freedom of observing, that he has succeeded better as a scholar than a poet; having fallen below the strength, the conciseness, and, at the same time, below the perspicuity of his author. I shall not point out the particular passages in which this disparity is remarkable, but content myself with saying, in general, that the criticisms, which there is room for on this translation, may be almost an incitement to some lawyer, studious of antiquity, to learn Latin.

The inscription, which I now proceed to consider, wants no arguments to prove its antiquity to those among the learned, who are versed in the writers of the darker ages, and know that the Latin poetry of those times was of a peculiar cast and air, not easy to be understood, and very difficult to be imitated; nor can it be conceived, that any man would lay out his abilities on a way of writing, which, though attained with much study, could gain him no reputation; and engrave his chimeras on a stone, to astonish posterity.

Its antiquity, therefore, is out of dispute; but how high a degree of antiquity is to be assigned it, there is more ground for inquiry than determination. How early Latin rhymes made their appearance in the world, is yet undecided by the criticks. Verses of this kind were called *leonine*; but whence they derived that appellation, the learned Camden¹⁸ confesses himself ignorant; so that the style carries no certain marks of its age. I shall only observe farther, on this head, that the characters are nearly of the same form with those on king Arthur's coffin; but whether, from their similitude, we may venture to pronounce them of the same date, I must refer to the decision of better judges.

Our inability to fix the age of this inscription, necessarily infers our ignorance of its author, with relation to whom, many controversies may be started, worthy of the most profound learning, and most indefatigable diligence.

The first question that naturally arises is: Whether he was a Briton or a Saxon? I had, at first, conceived some hope that, in this question, in which not only the idle curiosity of virtuosos, but the

¹⁸ See his *Remains*, 1614, p. 337, "Riming verses, which are called *versus leonini*, I know not wherefore, (for a lyon's taile doth not answer to the middle parts as these verses doe,) began in the time of Carolus Magnus, and were only in request then, and in many ages following, which delighted in nothing more than in this minstrelic of meeters."

honour of two mighty nations, is concerned, some information might be drawn from the word *patria*, my country, in the third line; England being not, in propriety of speech, the country of the Saxons; at least, not at their first arrival. But, upon farther reflection, this argument appeared not conclusive, since we find that, in all ages, foreigners have affected to call England their country, even when, like the Saxons of old, they came only to plunder it.

An argument in favour of the Britons may, indeed, be drawn from the tenderness, with which the author seems to lament his country, and the compassion he shows for its approaching calamities. I, who am a descendant from the Saxons, and, therefore, unwilling to say any thing derogatory from the reputation of my forefathers, must yet allow this argument its full force; for it has been rarely, very rarely, known, that foreigners, however well treated, caressed, enriched, flattered, or exalted, have regarded this country with the least gratitude or affection, till the race has, by long continuance, after many generations, been naturalized and assimilated.

They have been ready, upon all occasions, to prefer the petty interests of their own country, though, perhaps, only some desolate and worthless corner of the world. They have employed the wealth of England, in paying troops to defend mud-wall towns, and uninhabitable rocks, and in purchasing barriers for territories, of which the natural sterility secured them from invasion.

This argument, which wants no particular instances to confirm it, is, I confess, of the greatest weight in this question, and inclines me strongly to believe, that the benevolent author of this prediction must have been born a Briton.

The learned discoverer of the inscription was pleased to insist, with great warmth, upon the etymology of the word *patria*, which signifying, says he, *the land of my father*, could be made use of by none, but such whose ancestors had resided here; but, in answer to this demonstration, as he called it, I only desired him to take notice, how common it is for intruders of yesterday to pretend the same title with the ancient proprietors, and, having just received an estate, by voluntary grant, to erect a claim of *hereditary right*.

Nor is it less difficult to form any satisfactory conjecture, concerning the rank or condition of the writer, who, contented with a consciousness of having done his duty, in leaving this solemn warning to his country, seems studiously to have avoided that veneration, to which his knowledge of futurity, undoubtedly, entitled him, and those honours, which his memory might justly claim from the gratitude of posterity; and has, therefore, left no trace, by which the most sagacious and diligent inquirer can hope to discover him.

This conduct, alone, ought to convince us, that the prediction is of no small importance to mankind, since the author of it appears not to have been influenced by any other motive, than that noble and exalted philanthropy, which is above the narrow views of recompense or applause.

That interest had no share in this inscription, is evident beyond dispute, since the age in which he lived received neither pleasure nor instruction from it. Nor is it less apparent, from the suppression of his name, that he was equally a stranger to that wild desire of fame, which has, sometimes, infatuated the noblest minds.

His modesty, however, has not been able wholly to extinguish that curiosity, which so naturally leads us, when we admire a performance, to inquire after the author. Those, whom I have consulted on this occasion; and my zeal for the honour of this benefactor of my country has not suffered me to forget a single antiquary of reputation, have, almost unanimously, determined, that it was written by a king. For where else, said they, are we to expect that greatness of mind, and that dignity of expression, so eminently conspicuous in this inscription!

It is with a proper sense of the weakness of my own abilities, that I venture to lay before the publick the reasons which hinder me from concurring with this opinion, which I am not only inclined to favour by my respect for the authors of it, but by a natural affection for monarchy, and a prevailing inclination to believe, that every excellence is inherent in a king.

To condemn an opinion so agreeable to the reverence due to the regal dignity, and countenanced by so great authorities, without a long and accurate discussion, would be a temerity justly liable to the severest censures. A supercilious and arrogant determination of a controversy of such importance, would, doubtless, be treated by the impartial and candid with the utmost indignation.

But as I have too high an idea of the learning of my contemporaries, to obtrude any crude, hasty, or indigested notions on the publick, I have proceeded with the utmost degree of diffidence and caution; I have frequently reviewed all my arguments, traced them backwards to their first principles, and used every method of examination to discover, whether all the deductions were natural and just, and whether I was not imposed on by some specious fallacy; but the farther I carried my inquiries, and the longer I dwelt upon this great point, the more was I convinced, in spite of all my prejudices, that this wonderful prediction was not written by a king.

For, after a laborious and attentive perusal of histories, memoirs, chronicles, lives, characters, vindications, panegyrics and epitaphs, I could find no sufficient authority for ascribing to any of our English monarchs, however gracious or glorious, any prophetic knowledge or prescience of futurity; which, when we consider how rarely regal virtues are forgotten, how soon they are discovered, and how loudly they are celebrated, affords a probable argument, at least, that none of them have laid any claim to this character. For why should historians have omitted to embellish their accounts with such a striking circumstance? or, if the histories of that age are lost, by length of time, why was not so uncommon an excellence transmitted to posterity, in the more lasting colours of poetry? Was that unhappy age without a laureate? Was there then no Young ¹⁹ or Philips [20], no Ward [21] or Mitchell [22], to snatch such wonders from oblivion, and immortalize a prince of such capacities? If this was really the case, let us congratulate ourselves upon being reserved for better days; days so fruitful of happy writers, that no princely virtue can shine in vain. Our monarchs are surrounded with refined spirits, so penetrating, that they frequently discover, in their masters, great qualities, invisible to vulgar eyes, and which, did not they publish them to mankind, would be unobserved for ever.

Nor is it easy to find, in the lives of our monarchs, many instances of that regard for posterity, which seems to have been the prevailing temper of this venerable man. I have seldom, in any of the gracious speeches delivered from the throne, and received, with the highest gratitude and satisfaction, by both houses of parliament, discovered any other concern than for the current year, for which supplies are generally demanded in very pressing terms, and, sometimes, such as imply no remarkable solicitude for posterity.

Nothing, indeed, can be more unreasonable and absurd, than to require, that a monarch, distracted with cares and surrounded with enemies, should involve himself in superfluous anxieties, by an unnecessary concern about future generations. Are not pretenders, mock-patriots, masquerades, operas, birthnights, treaties, conventions, reviews, drawing-rooms, the births of heirs, and the deaths of queens, sufficient to overwhelm any capacity but that of a king? Surely, he that acquits himself successfully of such affairs may content himself with the glory he acquires, and leave posterity to his successours.

That this has been the conduct of most princes, is evident from the accounts of all ages and nations; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought that I have, without just reasons, deprived this inscription of the veneration it might demand, as the work of a king.

With what laborious struggles against prejudice and inclination, with what efforts of reasoning, and pertinacity of self-denial, I have prevailed upon myself to sacrifice the honour of this monument to the love of truth, none, who are unacquainted with the fondness of a commentator, will be able to conceive. But this instance will be, I hope, sufficient to convince the publick, that I write with sincerity, and that, whatever my success may be, my intentions are good.

¹⁹ Dr. Edward Young.

Where we are to look for our author, it still remains to be considered; whether in the high road of publick employments, or the by-paths of private life.

It has always been observed of those that frequent a court, that they soon, by a kind of contagion, catch the regal spirit of neglecting futurity. The minister forms an expedient to suspend, or perplex, an inquiry into his measures, for a few months, and applauds and triumphs in his own dexterity. The peer puts off his creditor for the present day, and forgets that he is ever to see him more. The frown of a prince, and the loss of a pension, have, indeed, been found of wonderful efficacy to abstract men's thoughts from the present time, and fill them with zeal for the liberty and welfare of ages to come. But, I am inclined to think more favourably of the author of this prediction, than that he was made a patriot by disappointment or disgust. If he ever saw a court, I would willingly believe, that he did not owe his concern for posterity to his ill reception there, but his ill reception there to his concern for posterity.

However, since truth is the same in the mouth of a hermit, or a prince, since it is not reason, but weakness, that makes us rate counsel by our esteem for the counsellor, let us, at length, desist from this inquiry, so useless in itself, in which we have room to hope for so little satisfaction. Let us show our gratitude to the author, by answering his intentions, by considering minutely the lines which he has left us, and examining their import without heat, precipitancy, or party-prejudices; let us endeavour to keep the just mean, between searching, ambitiously, for far-fetched interpretations, and admitting such low meaning, and obvious and low sense, as is inconsistent with those great and extensive views, which it is reasonable to ascribe to this excellent man.

It may be yet further asked, whether this inscription, which appears in the stone, be an original, and not rather a version of a traditional prediction, in the old British tongue, which the zeal of some learned man prompted him to translate and engrave, in a more known language, for the instruction of future ages: but, as the lines carry, at the first view, a reference both to the stone itself, and, very remarkably, to the place where it was found, I cannot see any foundation for such a suspicion.

It remains, now, that we examine the sense and import of the inscription, which, after having long dwelt upon it, with the closest and most laborious attention, I must confess myself not yet able fully to comprehend. The following explications, therefore, are, by no means, laid down as certain and indubitable truths, but as conjectures not always wholly satisfactory, even to myself, and which I had not dared to propose to so enlightened an age, an age which abounds with those great ornaments of human nature, skepticks, antimoralists, and infidels, but with hopes that they would excite some person of greater abilities, to penetrate further into the oraculous obscurity of this wonderful prediction.

Not even the four first lines are without their difficulties, in which the time of the discovery of the stone seems to be the time assigned for the events foretold by it:

"Cum lapidem hunc, magni
Qui nunc jacet incola stagni,
Vel pede equus tanget,
Vel arator vomere franget,
Sentiet ægra metus,
Effundet patria fletus,
Littoraque ut fluctu,
Resonabunt oppida luctu."

"Whene'er this stone, now hid beneath the lake,
The horse shall trample, or the plough shall break,
Then, O my country, shall thou groan distrest,
Grief in thine eyes, and terrour in thy breast.

Thy streets with violence of woe shall sound,
Loud as the billows bursting on the ground."

"When this stone," says he, "which now lies hid beneath the waters of a deep lake, shall be struck upon by the horse, or broken by the plough, then shalt thou, my country, be astonished with terrours, and drowned in tears; then shall thy towns sound with lamentations, as thy shores with the roarings of the waves." These are the words literally rendered, but how are they verified! The lake is dry, the stone is turned up, but there is no appearance of this dismal scene. Is not all, at home, satisfaction and tranquillity? all, abroad, submission and compliance? Is it the interest, or inclination, of any prince, or state, to draw a sword against us? and are we not, nevertheless, secured by a numerous standing army, and a king who is, himself, an army? Have our troops any other employment than to march to a review? Have our fleets encountered any thing but winds and worms? To me the present state of the nation seems so far from any resemblance to the noise and agitation of a tempestuous sea, that it may be much more properly compared to the dead stillness of the waves before a storm.

"Nam foecunda rubri
Serpent per prata colubri,
Gramina vastantes,
Flores fructusque vorantes,
Omnia foedantes,
Vitiantes, et spoliantes;
Quanquam haud pugnaces,
Ibunt per cuncta minaces,
Fures absque timore,
Et pingues absque labore."

"Then through thy fields shall scarlet reptiles stray,
And rapine and pollution mark their way;
Their hungry swarms the peaceful vale shall fright,
Still fierce to threaten, still afraid to fight;
The teeming year's whole product shall devour,
Insatiate pluck the fruit, and crop the flow'r;
Shall glutton on the industrious peasants' spoil,
Rob without fear, and fatten without toil."

He seems, in these verses, to descend to a particular account of this dreadful calamity; but his description is capable of very different senses, with almost equal probability:

"Red serpents," says he, (*rubri colubri* are the Latin words, which the poetical translator has rendered *scarlet reptiles*, using a general term for a particular, in my opinion, too licentiously,) "Red serpents shall wander o'er her meadows, and pillage, and pollute," &c. The particular mention of the colour of this destructive viper may be some guide to us in this labyrinth, through which, I must acknowledge, I cannot yet have any certain path. I confess, that, when a few days after my perusal of this passage, I heard of the multitude of lady-birds seen in Kent, I began to imagine that these were the fatal insects, by which the island was to be laid waste, and, therefore, looked over all accounts of them with uncommon concern. But, when my first terrours began to subside, I soon recollected that these creatures, having both wings and feet, would scarcely have been called serpents; and was quickly convinced, by their leaving the country, without doing any hurt, that they had no quality, but the colour, in common with the ravagers here described.

As I am not able to determine any thing on this question, I shall content myself with collecting, into one view, the several properties of this pestiferous brood, with which we are threatened, as hints to more sagacious and fortunate readers, who, when they shall find any red animal, that ranges uncontroled over the country, and devours the labours of the trader and the husbandman; that carries with it corruption, rapine, pollution, and devastation; that threatens without courage, robs without fear, and is pampered without labour, they may know that the prediction is completed. Let me only remark further, that if the style of this, as of all other predictions, is figurative, the serpent, a wretched animal that crawls upon the earth, is a proper emblem of low views, self-interest, and base submission, as well as of cruelty, mischief, and malevolence.

I cannot forbear to observe, in this place, that, as it is of no advantage to mankind to be forewarned of inevitable and insurmountable misfortunes, the author, probably, intended to hint to his countrymen the proper remedies for the evils he describes. In this calamity, on which he dwells longest, and which he seems to deplore with the deepest sorrow, he points out one circumstance, which may be of great use to disperse our apprehensions, and awaken us from that panick which the reader must necessarily feel, at the first transient view of this dreadful description. These serpents, says the original, are "haud pugnaces," of no fighting race; they will threaten, indeed, and hiss, and terrify the weak, and timorous, and thoughtless, but have no real courage or strength. So that the mischief done by them, their ravages, devastations, and robberies, must be only the consequences of cowardice in the sufferers, who are harassed and oppressed, only because they suffer it without resistance. We are, therefore, to remember, whenever the pest, here threatened, shall invade us, that submission and tameness will be certain ruin, and that nothing but spirit, vigilance, activity, and opposition, can preserve us from the most hateful and reproachful misery, that of being plundered, starved, and devoured by vermin and by reptiles.

"Horrida dementes
Rapiet discordia gentes;
Plurima tunc leges
Mutabit, plurima reges
Natio."

"Then o'er the world shall discord stretch her wings,
Kings change their laws, and kingdoms change their kings."

Here the author takes a general survey of the state of the world, and the changes that were to happen, about the time of the discovery of this monument, in many nations. As it is not likely that he intended to touch upon the affairs of other countries, any farther than the advantage of his own made it necessary, we may reasonably conjecture, that he had a full and distinct view of all the negotiations, treaties, confederacies, of all the triple and quadruple alliances, and all the leagues offensive and defensive, in which we were to be engaged, either as principals, accessaries, or guarantees, whether by policy, or hope, or fear, or our concern for preserving the balance of power, or our tenderness for the liberties of Europe. He knew that our negotiators would interest us in the affairs of the whole earth, and that no state could either rise or decline in power, either extend or lose its dominions, without affecting politicks, and influencing our councils.

This passage will bear an easy and natural application to the present time, in which so many revolutions have happened, so many nations have changed their masters, and so many disputes and commotions are embroiling, almost in every part of the world.

That almost every state in Europe and Asia, that is, almost every country, then known, is comprehended in this prediction, may be easily conceived, but whether it extends to regions at that

time undiscovered, and portends any alteration of government in Carolina and Georgia, let more able or more daring expositors determine:

"Conversa
In rabiem tunc contremet ursa
Cynthia."
"The bear, enrag'd, th' affrighted moon shall dread."

The terrour created to the moon by the anger of the bear, is a strange expression, but may, perhaps, relate to the apprehensions raised in the Turkish empire, of which a crescent, or new moon, is the imperial standard, by the increasing power of the emperess of Russia, whose dominions lie under the northern constellation, called the Bear.

"Tunc latis
Florebunt lilia pratis."
"The lilies o'er the vales triumphant spread."

The lilies borne by the kings of France are an apt representation of that country; and their flourishing over wide-extended valleys, seems to regard the new increase of the French power, wealth, and dominions by the advancement of their trade, and the accession of Lorrain. This is, at first view, an obvious, but, perhaps, for that very reason not the true sense of the inscription. How can we reconcile it with the following passage:

"Nec fremere audebit
Leo, sed violare timebit,
Omnia consuetus
Populari pascua laetus."

"Nor shall the lion, wont of old to reign
Despotick o'er the desolated plain,
Henceforth, tgh' inviolable bloom invade,
Or dare to murmur in the flow'ry glade,"

in which the lion that used, at pleasure, to lay the pastures waste, is represented, as not daring to touch the lilies, or murmur at their growth! The lion, it is true, is one of the supporters of the arms of England, and may, therefore, figure our countrymen, who have, in ancient times, made France a desert. But can it be said, that the lion dares not murmur or rage, (for *fremere* may import both,) when it is evident, that, for many years, this whole kingdom has murmured, however, it may be, at present, calm and secure, by its confidence in the wisdom of our politicians, and the address of our negotiators:

"Ante oculos natos
Calceatos et cruciatos
Jam feret ignavus,
Vetitaque libidine pravus."

"His tortur'd sons shall die before his face,
While he lies melting in a lewd embrace."

Here are other things mentioned of the lion, equally unintelligible, if we suppose them to be spoken of our nation, as that he lies sluggish, and depraved with unlawful lusts, while his offspring is trampled and tortured before his eyes. But in what place can the English be said to be trampled or tortured? Where are they treated with injustice or contempt? What nation is there, from pole to pole, that does not reverence the nod of the British king? Is not our commerce unrestrained? Are not the riches of the world our own? Do not our ships sail unmolested, and our merchants traffick in perfect security? Is not the very name of England treated by foreigners in a manner never known before? Or if some slight injuries have been offered; if some of our petty traders have been stopped, our possessions threatened; our effects confiscated; our flag insulted; or our ears cropped, have we lain sluggish and unactive? Have not our fleets been seen in triumph at Spithead? Did not Hosier visit the Bastimentos, and is not Haddock now stationed at Port Mahon?

"En quoque quod mirum,
Quod dicas denique dirum,
Sanguinem equus sugit,
Neque bellua victa remugit!"

"And, yet more strange! his veins a horse shall drain,
Nor shall the passive coward once complain!"

It is farther asserted, in the concluding lines, that the horse shall suck the lion's blood. This is still more obscure than any of the rest; and, indeed, the difficulties I have met with, ever since the first mention of the lion, are so many and great, that I had, in utter despair of surmounting them, once desisted from my design of publishing any thing upon this subject; but was prevailed upon by the importunity of some friends, to whom I can deny nothing, to resume my design; and I must own, that nothing animated me so much as the hope, they flattered me with, that my essay might be inserted in the *Gazetteer*, and, so, become of service to my country.

That a weaker animal should suck the blood of a stronger, without resistance, is wholly improbable, and inconsistent with the regard for self-preservation, so observable in every order and species of beings. We must, therefore, necessarily endeavour after some figurative sense, not liable to so insuperable an objection.

Were I to proceed in the same tenour of interpretation, by which I explained the moon and the lilies, I might observe, that a horse is the arms of H—. But how, then, does the horse suck the lion's blood! Money is the blood of the body politick.—But my zeal for the present happy establishment will not suffer me to pursue a train of thought, that leads to such shocking conclusions. The idea is detestable, and such as, it ought to be hoped, can enter into the mind of none but a virulent republican, or bloody jacobite. There is not one honest man in the nation unconvinced, how weak an attempt it would be to endeavour to confute this insinuation; an insinuation which no party will dare to abet, and of so fatal and destructive a tendency, that it may prove equally dangerous to the author, whether true or false.

As, therefore, I can form no hypothesis, on which a consistent interpretation may be built, I must leave these loose and unconnected hints entirely to the candour of the reader, and confess, that I do not think my scheme of explication just, since I cannot apply it, throughout the whole, without involving myself in difficulties, from which the ablest interpreter would find it no easy matter to get free.

Being, therefore, convinced, upon an attentive and deliberate review of these observations, and a consultation with my friends, of whose abilities I have the highest esteem, and whose impartiality, sincerity, and probity, I have long known, and frequently experienced, that my conjectures are, in general, very uncertain, often improbable, and, sometimes, little less than apparently false, I was

long in doubt, whether I ought not entirely to suppress them, and content myself with publishing in the *Gazetteer* the inscription, as it stands engraven on the stone, without translation or commentary, unless that ingenious and learned society should favour the world with their own remarks.

To this scheme, which I thought extremely well calculated for the publick good, and, therefore, very eagerly communicated to my acquaintance and fellow-students, some objections were started, which, as I had not foreseen, I was unable to answer.

It was observed, first, that the daily dissertations, published by that fraternity, are written with such profundity of sentiment, and filled with such uncommon modes of expression, as to be themselves sufficiently unintelligible to vulgar readers; and that, therefore, the venerable obscurity of this prediction, would much less excite the curiosity, and awaken the attention of mankind, than if it were exhibited in any other paper, and placed in opposition to the clear and easy style of an author generally understood.

To this argument, formidable as it was, I answered, after a short pause, that, with all proper deference to the great sagacity and advanced age of the objector, I could not but conceive, that his position confuted itself, and that a reader of the *Gazetteer*, being, by his own confession, accustomed to encounter difficulties, and search for meaning, where it was not easily to be found, must be better prepared, than any other man, for the perusal of these ambiguous expressions; and that, besides, the explication of this stone, being a task which nothing could surmount but the most acute penetration, joined with indefatigable patience, seemed, in reality, reserved for those who have given proofs of both, in the highest degree, by reading and understanding the *Gazetteer*.

This answer satisfied every one but the objector, who, with an obstinacy not very uncommon, adhered to his own opinion, though he could not defend it; and, not being able to make any reply, attempted to laugh away my argument, but found the rest of my friends so little disposed to jest upon this important question, that he was forced to restrain his mirth, and content himself with a sullen and contemptuous silence.

Another of my friends, whom I had assembled on this occasion, having owned the solidity of my answer to the first objection, offered a second, which, in his opinion, could not be so easily defeated.

"I have observed," says he, "that the essays in the *Gazetteer*, though written on very important subjects, by the ablest hands which ambition can incite, friendship engage, or money procure, have never, though circulated through the kingdom with the utmost application, had any remarkable influence upon the people. I know many persons, of no common capacity, that hold it sufficient to peruse these papers four times a year; and others, who receive them regularly, and, without looking upon them, treasure them under ground for the benefit of posterity. So that the inscription may, by being inserted there, sink, once more, into darkness and oblivion, instead of informing the age, and assisting our present ministry in the regulation of their measures."

Another observed, that nothing was more unreasonable than my hope, that any remarks or elucidations would be drawn up by that fraternity, since their own employments do not allow them any leisure for such attempts. Every one knows that panegyrick is, in its own nature, no easy task, and that to defend is much more difficult than to attack; consider, then, says he, what industry, what assiduity it must require, to praise and vindicate a ministry like ours.

It was hinted, by another, that an inscription, which had no relation to any particular set of men amongst us, but was composed many ages before the parties, which now divide the nation, had a being, could not be so properly conveyed to the world, by means of a paper dedicated to political debates.

Another, to whom I had communicated my own observations, in a more private manner, and who had inserted some of his own arguments, declared it, as his opinion, that they were, though very controvertible and unsatisfactory, yet too valuable to be lost; and that though to insert the inscription in a paper, of which such numbers are daily distributed at the expense of the publick, would, doubtless, be very agreeable to the generous design of the author; yet he hoped, that as all the students, either

of politicks or antiquities, would receive both pleasure and improvement from the dissertation with which it is accompanied, none of them would regret to pay for so agreeable an entertainment.

It cannot be wondered, that I have yielded, at last, to such weighty reasons, and such insinuating compliments, and chosen to gratify, at once, the inclinations of friends, and the vanity of an author. Yet, I should think, I had very imperfectly discharged my duty to my country, did I not warn all, whom either interest or curiosity shall incite to the perusal of this treatise, not to lay any stress upon my explications.

How a more complete and indisputable interpretation may be obtained, it is not easy to say. This will, I suppose, be readily granted, that it is not to be expected from any single hand, but from the joint inquiries, and united labours, of a numerous society of able men, instituted by authority, selected with great discernment and impartiality, and supported at the charge of the nation.

I am very far from apprehending, that any proposal for the attainment of so desirable an end, will be rejected by this inquisitive and enlightened age, and shall, therefore, lay before the publick the project which I have formed, and matured by long consideration, for the institution of a society of commentators upon this inscription.

I humbly propose, that thirty of the most distinguished genius be chosen for this employment, half from the inns of court, and half from the army, and be incorporated into a society for five years, under the name of the Society of Commentators.

That great undertakings can only be executed by a great number of hands, is too evident to require any proof; and, I am afraid, all that read this scheme will think, that it is chiefly defective in this respect, and that when they reflect how many commissaries were thought necessary at Seville, and that even their negotiations entirely miscarried, probably for want of more associates, they will conclude, that I have proposed impossibilities, and that the ends of the institution will be defeated by an injudicious and ill timed frugality.

But if it be considered, how well the persons, I recommend, must have been qualified, by their education and profession, for the provinces assigned them, the objection will grow less weighty than it appears. It is well known to be the constant study of the lawyers to discover, in acts of parliament, meanings which escaped the committees that drew them up, and the senates that passed them into laws, and to explain wills, into a sense wholly contrary to the intention of the testator. How easily may an adept in these admirable and useful arts, penetrate into the most hidden import of this prediction? A man, accustomed to satisfy himself with the obvious and natural meaning of a sentence, does not easily shake off his habit; but a true-bred lawyer never contents himself with one sense, when there is another to be found.

Nor will the beneficial consequences of this scheme terminate in the explication of this monument: they will extend much further; for the commentators, having sharpened and improved their sagacity by this long and difficult course of study, will, when they return into publick life, be of wonderful service to the government, in examining pamphlets, songs, and journals, and in drawing up informations, indictments, and instructions for special juries. They will be wonderfully fitted for the posts of attorney and solicitor general, but will excel, above all, as licensers for the stage.

The gentlemen of the army will equally adorn the province to which I have assigned them, of setting the discoveries and sentiments of their associates in a clear and agreeable light. The lawyers are well known not to be very happy in expressing their ideas, being, for the most part, able to make themselves understood by none but their own fraternity. But the geniuses of the army have sufficient opportunities, by their free access to the levee and the toilet, their constant attendance on balls and assemblies, and that abundant leisure which they enjoy, beyond any other body of men, to acquaint themselves with every new word, and prevailing mode of expression, and to attain the utmost nicety, and most polished prettiness of language.

It will be necessary, that, during their attendance upon the society, they be exempt from any obligation to appear on Hyde park; and that upon no emergency, however pressing, they be called

away from their studies, unless the nation be in immediate danger, by an insurrection of weavers, colliers, or smugglers.

There may not, perhaps, be found in the army such a number of men, who have ever condescended to pass through the labours, and irksome forms of education in use, among the lower classes of people, or submitted to learn the mercantile and plebeian arts of writing and reading. I must own, that though I entirely agree with the notions of the uselessness of any such trivial accomplishments in the military profession, and of their inconsistency with more valuable attainments; though I am convinced, that a man who can read and write becomes, at least, a very disagreeable companion to his brother soldiers, if he does not absolutely shun their acquaintance; that he is apt to imbibe, from his books, odd notions of liberty and independency, and even, sometimes, of morality and virtue, utterly inconsistent, with the desirable character of a pretty gentleman; though writing frequently stains the whitest finger, and reading has a natural tendency to cloud the aspect, and depress that airy and thoughtless vivacity, which is the distinguishing characteristick of a modern warrior; yet, on this single occasion, I cannot but heartily wish, that, by a strict search, there may be discovered, in the army, fifteen men who can write and read.

I know that the knowledge of the alphabet is so disreputable among these gentlemen, that those who have, by ill fortune, formerly been taught it, have partly forgot it by disuse, and partly concealed it from the world, to avoid the raileries and insults to which their education might make them liable: I propose, therefore, that all the officers of the army may be examined upon oath, one by one, and that if fifteen cannot be selected, who are, at present, so qualified, the deficiency may be supplied out of those who, having once learned to read, may, perhaps, with the assistance of a master, in a short time, refresh their memories.

It may be thought, at the first sight of this proposal, that it might not be improper to assign, to every commentator, a reader and secretary; but, it may be easily conceived, that not only the publick might murmur at such an addition of expense, but that, by the unfaithfulness or negligence of their servants, the discoveries of the society may be carried to foreign courts, and made use of to the disadvantage of our own country.

For the residence of this society, I cannot think any place more proper than Greenwich hospital, in which they may have thirty apartments fitted up for them, that they may make their observations in private, and meet, once a day, in the painted hall to compare them.

If the establishment of this society be thought a matter of too much importance to be deferred till the new buildings are finished, it will be necessary to make room for their reception, by the expulsion of such of the seamen as have no pretensions to the settlement there, but fractured limbs, loss of eyes, or decayed constitutions, who have lately been admitted in such numbers, that it is now scarce possible to accommodate a nobleman's groom, footman, or postilion, in a manner suitable to the dignity of his profession, and the original design of the foundation.

The situation of Greenwich will naturally dispose them to reflection and study: and particular caution ought to be used, lest any interruption be suffered to dissipate their attention, or distract their meditations: for this reason, all visits and letters from ladies are strictly to be prohibited; and if any of the members shall be detected with a lapdog, pack of cards, box of dice, draught-table, snuffbox, or looking-glass, he shall, for the first offence, be confined for three months to water gruel, and, for the second, be expelled the society.

Nothing now remains, but that an estimate be made of the expenses necessary for carrying on this noble and generous design. The salary to be allowed each professor cannot be less than 2,000*l.* a year, which is, indeed, more than the regular stipend of a commissioner of excise; but, it must be remembered, that the commentators have a much more difficult and important employment, and can expect their salaries but for the short space of five years; whereas a commissioner (unless he imprudently suffers himself to be carried away by a whimsical tenderness for his country) has an establishment for life.

It will be necessary to allow the society, in general, 30,000*l.* yearly, for the support of the publick table, and 40,000*l.* for secret service.

Thus will the ministry have a fair prospect of obtaining the full sense and import of the prediction, without burdening the publick with more than 650,000*l.* which may be paid out of the sinking fund; or, if it be not thought proper to violate that sacred treasure, by converting any part of it to uses not primarily intended, may be easily raised by a general poll-tax, or excise upon bread.

Having now completed my scheme, a scheme calculated for the publick benefit, without regard to any party, I entreat all sects, factions, and distinctions of men among us, to lay aside, for a time, their party-feuds and petty animosities; and, by a warm concurrence on this urgent occasion, teach posterity to sacrifice every private interest to the advantage of their country.

[In this performance, which was first printed in the year 1739, Dr. Johnson, "in a feigned inscription, supposed to have been found in Norfolk, the country of sir Robert Walpole, then the obnoxious prime minister of this country, inveighs against the Brunswick succession, and the measures of government consequent upon it. To this supposed prophecy, he added a commentary, making each expression apply to the times, with warm anti-Hanoverian zeal."—Boswell's Life, i.]

OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN 1756 ²⁰

The time is now come, in which every Englishman expects to be informed of the national affairs, and in which he has a right to have that expectation gratified. For whatever may be urged by ministers, or those whom vanity or interest make the followers of ministers, concerning the necessity of confidence in our governours, and the presumption of prying, with profane eyes, into the recesses of policy, it is evident, that this reverence can be claimed only by counsels yet unexecuted, and projects suspended in deliberation. But when a design has ended in miscarriage or success, when every eye, and every ear, is witness to general discontent, or general satisfaction, it is then a proper time to disentangle confusion, and illustrate obscurity; to show by what causes every event was produced, and in what effects it is likely to terminate; to lay down, with distinct particularity, what rumour always huddles in general exclamations, or perplexes by undigested narratives; to show whence happiness or calamity is derived, and whence it may be expected; and honestly to lay before the people, what inquiry can gather of the past, and conjecture can estimate of the future.

The general subject of the present war is sufficiently known. It is allowed, on both sides, that hostilities began in America, and that the French and English quarrelled about the boundaries of their settlements, about grounds and rivers, to which, I am afraid, neither can show any other right than that of power, and which neither can occupy but by usurpation, and the dispossession of the natural lords and original inhabitants. Such is the contest, that no honest man can heartily wish success to either party.

It may, indeed, be alleged, that the Indians have granted large tracts of land both to one and to the other; but these grants can add little to the validity of our titles, till it be experienced, how they were obtained; for, if they were extorted by violence, or induced by fraud; by threats, which the miseries of other nations had shown not to be vain; or by promises, of which no performance was ever intended, what are they but new modes of usurpation, but new instances of cruelty and treachery?

And, indeed, what but false hope, or resistless terrour, can prevail upon a weaker nation to invite a stronger into their country, to give their lands to strangers, whom no affinity of manners, or similitude of opinion, can be said to recommend, to permit them to build towns, from which the natives are excluded, to raise fortresses, by which they are intimidated, to settle themselves with such strength, that they cannot afterwards be expelled, but are, for ever, to remain the masters of the original inhabitants, the dictators of their conduct, and the arbiters of their fate?

When we see men acting thus against the precepts of reason, and the instincts of nature, we cannot hesitate to determine, that, by some means or other, they were debarred from choice; that they were lured or frighted into compliance; that they either granted only what they found impossible to keep, or expected advantages upon the faith of their new inmates, which there was no purpose to confer upon them. It cannot be said, that the Indians originally invited us to their coasts; we went, uncalled and unexpected, to nations who had no imagination that the earth contained any inhabitants, so distant and so different from themselves. We astonished them with our ships, with our arms, and with our general superiority. They yielded to us, as to beings of another and higher race, sent among them from some unknown regions, with power which naked Indians could not resist and, which they were, therefore, by every act of humility, to propitiate, that they, who could so easily destroy, might be induced to spare.

²⁰ Published first in the Literary Magazine, No. iv. from July 15, to Aug. 15, 1756. This periodical work was published by Richardson, in Paternoster row, but was discontinued about two years after. Dr. Johnson wrote many articles, which have been enumerated by Mr. Boswell, and there are others which I should be inclined to attribute to him, from internal evidence.

To this influence, and to this only, are to be attributed all the cessions and submissions of the Indian princes, if, indeed, any such cessions were ever made, of which we have no witness, but those who claim from them; and there is no great malignity in suspecting, that those who have robbed have also lied.

Some colonies, indeed, have been established more peaceably than others. The utmost extremity of wrong has not always been practised; but those that have settled in the new world, on the fairest terms, have no other merit than that of a scrivener, who ruins in silence, over a plunderer that seizes by force; all have taken what had other owners, and all have had recourse to arms, rather than quit the prey on which they had fastened.

The American dispute, between the French and us, is, therefore, only the quarrel of two robbers for the spoils of a passenger; but, as robbers have terms of confederacy, which they are obliged to observe, as members of the gang, so the English and French may have relative rights, and do injustice to each other, while both are injuring the Indians. And such, indeed, is the present contest: they have parted the northern continent of America between them, and are now disputing about their boundaries, and each is endeavouring the destruction of the other, by the help of the Indians, whose interest it is that both should be destroyed.

Both nations clamour, with great vehemence, about infractions of limits, violation of treaties, open usurpation, insidious artifices, and breach of faith. The English rail at the perfidious French, and the French at the encroaching English: they quote treaties on each side, charge each other with aspiring to universal monarchy, and complain, on either part, of the insecurity of possession near such turbulent neighbours.

Through this mist of controversy, it can raise no wonder, that the truth is not easily discovered. When a quarrel has been long carried on between individuals, it is often very hard to tell by whom it was begun. Every fact is darkened by distance, by interest, and by multitudes. Information is not easily procured from far; those whom the truth will not favour, will not step, voluntarily, forth to tell it; and where there are many agents, it is easy for every single action to be concealed.

All these causes concur to the obscurity of the question: By whom were hostilities in America commenced? Perhaps there never can be remembered a time, in which hostilities had ceased. Two powerful colonies, inflamed with immemorial rivalry, and placed out of the superintendance of the mother nations, were not likely to be long at rest. Some opposition was always going forward, some mischief was every day done or meditated, and the borderers were always better pleased with what they could snatch from their neighbours, than what they had of their own.

In this disposition to reciprocal invasion, a cause of dispute never could be wanting. The forests and deserts of America are without landmarks, and, therefore, cannot be particularly specified in stipulations; the appellations of those wide-extended regions have, in every mouth, a different meaning, and are understood, on either side, as inclination happens to contract or extend them. Who has yet pretended to define, how much of America is included in Brazil, Mexico, or Peru? It is almost as easy to divide the Atlantick ocean by a line, as clearly to ascertain the limits of those uncultivated, uninhabitable, unmeasured regions.

It is, likewise, to be considered, that contracts concerning boundaries are often left vague and indefinite, without necessity, by the desire of each party, to interpret the ambiguity to its own advantage, when a fit opportunity shall be found. In forming stipulations, the commissaries are often ignorant, and often negligent; they are, sometimes, weary with debate, and contract a tedious discussion into general terms, or refer it to a former treaty, which was never understood. The weaker part is always afraid of requiring explanations, and the stronger always has an interest in leaving the question undecided: thus it will happen, without great caution on either side, that, after long treaties, solemnly ratified, the rights that had been disputed are still equally open to controversy.

In America, it may easily be supposed, that there are tracts of land not yet claimed by either party, and, therefore, mentioned in no treaties; which yet one, or the other, may be afterwards inclined

to occupy; but to these vacant and unsettled countries each nation may pretend, as each conceives itself entitled to all that is not expressly granted to the other.

Here, then, is a perpetual ground of contest; every enlargement of the possessions of either will be considered as something taken from the other, and each will endeavour to regain what had never been claimed, but that the other occupied it.

Thus obscure in its original is the American contest. It is difficult to find the first invader, or to tell where invasion properly begins; but, I suppose, it is not to be doubted, that after the last war, when the French had made peace with such apparent superiority, they naturally began to treat us with less respect in distant parts of the world, and to consider us, as a people from whom they had nothing to fear, and who could no longer presume to contravene their designs, or to check their progress.

The power of doing wrong with impunity seldom waits long for the will; and, it is reasonable to believe, that, in America, the French would avow their purpose of aggrandizing themselves with, at least, as little reserve as in Europe. We may, therefore, readily believe, that they were unquiet neighbours, and had no great regard to right, which they believed us no longer able to enforce.

That in forming a line of forts behind our colonies, if in no other part of their attempt, they had acted against the general intention, if not against the literal terms of treaties, can scarcely be denied; for it never can be supposed, that we intended to be inclosed between the sea and the French garrisons, or preclude ourselves from extending our plantations backwards, to any length that our convenience should require.

With dominion is conferred every thing that can secure dominion. He that has the coast, has, likewise, the sea, to a certain distance; he that possesses a fortress, has the right of prohibiting another fortress to be built within the command of its cannon. When, therefore, we planted the coast of North America, we supposed the possession of the inland region granted to an indefinite extent; and every nation that settled in that part of the world, seems, by the permission of every other nation, to have made the same supposition in its own favour.

Here, then, perhaps, it will be safest to fix the justice of our cause; here we are apparently and indisputably injured, and this injury may, according to the practice of nations, be justly resented. Whether we have not, in return, made some encroachments upon them, must be left doubtful, till our practices on the Ohio shall be stated and vindicated. There are no two nations, confining on each other, between whom a war may not always be kindled with plausible pretences on either part, as there is always passing between them a reciprocation of injuries, and fluctuation of encroachments.

From the conclusion of the last peace, perpetual complaints of the supplantations and invasions of the French have been sent to Europe, from our colonies, and transmitted to our ministers at Paris, where good words were, sometimes, given us, and the practices of the American commanders were, sometimes, disowned; but no redress was ever obtained, nor is it probable, that any prohibition was sent to America. We were still amused with such doubtful promises, as those who are afraid of war are ready to interpret in their own favour, and the French pushed forward their line of fortresses, and seemed to resolve, that before our complaints were finally dismissed, all remedy should be hopeless.

We, likewise, endeavoured, at the same time, to form a barrier against the Canadians, by sending a colony to New Scotland, a cold uncomfortable tract of ground; of which we had long the nominal possession, before we really began to occupy it. To this, those were invited whom the cessation of war deprived of employment, and made burdensome to their country; and settlers were allured thither by many fallacious descriptions of fertile valleys and clear skies. What effects these pictures of American happiness had upon my countrymen, I was never informed, but, I suppose, very few sought provision in those frozen regions, whom guilt, or poverty, did not drive from their native country. About the boundaries of this new colony there were some disputes; but, as there was nothing yet worth a contest, the power of the French was not much exerted on that side; some disturbance was, however, given, and some skirmishes ensued. But, perhaps, being peopled chiefly with soldiers, who would rather live by plunder than by agriculture, and who consider war as their best trade, New

Scotland would be more obstinately defended than some settlements of far greater value; and the French are too well informed of their own interest, to provoke hostility for no advantage, or to select that country for invasion, where they must hazard much and can win little. They, therefore, pressed on southward, behind our ancient and wealthy settlements, and built fort after fort, at such distances that they might conveniently relieve one another, invade our colonies with sudden incursions, and retire to places of safety, before our people could unite to oppose them.

This design of the French has been long formed, and long known, both in America and Europe, and might, at first, have been easily repressed, had force been used instead of expostulation. When the English attempted a settlement upon the island of St. Lucia, the French, whether justly or not, considering it as neutral, and forbidden to be occupied by either nation, immediately landed upon it, and destroyed the houses, wasted the plantations, and drove, or carried away, the inhabitants. This was done in the time of peace, when mutual professions of friendship were daily exchanged by the two courts, and was not considered as any violation of treaties, nor was any more than a very soft remonstrance made on our part.

The French, therefore, taught us how to act; but an Hanoverian quarrel with the house of Austria, for some time, induced us to court, at any expense, the alliance of a nation, whose very situation makes them our enemies. We suffered them to destroy our settlements, and to advance their own, which we had an equal right to attack. The time, however, came, at last, when we ventured to quarrel with Spain, and then France no longer suffered the appearance of peace to subsist between us, but armed in defence of her ally.

The events of the war are well known: we pleased ourselves with a victory at Dettingen, where we left our wounded men to the care of our enemies, but our army was broken at Fontenoy and Val; and though, after the disgrace which we suffered in the Mediterranean, we had some naval success, and an accidental dearth made peace necessary for the French, yet they prescribed the conditions, obliged us to give hostages, and acted as conquerors, though as conquerors of moderation.

In this war the Americans distinguished themselves in a manner unknown and unexpected. The New English raised an army, and, under the command of Pepperel, took cape Breton, with the assistance of the fleet. This is the most important fortress in America. We pleased ourselves so much with the acquisition, that we could not think of restoring it; and, among the arguments used to inflame the people against Charles Stuart, it was very clamorously urged, that if he gained the kingdom, he would give cape Breton back to the French.

The French, however, had a more easy expedient to regain cape Breton, than by exalting Charles Stuart to the English throne. They took, in their turn, fort St. George, and had our East India company wholly in their power, whom they restored, at the peace, to their former possessions, that they may continue to export our silver.

Cape Breton, therefore, was restored, and the French were reestablished in America, with equal power and greater spirit, having lost nothing by the war, which they had before gained.

To the general reputation of their arms, and that habitual superiority which they derive from it, they owe their power in America, rather than to any real strength or circumstances of advantage. Their numbers are yet not great; their trade, though daily improved, is not very extensive; their country is barren; their fortresses, though numerous, are weak, and rather shelters from wild beasts, or savage nations, than places built for defence against bombs or cannons. Cape Breton has been found not to be impregnable; nor, if we consider the state of the places possessed by the two nations in America, is there any reason upon which the French should have presumed to molest us, but that they thought our spirit so broken, that we durst not resist them; and in this opinion our long forbearance easily confirmed them.

We forgot, or rather avoided to think, that what we delayed to do, must be done at last, and done with more difficulty, as it was delayed longer; that while we were complaining, and they were

eluding, or answering our complaints, fort was rising upon fort, and one invasion made a precedent for another.

This confidence of the French is exalted by some real advantages. If they possess, in those countries, less than we, they have more to gain, and less to hazard; if they are less numerous, they are better united.

The French compose one body with one head. They have all the same interest, and agree to pursue it by the same means. They are subject to a governour, commissioned by an absolute monarch, and participating the authority of his master. Designs are, therefore, formed without debate, and executed without impediment. They have yet more martial than mercantile ambition, and seldom suffer their military schemes to be entangled with collateral projects of gain: they have no wish but for conquest, of which they justly consider riches as the consequence.

Some advantages they will always have, as invaders. They make war at the hazard of their enemies: the contest being carried on in our territories, we must lose more by a victory, than they will suffer by a defeat. They will subsist, while they stay, upon our plantations; and, perhaps, destroy them, when they can stay no longer. If we pursue them, and carry the war into their dominions, our difficulties will increase every step as we advance, for we shall leave plenty behind us, and find nothing in Canada, but lakes and forests, barren and trackless; our enemies will shut themselves up in their forts, against which it is difficult to bring cannon through so rough a country, and which, if they are provided with good magazines, will soon starve those who besiege them.

All these are the natural effects of their government and situation; they are accidentally more formidable, as they are less happy. But the favour of the Indians, which they enjoy, with very few exceptions, among all the nations of the northern continent, we ought to consider with other thoughts; this favour we might have enjoyed, if we had been careful to deserve it. The French, by having these savage nations on their side, are always supplied with spies and guides, and with auxiliaries, like the Tartars to the Turks, or the Hussars to the Germans, of no great use against troops ranged in order of battle, but very well qualified to maintain a war among woods and rivulets, where much mischief may be done by unexpected onsets, and safety be obtained by quick retreats. They can waste a colony by sudden inroads, surprise the straggling planters, frighten the inhabitants into towns, hinder the cultivation of lands, and starve those whom they are not able to conquer²¹.

²¹ In the magazine, this article is promised "to be continued;" but the author was, by whatever means, diverted from it, and no continuation appears.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE POLITICAL STATE OF GREAT BRITAIN

Written in the year 1756 ²².

The present system of English politicks may properly be said to have taken rise in the reign of queen Elizabeth. At this time the protestant religion was established, which naturally allied us to the reformed state, and made all the popish powers our enemies.

We began in the same reign to extend our trade, by which we made it necessary to ourselves to watch the commercial progress of our neighbours; and if not to incommode and obstruct their traffick, to hinder them from impairing ours.

We then, likewise, settled colonies in America, which was become the great scene of European ambition; for, seeing with what treasures the Spaniards were annually enriched from Mexico and Peru, every nation imagined, that an American conquest, or plantation, would certainly fill the mother country with gold and silver. This produced a large extent of very distant dominions, of which we, at this time, neither knew nor foresaw the advantage or incumbrance; we seem to have snatched them into our hands, upon no very just principles of policy, only because every state, according to a prejudice of long continuance, concludes itself more powerful, as its territories become larger.

The discoveries of new regions, which were then every day made, the profit of remote traffick, and the necessity of long voyages, produced, in a few years, a great multiplication of shipping. The sea was considered as the wealthy element; and, by degrees, a new kind of sovereignty arose, called naval dominion.

As the chief trade of the world, so the chief maritime power was at first in the hands of the Portuguese and Spaniards, who, by a compact, to which the consent of other princes was not asked, had divided the newly discovered countries between them; but the crown of Portugal having fallen to the king of Spain, or being seized by him, he was master of the ships of the two nations, with which he kept all the coasts of Europe in alarm, till the armada, which he had raised, at a vast expense, for the conquest of England, was destroyed, which put a stop, and almost an end, to the naval power of the Spaniards.

At this time, the Dutch, who were oppressed by the Spaniards, and feared yet greater evils than they felt, resolved no longer to endure the insolence of their masters: they, therefore, revolted; and, after a struggle, in which they were assisted by the money and forces of Elizabeth, erected an independent and powerful commonwealth.

When the inhabitants of the Low Countries had formed their system of government, and some remission of the war gave them leisure to form schemes of future prosperity, they easily perceived, that, as their territories were narrow, and their numbers small, they could preserve themselves only by that power which is the consequence of wealth; and that, by a people whose country produced only the necessaries of life, wealth was not to be acquired, but from foreign dominions, and by the transportation of the products of one country into another.

From this necessity, thus justly estimated, arose a plan of commerce, which was, for many years, prosecuted with industry and success, perhaps never seen in the world before, and by which the poor tenants of mud-walled villages, and impassable bogs, erected themselves into high and mighty states, who put the greatest monarchs at defiance, whose alliance was courted by the proudest, and whose power was dreaded by the fiercest nation. By the establishment of this state, there arose, to England, a new ally, and a new rival.

²² This was the introductory article to the Literary Magazine, No. i.

At this time, which seems to be the period destined for the change of the face of Europe, France began first to rise into power, and, from defending her own provinces with difficulty and fluctuating success, to threaten her neighbours with encroachments and devastations. Henry the fourth having, after a long struggle, obtained the crown, found it easy to govern nobles, exhausted and wearied with a long civil war, and having composed the disputes between the protestants and papists, so as to obtain, at least, a truce for both parties, was at leisure to accumulate treasure, and raise forces, which he purposed to have employed in a design of settling for ever the balance of Europe. Of this great scheme he lived not to see the vanity, or to feel the disappointment; for he was murdered in the midst of his mighty preparations.

The French, however, were, in this reign, taught to know their own power; and the great designs of a king, whose wisdom they had so long experienced, even though they were not brought to actual experiment, disposed them to consider themselves as masters of the destiny of their neighbours; and, from that time, he that shall nicely examine their schemes and conduct, will, I believe, find that they began to take an air of superiority, to which they had never pretended before; and that they have been always employed, more or less openly, upon schemes of dominion, though with frequent interruptions from domestick troubles, and with those intermissions which human counsels must always suffer, as men intrusted with great affairs are dissipated in youth, and languid in age; are embarrassed by competitors, or, without any external reason, change their minds.

France was now no longer in dread of insults, and invasions from England. She was not only able to maintain her own territories, but prepared, on all occasions, to invade others; and we had now a neighbour, whose interest it was to be an enemy, and who has disturbed us, from that time to this, with open hostility, or secret machinations.

Such was the state of England, and its neighbours, when Elizabeth left the crown to James of Scotland. It has not, I think, been frequently observed, by historians, at how critical a time the union of the two kingdoms happened. Had England and Scotland continued separate kingdoms, when France was established in the full possession of her natural power, the Scots, in continuance of the league, which it would now have been more than ever their interest to observe, would, upon every instigation of the French court, have raised an army with French money, and harassed us with an invasion, in which they would have thought themselves successful, whatever numbers they might have left behind them. To a people warlike and indigent, an incursion into a rich country is never hurtful. The pay of France, and the plunder of the northern countries, would always have tempted them to hazard their lives, and we should have been under a necessity of keeping a line of garrisons along our border.

This trouble, however, we escaped, by the accession of king James; but it is uncertain, whether his natural disposition did not injure us more than this accidental condition happened to benefit us. He was a man of great theoretical knowledge, but of no practical wisdom; he was very well able to discern the true interest of himself, his kingdom, and his posterity, but sacrificed it, upon all occasions, to his present pleasure or his present ease; so conscious of his own knowledge and abilities, that he would not suffer a minister to govern, and so lax of attention, and timorous of opposition, that he was not able to govern for himself. With this character, James quietly saw the Dutch invade our commerce; the French grew every day stronger and stronger; and the protestant interest, of which he boasted himself the head, was oppressed on every side, while he writ, and hunted, and despatched ambassadours, who, when their master's weakness was once known, were treated, in foreign courts, with very little ceremony. James, however, took care to be flattered at home, and was neither angry nor ashamed at the appearance that he made in other countries.

Thus England grew weaker, or, what is, in political estimation, the same thing, saw her neighbours grow stronger, without receiving proportionable additions to her own power. Not that the mischief was so great as it is generally conceived or represented; for, I believe, it may be made to appear, that the wealth of the nation was, in this reign, very much increased, though, that of the crown was lessened. Our reputation for war was impaired; but commerce seems to have been carried on

with great industry and vigour, and nothing was wanting, but that we should have defended ourselves from the encroachments of our neighbours.

The inclination to plant colonies in America still continued, and this being the only project in which men of adventure and enterprise could exert their qualities, in a pacifick reign, multitudes, who were discontented with their condition in their native country, and such multitudes there will always be, sought relief, or, at least, a change, in the western regions, where they settled, in the northern part of the continent, at a distance from the Spaniards, at that time almost the only nation that had any power or will to obstruct us.

Such was the condition of this country, when the unhappy Charles inherited the crown. He had seen the errors of his father, without being able to prevent them, and, when he began his reign, endeavoured to raise the nation to its former dignity. The French papists had begun a new war upon the protestants: Charles sent a fleet to invade Rhée and relieve Rochelle, but his attempts were defeated, and the protestants were subdued. The Dutch, grown wealthy and strong, claimed the right of fishing in the British seas: this claim the king, who saw the increasing power of the states of Holland, resolved to contest. But, for this end, it was necessary to build a fleet, and a fleet could not be built without expense: he was advised to levy ship-money, which gave occasion to the civil war, of which the events and conclusion are too well known.

While the inhabitants of this island were embroiled among themselves, the power of France and Holland was every day increasing. The Dutch had overcome the difficulties of their infant commonwealth; and, as they still retained their vigour and industry, from rich grew continually richer, and from powerful more powerful. They extended their traffick, and had not yet admitted luxury; so that they had the means and the will to accumulate wealth, without any incitement to spend it. The French, who wanted nothing to make them powerful, but a prudent regulation of their revenues, and a proper use of their natural advantages, by the successive care of skilful ministers, became, every day, stronger, and more conscious of their strength.

About this time it was, that the French first began to turn their thoughts to traffick and navigation, and to desire, like other nations, an American territory. All the fruitful and valuable parts of the western world were, already, either occupied, or claimed; and nothing remained for France, but the leavings of other navigators, for she was not yet haughty enough to seize what the neighbouring powers had already appropriated.

The French, therefore, contented themselves with sending a colony to Canada, a cold, uncomfortable, uninviting region, from which nothing but furs and fish were to be had, and where the new inhabitants could only pass a laborious and necessitous life, in perpetual regret of the deliciousness and plenty of their native country.

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