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Parodies of Ballad Criticism (1711-1787)

William Wagstaffe, *A Comment Upon the History of Tom Thumb*, 1711
George Canning, *The Knave of Hearts*, 1787

Selected, with an Introduction, by
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The Augustan Reprint Society regrets to announce the death of one of its founders and editors, Edward Niles Hooker. The editors hope, in the near future, to issue a volume in his memory.

INTRODUCTION

Joseph Addison's enthusiasm for ballad poetry (*Spectators* 70, 74, 85) was not a sheer novelty. He had a ringing English precedent in Sidney, whom he quotes. And he may have had one in Jonson; at least he thought he had. He cited Dryden and Dorset as collectors and readers of ballads; and he might have cited others. He found comfort in the fact that Molière's Misanthrope was on his side. The modern or broadside version of *Chevy Chase*, the one which Addison quoted, had been printed, with a Latin translation, in the third volume of Dryden's *Miscellany* (1702) and had been appreciated along with *The Nut-Brown Maid* in an essay *Of the Old English Poets and Poetry* in *The Muses Mercury* for June, 1707. The feelings expressed in Addison's essays on the ballads were part of the general patriotic archaism which at that time was moving in rapport with cyclic theories of the robust and the effete, as in Temple's essays, and was complicating the issue of the classical ancients versus the moderns. Again, these feelings were in harmony with the new Longinianism of boldness and bigness, cultivated in one way by Dennis and in another by Addison himself in later *Spectators*. The tribute to the old writers in Rowe's Prologue to *Jane Shore* (1713) is of course not simply the result of Addison's influence.[1]

> Those venerable ancient Song-Enditers
> Soar'd many a Pitch above our modern Writers.

It is true also that Addison exhibits, at least in the first of the two essays on *Chevy Chase*, a degree of the normal Augustan condescension to the archaic—the vision which informs the earlier couplet poem on the English poets. Both in his quotation from Sidney ("...being so evil apparelled in the Dust and Cobweb of that uncivil Age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous Eloquence of *Pindar*?") and in his own apology for the "Simplicity of the Stile" there is sufficient prescription for all those improvements that either a Ramsay or a Percy were soon actually to undertake. And some of the Virgilian passages in *Chevy Chase* which Addison picked out for admiration were not what Sidney had known but the literary invention of the more modern broadside writer.

Nevertheless, the two *Spectators* on *Chevy Chase* and the sequel on the *Children in the Wood* were startling enough. The general announcement was ample, unabashed, soaring—unmistakable evidence of a new polite taste for the universally valid utterances of the primitive heart. The accompanying measurement according to the epic rules and models was not a qualification of the taste, but only a somewhat awkward theoretical dimension and justification.

> It is impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approved by a Multitude, tho' they are only the Rabble of a Nation, which hath not in it some peculiar Aptness to please and gratify the Mind of Man.... an ordinary Song or Ballad that is the Delight of the common People, cannot fail to please all such Readers as are not unqualified for the Entertainment by their Affectation or Ignorance.

Professor Clarence D. Thorpe is surely correct in his view of Addison as a "grandfather" of such that would come in romantic aesthetics for the next hundred years.[2] Not that Addison invents anything; but he catches every current whisper and swells it to the journalistic audibility. Here, if we take Addison at his word, are the key ideas for Wordsworth's Preface on the language of rustic life, for Tolstoy's ruthless reduction of taste to the peasant norm. Addison went on to urge what was perfectly

just, that the old popular ballads ought to be read and liked; at the same time he pushed his praise to a rather wild extreme, and he made some comic comparisons between *Chevy Chase* and Virgil and Homer. iii

We know now that he was on the right track; he was riding the wave of the future. It will be sufficient here merely to allude to that well established topic of English literary history, the rise of the ballad during the eighteenth century—in *A Collection of Old Ballads* (1723-1725), in Ramsay's *Evergreen* and *Tea-Table*, in Percy's *Reliques*, and in all the opinions, the critiques, the imitations, the modern ballads, and the forgeries of that era—in *Henry and Emma*, *Colin and Lucy*, and *Hardyknute*, in Gay, Shenstone, and Gray, in Chatterton's Rowley. All these in a sense testified to the influence of Addison's essays. Addison was often enough given honorable mention and quoted.

On the other hand, neo-classic stalwart good sense and the canons of decorum did not collapse easily, and the cultivation of the ballads had, as we have suggested, a certain aspect of silliness. It is well known that Addison's essays elicited the immediate objections of Dennis. The Spectator's "Design is to see how far he can lead his Reader by the Nose." He wants "to put Impotence and Imbecility upon us for Simplicity." Later Johnson in his *Life of Addison* quoted Dennis and added his own opinion of *Chevy Chase*: "The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make less impression on the mind."

It was fairly easy to parody the ballads themselves, or at least the ballad imitations, as Johnson would demonstrate *ex tempore*. "I put my hat upon my head And walked into the Strand, And there I met another man Whose hat was in his hand." And it was just as easy to parody ballad criticism. The present volume is an anthology of two of the more deserving mock-criticisms which Addison's effort either wholly or in part inspired. iv

An anonymous satirical writer who was later identified, on somewhat uncertain authority, as the Tory Dr. William Wagstaffe was very prompt in responding. His *Comment Upon the History of Tom Thumb* appeared in 1711 perhaps within a week or two of the third guilty *Spectator* (June 7) and went into a second edition, "Corrected," by August 18. An advertisement in the *Post Man* of that day referred to yet a third "sham" edition, "full of errors."[3] The writer alludes to the author of the *Spectators* covertly ("we have had an *enterprising Genius* of late") and quotes all three of the ballad essays repeatedly. The choice of *Tom Thumb* as the *corpus vile* was perhaps suggested by Swift's momentary "handling" of it in *A Tale of a Tub*.[4] The satirical method is broad and easy and scarcely requires comment. This is the attack which was supposed by Addison's editor Henry Morley (*Spectator*, 1883, I, 318) to have caused Addison to "flinch" a little in his revision of the ballad essays. It is scarcely apparent that he did so. The last paragraph of the third essay, on the *Children in the Wood*, is a retort to some other and even prompter unfriendly critics —"little conceited Wits of the Age," with their "little Images of Ridicule."

But Addison is not the only target of "Wagstaffe's" *Comment*. "Sir B—— B ———" and his "Arthurs" are another, and "Dr. B—tly" another. One of the most eloquent moments in the *Comment* occurs near the end in a paragraph on what the author conceives to be the follies of the historical method. The use of the slight vernacular poem to parody the Bentleyan kind of classical scholarship was to be tried by Addison himself in *Spectator* 470 (August 29, 1712) and had a French counterpart in the *Chef d'oeuvre d'un inconnu*, 1714. A later example was executed by Defoe's son-in-law Henry Baker in No. XIX of his *Universal Spectator*, February 15, 1729.[5] And that year too provided the large-scale demonstration of the *Dunciad Variorum*. The very "matter" of Tom Thumb reappeared under the same light in Fielding's *Tragedy of Tragedies or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great with the Annotations of H. Scriblerus Secundus*, 1731. Addison's criticism of the ballads was scarcely a legitimate object for this kind of attack, but Augustan satire and parody were free and hospitable genres, always ready to entertain more than one kind of "bard and blockhead side by side."[6] v

No less a person than George Canning (as a schoolboy) was the author of the second of the two parodies reproduced in the present volume. A group of precocious Eton lads, Canning, J. Hookham Frere, John Smith, and Robert (Bobus) Smith, during the years 1786-1787 produced forty octavo numbers of a weekly paper called *The Microcosm*. They succeeded in exciting some interest among the literati,[7] were coming out in a "Second Edition" as early as the Christmas vacation of 1786,[8] and in the end sold their copyright for fifty pounds to their publisher, Charles Knight of Windsor.[9] Canning wrote Nos. XI and XII (February 12, 1787), a critique of the "Epic Poem" concerning "The Reformation of the Knave of Hearts."[10] This essay in two parts, running for nearly as many pages as Wagstaffe's archetypal pamphlet, is a much more systematic and theoretically ambitious effort than any predecessor. *The Knave of Hearts* is praised for its *beginning* (*in medias res*), its *middle* (all "bustle and business"), and its *end* (full of *Poetical Justice* and superior *Moral*). The earlier writers had directly labored the resemblance of the ballads to passages in Homer and Virgil. That method is now hardly invoked at all. Criticism according to the epic rules of Aristotle had been well enough illustrated by Addison on *Paradise Lost* (see especially *Spectator* 267) if not by Addison on ballads. The decline of simple respect for the "Practice and Authority" of the ancient models during the neo-classic era, the general advance of something like reasoning in criticism, finds one of its quainter testimonials in the Eton schoolboy's cleverness. He would show by definition and strict deduction that *The Knave of Hearts* is a "*due and proper Epic Poem*," having as "good right to that title, from its adherence to prescribed rules, as any of the celebrated master-pieces of antiquity." The post-Ramblerian date of the performance and a further if incidental aim of the satire—a facetious removal from the Augustan vi

coffeehouse conversation—can be here and there felt in a heavy roll of the periods, a doubling and redoubling of the abstractions.[11]

The essay, nevertheless, shows sufficient continuity with the earlier tradition of parody ballad criticism—for it begins by alluding to the *Spectator's* critiques of Shakespeare, Milton, and *Chevy Chase*, and near the end of the first number slides into a remark that "one of the *Scribleri*, a descendant of the famous *Martinus*, has expressed his suspicions of the text being corrupted." A page or two of irony concerning the "plain and simple" opening of the poem seems to hark back to something more subtle in the Augustans than the Wagstaffian derision, no doubt to Pope's victory over Philips in a *Guardian* on pastorals. "There is no task more difficult to a Poet, than that of *Rejection*. Ovid, among the ancients, and *Dryden*, among the moderns, were perhaps the most remarkable for the want of it."[12]

The interest of these little pieces is historical[13] in a fairly strict sense. Their value is indirect, half accidental, a glancing revelation of ideas concerning simplicity, feeling, genius, the primitive, the historical which run steadily beneath all the ripples during the century that moves from "classic" to "romantic." Not all of Addison's parodists taken together muster as much fun, as such whimsical charm, as Addison himself in a single paragraph such as the one on "accidental readings" which opens the *Spectator* on the *Children in the Wood*. But this passage, as it happens, requires only a slightly sophistical application to be taken as a cue to a useful attitude in our present reading. "I once met with a Page of *Mr. Baxter* under a Christmas Pye.... I might likewise mention a Paper-Kite, from which I have received great Improvement."

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NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. The chief authorities for the history which I am summarizing are W. L. Phelps, *The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, Boston, 1893, Chapter VII; E. K. Broadus, "Addison's Influence on the Development of Interest in Folk-Poetry in the Eighteenth Century," *Modern Philology*, VIII (July, 1910), 123-134; S. B. Hustvedt, *Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain During the Eighteenth Century*, New York, 1916.

2. "Addison's Contribution to Criticism," in R. F. Jones *et al.*, *The Seventeenth Century* (Stanford, 1951), p. 329.

3. Edward B. Reed, "Two Notes on Addison," *Modern Philology*, VI (October, 1908), 187. The attribution of *A Comment Upon Tom Thumb* and other satirical pieces to the Dr. William Wagstaffe who died in 1725 as Physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital depends entirely upon the fact that a collection of such pieces was published, with an anonymous memoir, in 1726 under the title *Miscellaneous Works of Dr. William Wagstaffe*. Charles Dilke, *Papers of a Critic* (London, 1875), I, 369-382. argues that not Wagstaffe but Swift was the author of some of the pieces in the volume. The case for Wagstaffe is put by Nicholas Moore in a letter to *The Athenaeum*, June 10, 1882 and in his article on Wagstaffe in the *DNB*. Paul V. Thompson, "Swift and the Wagstaffe Papers," *Notes and Queries*, 175 (1938), 79, supports the notion of Wagstaffe as an understrapper of Swift. The negative part of Dilke's thesis is perhaps the more plausible. *A Comment Upon Tom Thumb*, as Dilke himself confesses (*Papers*, p. 377), scarcely sounds very much like Swift.

4. Text, p. 6. The nursery rhyme *Tom Thumb, His Life and Death*, 1630, and the augmented *History of Tom Thumb*, c. 1670, are printed with introductory remarks by W. C. Hazlitt, *Remains of the Early Popular Poetry of England*, II (London, 1866), 166-250.

5. Cf. George R. Potter, "Henry Baker, F.R.S. (1698-1774)," *Modern Philology*, XXIX (1932), 305. Nathan Drake, *The Gleaner*, I (London, 1811), 220 seems mistaken in his remark that Baker's Scriblerian commentary (upon the nursery rhyme "Once I was a Batchelor, and lived by myself") was the model for later mock-ballad-criticisms.

6. For another early instance of our genre and a very pure one, see an anonymous Cambridge correspondent's critique of the burlesque broadside ballad of "Moor of Moore-Hall and the Dragon of Wantley," in Nathaniel Mist's *Weekly Journal* (second series), September 2, 1721, reproduced by Roger P. McCutcheon, "Another Burlesque of Addison's Ballad Criticism," *Studies in Philology*, XXXIII (October, 1926), 451-456.

7. *Diary & Letters of Madame d'Arblay* (London, 1904-1905), III, 121-122, 295: November 28, 1786; July 29, 1787; William Roberts, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More* (London, 1834), II, 46, letter from W. W. Pepys, December 31, 1786.

8. Advertisement inserted before No. I in a collected volume dated 1787 (Yale 217. 304g).

9. The source of the anecdote seems to be William Jordan, *National Portrait Gallery* (London, 1831), II, 3, quoting a communication from Charles Knight the publisher, son of Charles Knight of Windsor.

The present reprint of Nos. XI and XII of *The Microcosm* is from the "Second" octavo collected edition, Windsor, 1788. *The Microcosm* had reappeared at least seven times by 1835.

10. Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford, 1951), are unable to find an earlier printed source for this rhyme than the *European Magazine*, I (April, 1782), 252.

11. No. XXXVI of *The Microcosm* is a letter from Capel Lofft defending the "Middle Style" of Addison in contrast to the more modern Johnsonian eloquence. Robert Bell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. George Canning* (London, 1846), pp. 48-54, in a helpful account of *The Microcosm*, stresses its

general fidelity to *Spectator* style and themes.

12. Canning's critique closes with an appendix of three and a half pages alluding to the Eton Shrovetide custom of writing Latin verses, known as the "Bacchus." See H. C. Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College* (London, 1911), pp. 146-147.

13. As late as the turn of the century the trick was still in a manner feasible. The anonymous author of *Literary Leisure, or the Recreations of Solomon Saunter, Esq.* (1799-1800) divides two numbers, VIII and XV, between other affairs and a Shandyesque argument about the nursery charm for the hiccup "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper." This author was most likely not Byron's assailant Hewson Clarke (born 1787, author of *The Saunterer in 1804*), as asserted in the *Catalogue* of the Hope Collection (Oxford, 1865), p. 128.

A historical interest may be not only retrospective but contemporary. The reader of the present volume will appreciate "How to Criticize a Poem (In the Manner of Certain Contemporary Poets)", a critique of the mnemonic rhyme "Thirty days hath September," in the *New Republic*, December 6, 1943.

A

COMMENT

UPON THE

HISTORY

OF

Tom Thumb.

——Juvat immemorata ferentem
Ingenuis oculisque legi manibusque teneri. Hor.

LONDON,

Printed for *J. Morphew* near *Stationers-Hall*.
1711. Price 3 *d.*

A

COMMENT

UPON THE

HISTORY

OF

TOM THUMB.

IT is a surprising thing that in an Age so Polite as this, in which we have such a Number of Poets, Criticks and Commentators, some of the best things that are extant in our Language shou'd pass unobserv'd amidst a Croud of inferiour Productions, and lie so long buried as it were, among those that profess such a Readiness to give Life to every thing that is valuable. Indeed we have had an Enterprising Genius of late, that has thought fit to disclose the Beauties of some Pieces to the World, that might have been otherwise indiscernable, and believ'd to have been trifling and insipid, for no other Reason but their unpolish'd Homeliness of Dress. And if we were to apply our selves, instead of the Classicks, to the Study of Ballads and other ingenious Composures of that Nature, in such Periods of our Lives, when we are arriv'd to a Maturity of Judgment, it is impossible to say what Improvement might be made to Wit in

general, and the Art of Poetry in particular: And certainly our Passions are describ'd in them so naturally, in such lively, tho' simple, Colours, that how far they may fall short of the Artfulness and Embellishments of the *Romans* in their Way of Writing, *yet cannot fail to please all such Readers as are not unqualify'd for the Entertainment by their Affectation or Ignorance*.

It was my good Fortune some time ago to have the Library of a School-Boy committed to my Charge, where, among other undiscover'd valuable Authors, I pitch'd upon *Tom Thumb* and *Tom Hickathrift*, Authors indeed more proper to adorn the Shelves of *Bodley* or the *Vatican*, than to be confin'd to the Retirement and Obscurity of a private Study. I have perus'd the first of these with an infinite Pleasure, and a more than ordinary Application, and have made some Observations on it, which may not, I hope, prove unacceptable to the Publick; and however it may have been ridicul'd, and look'd upon as an Entertainment only for Children, and those of younger Years, may be found perhaps a Performance not unworthy the Perusal of the Judicious, and the Model superiour to either of those incomparable Poems of *Chevy Chase*, or *The Children in the Wood*. The Design was undoubtedly to recommend Virtue, and to shew that however any one may labour under the Disadvantages of Stature or Deformity, or the Meanness of Parentage, yet if his Mind and Actions are above the ordinary Level, those very Disadvantages that seem to depress him, shall add a Lustre to his Character. 5

There are Variety of Incidents, dispers'd thro' the whole Series of this Historical Poem, that give an agreeable Delight and Surprise, *and are such as* Virgil *himself wou'd have touch'd upon, had the like Story been told by that Divine Poet*, viz. his falling into the Pudding-Bowl and others; which shew the Courage and Constancy, the Intrepidity and Greatness of Soul of this little Hero, amidst the greatest Dangers that cou'd possibly befall him, and which are the unavoidable Attendants of human Life.

Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

The Author of this was unquestionably a Person of an Universal Genius, and if we consider that the Age he wrote in, must be an Age of the most profound Ignorance, as appears from the second Stanza of the first *Canto*, he was a Miracle of a Man.

I have consulted Monsieur *Le Clerk*, and my Friend Dr. *B—ly* concerning the Chronology of this Author, who both assure me, tho' Neither can settle the Matter exactly, that he is the most ancient of our Poets, and 'tis very probable he was a *Druid*, who, as *Julius Cæsar* mentions in his *Commentaries*, us'd to deliver their Precepts in Poetry and Metre. The Author of *The Tale of a Tub*, believes he was a *Pythagorean* Philosopher, and held the *Metempsichosis*; and Others that he had read *Ovid's Metamorphosis*, and was the first Person that ever found out the Philosopher's Stone. A certain Antiquary of my Acquaintance, who is willing to forget every thing he shou'd remember, tells me, He can scarcely believe him to be Genuine, but if he is, he must have liv'd some time before the *Barons* Wars; which he proves, as he does the Establishment of Religion in this Nation, upon the Credit of an old Monument. 6

There is another Matter which deserves to be clear'd, whether this is a Fiction, or whether there was really such a Person as *Tom Thumb*. As to this, my Friends tell me, 'Twas Matter of Fact, and that 'twas an unpardonable Omission in a certain Author never once to mention him in his *Arthur*'s, when nothing is more certain than that he was the greatest Favourite of that Prince, and a Person who had perform'd some very eminent Services for his Country. And indeed I can't excuse his taking no Notice of our Poet who has afforded him such Helps, and to whom he is so much oblig'd for the Model of those Productions: Besides it had been but a Debt of Gratitude, as Sir *R—— B——* was a Member of the Faculty, to have made honourable mention of him who has spoke so honourably of the Profession, on the Account of the Sickness of his Hero.

I have an old Edition of this Author by me, the Title of which is more Sonorous and Heroical, than those of later Date, which for the better Information of the Reader, it may not be improper to insert in this Place. Tom Thumb *his Life and Death, wherein is declar'd his many marvellous Acts of Manhood, full of Wonder and strange Merriment*: Then he adds, *which little Knight liv'd in King* Arthur*'s Time in the* 7

Court of Great Britain. Indeed there are so many spurious Editions of this Piece upon one Account or other, that I wou'd advise my Readers to be very cautious in their Choice, and it would be very wisely done, if they wou'd consult the curious *Ælianus* concerning this Matter, who has the choicest Collection of any Man in *England*, and understands the most correct Editions of Books of this Nature.

I have took a great deal of Pains to set these Matters of Importance in as clear a Light as we Criticks generally do, and shall begin with the first *Canto*, which treats of our Hero's Birth and Parentage, and Education, with some other Circumstances which you'll find are carry'd on in a manner not very inelegant, *and cannot fail to please those who are not Judges of Language, or those who notwithstanding they are Judges of Language, have a genuine and unprejudic'd Tast of Nature*.

In Arthur's *Court* Tom Thumb *did live;*
A Man of mickle Might,
The best of all the Table round,
And eke a doubty Knight,
In Stature but an Inch in Height,
Or quarter of a Span;
Then think you not this worthy Knight 8
Was prov'd a valiant Man.

This Beginning is agreeable to the best of the Greek and Latin Poets; *Homer* and *Virgil* give an Idea of the whole Poem in a few of the first Lines, and here our Author draws the Character of his Hero, and shews what you may expect from a Person so well qualify'd for the greatest Undertakings.

In the Description of him, which is very fine, he insinuates, that tho' perhaps his Person may appear despicable and little, yet you'll find him an Hero of the most consummate Bravery and Conduct, and is almost the same Account *Statius* gives of *Tydeus*.

————Totos infusa per artus,
Major in exiguo regnabat corpore virtus.

If any suppose the Notion of such an Hero improbable, they'll find the Character *Virgil* gives *Camilla* to be as far stretch'd:

Illa vel Intactæ segetis per summa volaret
Gramina, nec teneras cursu læsisset Aristas:
Vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumenti
Ferret Iter: celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.

But to proceed,

His Father was a Plowman plain,
His Mother milk'd the Cow,
And yet a Way to get a Son
This Couple knew not how,
B *Until such time the good old Man* 9
To learned Merlin *goes,*
And there to him in deep Distress
In secret Manner shows,
How in his Heart he wish'd to have,
A Child in time to come,
To be his Heir, tho' it might be
No bigger than his Thumb.
Of which old Merlin *was foretold,*
That he his Wish should have,
And so a Son of Stature small
The Charmer to him gave.

There is nothing more common throughout the Poets of the finest Taste, than to give an Account of the Pedigree of their Hero. So *Virgil*,

——Æneas quem Dardanio Anchisæ
Alma Venus Phrygii genuit Simoentis ad undas.

And the Manner of the Countryman's going to consult *Merlin*, is like that of *Æneas*'s approaching the Oracle of *Delphos*.

——Egressi veneramur Apollinis Urbem.

And how naturally and poetically does he describe the Modesty of the Man, who wou'd be content, if *Merlin* wou'd grant him his Request, with a Son no bigger than his Thumb.

The Two next Stanza's carry on the Idea with a great deal of

Probability and Consistence; and to convince the World that he was born to be something more than Man, he produces a Miracle to bring him into it. 10

Begot, and born in half an Hour,
To fit his Father's Will.

The following Stanza continues the Miracle, and brings the *Fairy Queen* and her Subjects, who gives him his Name, and makes him a Present of his Apparel.

Whereas she cloath'd him fine and brave,
In Garments richly fair,
The which did serve him many Years
In seemly sort to wear.

So *Virgil* of Queen *Dido*'s Present to *Ascanius*:

Hoc Juvenem egregium præstanti munere donat.

And again,

————Quem candida Dido
Esse sui dederat Monumentum & pignus Amoris.

The Description of his Dress is very agreeable, and is not unlike what I have met with somewhere of a Giant going a Fishing, with an Account of his Implements equal to his Proportion.

His Hat made of an Oaken Leaf,
His Shirt a Spider's Web,
Both light and soft for these his Limbs
That were so smally bred.
B2 *His Hose and Doublet Thistle Down,* 11
Together weav'd full fine;
His Stockings of an Apple green,
Made of the outward Rind;
His Garters were two little Hairs
Pluck'd from his Mothers Eye;
His Shooes made of a Mouse's Skin,
And Tann'd most curiously.

The next Stanza's relate his Diversions, bearing some Analogy to those of *Ascanius* and other Lads in *Virgil*:

Thus like a valiant Gallant He
Adventures forth to go,
With other Children in the Street,
His pretty Tricks to show.

Una Acies Juvenum ducit quam Parvus Ovantem
Nomen Avi referens Priamus.

There is a Piece of Revenge our little Hero took upon a Play-fellow, which proves, to what an height Mechanical and Experimental Philosophy was arriv'd to in that Age, and may be worth while to be considered by the *Royal Society*.

Of whom to be reveng'd, he took
In Mirth and pleasant Game,
Black Pots and Glasses, which he hung
Upon a bright Sun-Beam.

The third Line is a Demonstration of the Antiquity of Drinking out of Black-Pots, which still prevails in most Counties of this Nation, among the Justices of Peace at their Petty and Quarter Sessions.

12

The last four Lines of this Canto, and the beginning of the next, contain the miraculous Adventure of the Pudding-Bowl: And, by the by, we may observe, That it was the Custom of the *Christians* at that time, to make Hog-Puddings instead of Minc'd-Pies at *Christmas*; a laudable Custom very probably brought up to distinguish 'em more particularly from the *Jews*.

Whereas about a Christmas *time,*
His Father an Hog had kill'd,
And Tom *to see the Pudding made,*
Fear that it should be spill'd;
He sat, the Candle for to Light,
Upon the Pudding-Bowl:
Of which there is unto this Day
A pretty Pastime told:
For Tom *fell in——*

Perhaps some may think it below our Hero to stoop to such a mean Employment as the Poet has here enjoyn'd him, of holding the Candle, and that it looks too much like a *Citizen*, or a *Cot*, as the Women call it: But if we reflect on the Obedience due to Parents, as our Author undoubtedly did, and the Necessities those People labour'd under, we cannot but admire at his ready Compliance with what could by no Means be agreeable to the Heroical Bent of his Inclinations, and perceive what a tender Regard he had for the Wellfare of his Family, when he took the strictest Care imaginable for the Preservation of the Hog-Pudding. And what can be more remarkable? What can raise the Sentiments of Pity and Compassion to an higher Pitch, than to see an Hero fall into such an unforeseen Disaster in the honourable Execution of his Office? *This certainly is conformable to the way of Thinking among the Ancient Poets, and what a good-natur'd Reader cannot but be affected with.* 13

The following Part of this Canto is the Relation of our Hero's being put into a Pudding, and convey'd away in a Tinker's Budget; which is design'd by our Author to prove, if it is understood literally, That the greatest Men are subject to Misfortunes. But it is thought by Dr. *B—tly* to be all Mythology, and to contain the Doctrine of the Transmutation of Metals, and is design'd to shew, that all Matter is the same, tho' very differently Modified. He tells me, he intends to publish a distinct Treatise of this Canto; and I don't question, but he'll manage the Dispute with the same Learning, Conduct, and good Manners, he has done others, and as Dr. *Salmon* uses in his Corrections of Dr. *Sydenham* and the *Dispensatory*.

The next Canto is the Story of *Tom Thumb*'s being Swallow'd by a Cow, and his Deliverance out of her, which is treated of at large by *Giordano Bruno* in his *Spaccio de la Bestia trionfante*; which Book, tho' very scarce, yet a *certain Gentleman*, who has it in his Possession, has been so obliging as to let every Body know where to meet with it. After this, you find him carried off by a Raven, and swallow'd by a Giant; and 'tis almost the same Story as that of *Ganimede*, and the Eagle in *Ovid*.

Now by a Raven of great Strength,
Away poor Tom *was born.*

Nec mora: percusso mendacibus aere pennis
Abripit Iliaden.

14

A certain great *Critick* and *Schoolmaster* who has publish'd such Notes upon *Horace* as were never seen before, is of Opinion, and has very good Authority for what he says, that 'twas rather an Owl than a Raven; for, as he observes with a wonderful deal of Penetration and Sagacity, our Hero's Shoes were made of a Mouse's Skin which might induce the Owl to run away with him. The Giant, he owns, looks very probable, because we find 'em swallowing People very fast in almost all Romances.

This Canto concludes with our Hero's Arrival at Court; after he had spent a considerable Part of his Youth in Labours and Fatigues, had been inur'd to nothing else but Hardships and Adventures, we see him receive the Recompence of his Merit, and become the Favourite of his Prince: And here we may perceive all the Fineness of the Gentleman, mixt with all the Resolution and Courage of the Warriour; We may behold him as ready to oblige the Ladies with a Dance, as he was to draw his Sword in their Defence.

Amongst the Deeds of Courtship done,
His Highness did command,
That he shou'd dance a Galliard brave
Upon the Queen's Left Hand.
The which he did——

This shews he had all the Accomplishments of *Achilles* who was undoubtedly one of the best Dancers in the Age he liv'd, according to the Character *Homer* gives him so frequently of the Agility of his Feet. I have consulted a Master of the Profession of Dancing, who is excellently vers'd in the Chronology of all Dances, he tells me that this *Galliard* came into Vogue about the latter End of the Reign of *Uter Pendragon*, and continu'd during that of King *Arthur*, which is Demonstration to me that our Poet liv'd about that Age. 15

It is asserted very positively in the later Editions of this Poem, that the four following Lines are a Relation of the King and *Tom Thumb*'s going together an Hunting, but I have took indefatigable Pains to consult all the *Manuscripts* in *Europe* concerning this Matter, and I

find it an *Interpolation*. I have also an *Arabick Copy* by me, which I got a *Friend* to translate, being unacquainted with the Language, and it is plain by the Translation that 'tis there also *interpolated*.

Now after that the King wou'd not
Abroad for Pleasure go,
But still Tom Thumb *must go with him*
Plac'd on his Saddle Bow.

——Ipse Uno graditur comitatus Achate.

There is scarcely any Scene more moving than this that follows, and is *such an one as wou'd have shined in* Homer *or* Virgil. When he was favour'd with his Prince's Ear, and might have ask'd the most profitable and important Posts in the Government, and been indemnified if guilty of a *Peculatus*; He only used his Interest to relieve the Necessities of his Parents, when another *Person* wou'd have scarcely own'd 'em for his *Relations*. This discovers such a Generosity of Soul, such an Humility in the greatest Prosperity, such a tender Affection for his Parents, as is hardly to be met with, but in our Author.

16

And being near his Highness Heart
He crav'd a wealthy Boon,
A noble Gift, the which the King
Commanded to be done;
To relieve his Father's Wants,
And Mother being old.

The rest of this Canto relates the Visit to his Father, in which there is something very soft and tender, something *that may move the Mind of the most polite Reader, with the inward Meltings of Humanity and Compassion*.

The Next Canto of the Tilts and Tournaments, is much like the Fifth Book of *Virgil*, and tho' we can't suppose our Poet ever saw that Author, yet we may believe he was directed to almost the same Passages, *by the same kind of Poetical Genius, and the same Copyings after Nature*.

Now he with Tilts and Tournaments,
Was entertained so,
That all the rest of Arthur*'s Knights*
Did him much Pleasure show;
And good Sir Lancelot *of* Lake*,*
Sir Tristram*, and Sir* Guy*;*
But none like to Tom Thumb
For Acts of Chivalry.

Longeque ante omnia Corpora Nisus
Emicat——

And agen,

Post Elymus subit, & nunc tertia palma Diores.

C

17

In Honour of which noble Day,
And for his Lady's Sake,
A Challenge in King Arthur*'s Court,*
Tom Thumb *did bravely make.*

Talis prima Dares caput altum in prælia tollit,
Ostenditq^{ue} humeros latos, alternaq^{ue} Iactat
Brachia portendens, & verberat Ictibus auras,
Quæritur huic alius:——

'Gainst whom those noble Knights did run,
Sir Chion *and the rest,*
But, still Tom Thumb *with all his Might*
Did bear away the best.

Et primum ante omnes victorem appellat Acesten.

At the same time our Poet shews a laudable Partiality for his Hero, he represents Sir *Lancelot* after a manner not unbecoming so bold and brave a Knight.

At last Sir Lancelot *of* Lake*,*
In manly sort came in,
And with this stout and hardy Knight
A Battle to begin.

Huic contra Æneas, speculatus in agmine longo

Obvius ire parat——

Which made the Courtiers all aghast.

Obstupuere animi——

This Canto concludes with the Presents made by the King to the Champion according to the Custom of the *Greeks* and *Romans* in such Cases; only his tumbling thro' the Queen's Ring is observable, and may serve to give some Light into the Original of that ingenious Exercise so much practis'd by the Moderns, of tumbling thro' an Hoop. 18

The last Canto treats of the Champion's Sickness and Death, and whoever considers the Beauty, Regularity and majestic Simplicity of the Relation, cannot but be surpris'd at the Advances that may be made in Poetry by the Strength of an uncultivated Genius, and may see how far Nature can proceed without the Ornamental Helps and Assistances of Art. The Poet don't attribute his Sickness to a Debauch, to the Irregularity or Intemperance of his Life, but to an Exercise becoming an Hero; and tho' he dies quietly in his Bed, he may be said in some measure to die in the Bed of Honour. And to shew the great Affection the King had for him, he sends for his Physicians, and orders all the Care imaginable to be taken for the Conservation of his Life.

He being slender and tall,
This cunning Doctor took
A fine perspective Glass, with which,
He did in Secret look.

It is a Wonder that the learned World shou'd differ so in their Opinions concerning the Invention and Antiquity of Optic Glasses, and that any one should contend for *Metius* of *Alcmaer*, or, as Dr. *Plot* does, for *Fryar Bacon*, when, if this Author had been consulted, Matters might have been so easily adjusted. Some great Men indeed wou'd prove from hence, our Knight was the Inventor of 'em, that his Valet might the more commodiously see to dress him; but if we consider there were no Beau's in that Age, or reflect more maturely on the Epithet here given to the Doctor, we may readily conclude, that the Honour of this Invention belongs more particularly to that ingenious Profession. 19 C2

How lovely is the Account of the Departure of his Soul from his Body:

And so with Peace and Quietness
He left the World below.

Placidaque demum ibi morte quievit.

And up into the Fairy Land
His Soul did fleeting go.

——At Æthereas repetit mens ignea sedes.

Whereas the Fairy Queen receiv'd
With happy Mourning Cheer
The Body of this valiant Knight,
Whom she esteem'd so dear;
For with her dancing Nymphs in Green
She fetch'd him from his Bed,
With Musick and with Melody,
As soon as Life was fled.

——Et fotum gremio Dea tollit in Altos
Idaliæ lucos——

So one of our Modern Poets;

Thither the Fairys and their Train resort,
And leave their Revels, and their midnight Sport. 20

We find in all the most celebrated Poets some Goddess that takes upon her to be the peculiar Guardian of the Hero, which has been carry'd on very elegantly in this Author.

But agen;

For whom King Arthur *and his Knights,*
Full forty Days did mourn,
And in Remembrance of his name,
Who was so strangely born,
He built a Tomb of Marble grey,
And Year by Year did come,
To celebrate the Mournful Day,

And Burial of Tom Thumb*,*
Whose Fame lives here in England *still,*
Among the Country sort,
Of whom their Wives and Children small,
Tell Tales of pleasant Sport.

So *Ovid*;

——Luctus monumenta manebunt
Semper Adoni mei, repetitaq^{ue} *mortis Imago*
Annua plangoris peragit simulamina Nostri.

Nor is this Conclusion unlike one of the best Latin Poems this Age has produc'd.

Tu Taffi Æternum vives, tua munera Cambri
Nunc etiam Celebrant, quotiesq^{ue} *revolvitur Annus*
Te memorant, Patrium Gens tota tuetur Honorem, 21
Et cingunt viridi redolentia tempora Porro.

And now, tho' I am very well satisfied with this Performance, yet, according to the usual Modesty of us Authors, I am oblig'd to tell the World, *it will be a great Satisfaction to me, knowing my own Insufficiency*, if I have given but some Hints of the Beauties of this Poem, which are capable of being improv'd by those of greater Learning and Abilities. And I am glad to find by a Letter I have receiv'd from one of the *Literati* in *Holland*, That the learned *Huffius*, a great Man of our Nation, is about the Translation of this Piece into *Latin* Verse, which he assures me will be done with a great deal of Judgment, in case he has enough of that Language to furnish out the Undertaking. I am very well Appris'd, That there has been publish'd Two Poems lately, Intituled, The Second and Third Parts of this Author; which treat of our little Hero's rising from the Dead in the Days of King *Edgar*: But I am inform'd by my Friend the *Schoolmaster*, and others, That they were compos'd by an Enthusiast in the last Century, and have been since Printed for the Establishment of the Doctrine of Monsieur *Marion* and his Followers, and the Resurrection of Dr. *Ems*.

I hope no Body will be offended at my asserting Things so positively, since 'tis the Priviledge of us *Commentators*, who understand the meaning of an Author Seventeen Hundred Years after he has wrote, much better than ever he cou'd be suppos'd to do himself. And certainly, a Critick ought not only to know what his Authors Thoughts 22
were when he was Writing such and such Passages, but how those Thoughts came into his Head, where he was when he wrote, or what he was doing of; whether he wrote in a Garden, a Garret, or a Coach; upon a Lady, or a Milkmaid; whether at that Time he was scratching his Elbow, drinking a Bottle, or playing at Questions and Commands. These are material and important Circumstances so well known to the *True Commentator*, that were *Virgil* and *Horace* to revisit the World at this time, they'd be wonderfully surpris'd to see the minutest of their Perfections discover'd by the Assistances of *Modern Criticism*. Nor have the Classicks only reap'd Benefit from Inquiries of this Nature, but Divinity it self seems to be render'd more intelligible. I know a Divine, who understands what St. *Paul* meant by *Higher Powers*, much better than that Apostle cou'd pretend to do; and another, That can unfold all the Mysteries of the *Revelations* without Spectacles.

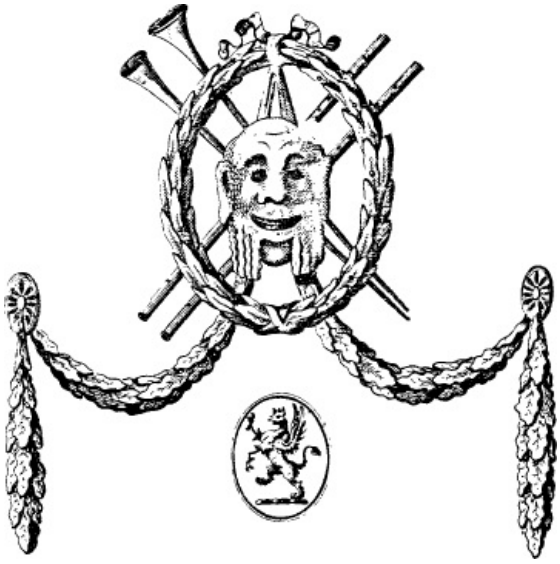
I know there are some People that cast an Odium on me, and others, for pointing out the Beauties of such Authors, as have, they say, been hitherto unknown, and argue, That 'tis a sort of Heresie in Wit, and is like the fruitless Endeavours of proving the Apostolical Constitutions *Genuine*, that have been indisputably *Spurious* for so many Ages: But let these Gentlemen consider, whether they pass not the same Judgment on an Author, as a Woman does on a Man, by the gayety of his Dress, or the gaudy Equipage of his Epithets. And however they may call me *second-sighted*, for discerning what they are Blind to, 23
I must tell them this Poem has not been altogether so obscure, but that the most refin'd *Writers* of this Age have been delighted with the reading it. Mr. *Tho. D'Urfey*, I am told, is an Admirer, and Mr. *John Dunton* has been heard to say, more than once, he had rather be the Author of it than all his Works.

How often, *says my Author*, have I seen the Tears trickle down the Face of the Polite *Woodwardius* upon reading some of the most pathetical Encounters of *Tom Thumb*! How soft, how musically sorrowful was his Voice! How good Natur'd, how gentle, how

unaffected was the Ceremoniale of his Gesture, and how unfit for a Profession so Merciless and Inhumane!

I was persuaded by a Friend to write some Copies of Verses and place 'em in the Frontispiece of this Poem, in Commendation of My self and my *Comment*, suppos'd to be compos'd by *AG. FT. LM. RW.* and so forth. *To their very worthy and honour'd Friend* C. D. upon his admirable and useful *Comment* on the History of *Tom Thumb*; but my Bookseller told me the Trick was so common, 'twou'd not answer. Then I propos'd a Dedication to my Lord *such an One*, or Sir *Thomas such an One*; but he told me the Stock to be rais'd on Dedications was so small now a Days, and the Discount to my Lord's Gentleman, *&c.* so high, that 'twou'd not be worth while; besides, says he, it is the Opinion of some Patrons, that a Dinner now and then, with, *Sir, I shall expect to see you sometimes*, is a suitable Reward for a publick Compliment in Print. But if, continues my Bookseller, you have a Mind it shou'd turn to Advantage, write Treason or Heresy, get censur'd by the Parliament or Convocation, and condemn'd to be burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman, and you can't fail having a Multitude of Readers, by the same Reason, *A notorious Rogue has such a Number of Followers to the Gallows*.

FINIS.



THE

MICROCOSM.

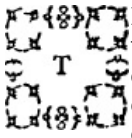
by

Gregory Griffin.

MICROCOSM.

MONDAY, *February* 12, 1787.

Res gestæ regumque, ducumque, et tristia bella,
Quo scribi possint numero, monstravit Homerus.—HOR.
By Homer taught, the modern poet sings,
In Epic strains, of heroes, wars, and Kings.—FRANCIS.



HERE are certain forms and etiquettes in life, which, though the neglect of them does not amount to the commission of a crime, or the violation of a duty, are yet so established by example, and sanctioned by custom, as to pass into Statutes, equally acknowledged by society, and almost equally binding to individuals, with the laws of the land, or the precepts of morality. A man guilty of breaking these, though he cannot be transported for a felon, or indicted for treasonable practices, is yet, in the High Court of Custom, branded as a flagrant offender against decorum, as notorious for an unprecedented infringement on propriety.

There is no race of men on whom these laws are more severe than Authors; and no species of Authors more subject to them, than Periodical Essayists. *Homer* having prescribed the form, or to use a more modern phrase, *set the fashion* of *Epic Poems*, whoever presumes to deviate from his plan, must not hope to participate his dignity: And whatever method, *The Spectator*, *The Guardian*, and others, who first adopted this species of writing, have pursued in their undertaking, is set down as a rule for the conduct of their followers; which, whoever is bold enough to transgress, is accused of a deviation from the original design, and a breach of established regulation. 130

It has hitherto been customary for all Periodical Writers, to take some opportunity, in the course of their labours, to display their Critical abilities, either by making observations on some popular Author, and work of known character, or by bringing forth the performances of hidden merit, and throwing light on genius in obscurity. To the critiques of *The Spectator*, *Shakespear*, and more particularly, *Milton*, are indebted, for no inconsiderable share of the reputation, which they now so universally enjoy; and by his means were the ruder graces, and more simple beauties of *Chevy Chace* held up to public view, and recommended to general admiration.

I should probably be accused of swerving from the imitation of so great an example, were not I to take occasion to shew that I too am not entirely destitute of abilities of this kind; but that by possessing a decent share of critical discernment, and critical jargon, I am capable of becoming a very tolerable commentator. For the proof of which, I shall rather prefer calling the attention of my readers to an object as yet untreated of by any of my immediate predecessors, than venture to throw in my observations on any work which has before passed the ordeal of frequent examination. And this I shall do for two reasons; partly, because were I to choose a field, how fertile soever, of which many others had before me been reaping the fruits, mine would be at best but the gleanings of criticism; and partly, from a more interested view, from a selfish desire of accumulated praise; since, by making a work, as yet almost wholly unknown, the subject of my consideration, I shall acquire the reputation of taste, as well as judgement;—of judiciousness in selection, as well as justness in observation;—of propriety in choosing the object, as well as skill in using the language, of commentary. 131

The *Epic Poem* on which I shall ground my present critique, has for its chief characteristics, brevity and simplicity. The Author,—whose name I lament that I am, in some degree, prevented from consecrating to immortal fame, by not knowing what it is—the Author, I say, has not branched his poem into excressences of episode, or prolixities of digression; it is neither variegated with diversity of unmeaning similitudes, nor glaring with the varnish of unnatural metaphor. The whole is plain and uniform; so much so indeed, that I should hardly be surprised, if some morose readers were to conjecture, that the poet had been thus simple rather from necessity than choice; that he had been restrained not so much by chastity of judgement, as sterility of imagination. 132

Nay, some there may be perhaps, who will dispute his claim to the title of an *Epic Poet*; and will endeavour to degrade him even to the rank of a *ballad-monger*. But I, as his Commentator, will contend for the dignity of my Author; and will plainly demonstrate his Poem to be

an *Epic Poem*, agreeable to the example of all Poets, and the consent of all Critics heretofore.

First, it is universally agreed, that an *Epic Poem* should have three component parts, *a beginning*, *a middle*, and *an end*;—secondly, it is allowed, that it should have one *grand action*, or *main design*, to the forwarding of which, all the parts of it should directly or indirectly tend; and that this design should be in some measure consonant with, 133
and conducive to, the purposes of *Morality*;—and thirdly, it is indisputably settled, that it should have *a Hero*. I trust that in none of these points the poem before us will be found deficient. There are other inferior properties, which I shall consider in due order.

Not to keep my readers longer in suspense, the subject of the poem is "*The Reformation of the Knave of Hearts*." It is not improbable, that some may object to me that a *Knave* is an unworthy Hero for an Epic Poem; that a Hero ought to be all that is great and good. The objection is frivolous. The greatest work of this kind that the World has ever produced, has "*The Devil*" for its hero; and supported as my author is by so great a precedent, I contend, that his Hero is a very decent Hero; and especially as he has the advantage of *Milton*'s, by reforming at the end, is evidently entitled to a competent share of celebrity.

I shall now proceed in the more immediate examination of the poem in its different parts. The *beginning*, say the Critics, ought to be plain and simple; neither embellished with the flowers of poetry, nor turgid with pomposity of diction. In this how exactly does our Author 134
conform to the established opinion! he begins thus,

“The Queen of Hearts
“She made some Tarts”—

Can any thing be more clear! more natural! more agreeable to the true spirit of simplicity! Here are no tropes,—no figurative expressions,—not even so much as an invocation to the Muse. He does not detain his readers by any needless circumlocution; by unnecessarily informing them, what he *is* going to sing; or still more unnecessarily enumerating what he *is not* going to sing: but according to the precept of Horace,

————————in medias res,
Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit,——

That is, he at once introduces us, and sets us on the most easy and familiar footing imaginable, with her Majesty of Hearts, and interests us deeply in her domestic concerns. But to proceed,

“The Queen of Hearts
“She made some Tarts,
“All on a Summer’s Day.”

Here indeed the prospect brightens, and we are led to expect some liveliness of imagery, some warmth of poetical colouring;—but here is no such thing.—There is no task more difficult to a Poet, than that of *Rejection*. *Ovid*, among the ancients, and *Dryden*, among the moderns, were perhaps the most remarkable for the want of it. The latter from 135
the haste in which he generally produced his compositions, seldom paid much attention to the "*limæ labor*," "the labour of correction," and seldom therefore rejected the assistance of any idea that presented itself. *Ovid*, not content with catching the leading features of any scene or character, indulged himself in a thousand minutiæ of description, a thousand puerile prettinesses, which were in themselves uninteresting, and took off greatly from the effect of the whole; as the numberless suckers, and straggling branches of a fruit tree, if permitted to shoot out unrestrained, while they are themselves barren and useless, diminish considerably the vigour of the parent stock. *Ovid* had more genius, but less judgement than *Virgil*; *Dryden* more imagination, but less correctness than *Pope*; had they not been deficient in these points, the former would certainly have equalled, the latter infinitely outshone the merits of his countryman.—*Our Author* was undoubtedly possessed of that power which they wanted; and was cautious not to indulge too far the sallies of a lively imagination. Omitting therefore any mention of—sultry Sirius,—silvan shade,—sequestered glade,—verdant hills,—purling rills,—mossy mountains,—gurgling fountains,—&c. &c.—he simply tells us that it was "*All on a Summers Day*." For my own part, I confess, that I find 136
myself rather flattered than disappointed; and consider the Poet as rather paying a compliment to the abilities of his readers, than baulking their expectations. It is certainly a great pleasure to see a

picture well painted; but it is a much greater to paint it well oneself. This therefore I look upon as a stroke of excellent management in the Poet. Here every reader is at liberty to gratify his own taste; to design for himself just what sort of "*Summer's Day*" he likes best; to choose his own scenery; dispose his lights and shades as he pleases; to solace himself with a rivulet or a horse-pond,—a shower, or a sun-beam,—a grove, or a kitchen garden,—according to his fancy. How much more considerate this, than if the Poet had, from an affected accuracy of description, thrown us into an unmannerly perspiration by the heat of the atmosphere; forced us into a landscape of his own planning, with perhaps a paltry good-for-nothing zephyr or two, and a limited quantity of wood and water.—All this *Ovid* would undoubtedly have done. Nay, to use the expression of a learned brother-commentator, "*quovis pignore decertem*" "I would lay any wager," that he would have gone so far as to tell us what the tarts were made of; and perhaps wandered into an episode on the art of preserving cherries. But *our Poet*, above such considerations, leaves every reader to 137
choose his own ingredients, and sweeten them to his own liking; wisely foreseeing, no doubt, that the more palatable each had rendered them to his own taste, the more he would be affected at their approaching loss.

"All on a Summer's Day."

I cannot leave this line without remarking, that one of the *Scribleri*, a descendant of the famous *Martinus*, has expressed his suspicions of the text being corrupted here, and proposes, instead of "*All on*" reading "*Alone*," alledging, in favour of this alteration, the effect of Solitude in raising the passions. But *Hiccius Doctius*, a High Dutch commentator, one nevertheless well versed in British literature, in a note of his usual length and learning, has confuted the arguments of *Scriblerus*. In support of the present reading, he quotes a passage from a poem written about the same period with our author's, by the celebrated *Johannes Pastor**, intituled "*An Elegiac Epistle to the Turnkey of Newgate*," wherein the gentleman declares, that rather indeed in compliance with an old custom, than to gratify any particular will of his own, he is going

————"*All hanged for to be*
"Upon that fatal Tyburn tree."——

* More commonly known, I believe, by the appellation of "*Jack Shepherd*."

Now as nothing throws greater light on an author, than the 138
concurrence of a contemporary writer, I am inclined to be of *Hiccius's* opinion, and to consider the "*All*" as an elegant expletive, or, as he more aptly phrases it "*elegans expletivum*." The passage therefore must stand thus,

"The Queen of Hearts
"She made some Tarts,
"All on a Summer's Day."

And thus ends the first part, or *beginning*; which is simple and unembellished; opens the subject in a natural and easy manner; excites, but does not too far gratify our curiosity: for a reader of accurate observation may easily discover, that the *Hero* of the Poem has not, as yet, made his appearance.

I could not continue my examination at present through the whole of this Poem, without far exceeding the limits of a single paper. I have therefore divided it into two; but shall not delay the publication of the second to another week,—as that, besides breaking the connection of criticism, would materially injure the *unities* of the Poem.

No. XII. 139

OF THE

MICROCOSM.

MONDAY, *February 12, 1787.*

————*Servetur ad imum,*
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

From his first Entrance to the closing Scene,
Let him one equal Character maintain.

FRANCIS.

HAVING thus gone through the first part, or *beginning* of the Poem, we may naturally enough proceed to the consideration of the second.

The second part, or *middle*, is the proper place for bustle and business; for incident and adventure.

"The Knave of Hearts
"He stole those Tarts."

Here attention is awakened; and our whole souls are intent upon the first appearance of the Hero. Some readers may perhaps be offended at his making his *entré* in so disadvantageous a character as that of a *thief*. To this I plead precedent. 140

The Hero of the Iliad, as I observed in a former paper, is made to lament very pathetically,—that "life is not like all other possessions, to be acquired by theft."—A reflection, in my opinion, evidently shewing, that, if he *did* refrain from the practice of this ingenious art, it was not from want of an inclination that way. We may remember too, that in *Virgil's* poem, almost the first light in which the *Pious Æneas* appears to us, is a *deer-stealer*; nor is it much excuse for him, that the deer were wandering without keepers; for however he might, from this circumstance, have been unable to ascertain whose property they were; he might, I think, have been pretty well assured that they were not *his*.

Having thus acquitted our Hero of misconduct, by the example of his betters, I proceed to what I think the Master-Stroke of the Poet.

"The Knave of Hearts
"He stole those Tarts,
"And——took them——quite away!!"

141 Here, whoever has an ear for harmony, and a heart for feeling, must be touched! There is a desponding melancholy in the run of the last line! an air of tender regret in the addition of "*quite away!*" a something so expressive of irrecoverable loss! so forcibly intimating the "*Ah nunquam reditura!*" "They never can return!" in short, such an union of sound and sense, as we rarely, if ever meet with in any author, ancient or modern. Our feelings are all alive—but the Poet, wisely dreading that our sympathy with the injured Queen might alienate our affections from his Hero, contrives immediately to awaken our fears for him, by telling us, that

"The King of Hearts
"Call'd for those Tarts,"—

We are all conscious of the fault of our Hero, and all tremble with him, for the punishment which the enraged Monarch may inflict;

"And beat the Knave—full sore!"

The fatal blow is struck! We cannot but rejoice that guilt is justly punished, though we sympathize with the guilty object of punishment. Here *Scriblerus*, who, by the bye, is very fond of making unnecessary alterations, proposes reading "*Score*" instead of "*sore*," meaning thereby to particularize, that the beating bestowed by this Monarch, consisted of *twenty* stripes. But this proceeds from his ignorance of the genius of our language, which does not admit of such an expression as "*full score*," but would require the insertion of the particle "*a*," which cannot be, on account of the metre. And this is another great artifice of the Poet: by leaving the quantity of beating indeterminate, he gives every reader the liberty to administer it, in exact proportion to the sum of indignation which he may have conceived against his Hero; that by thus amply satisfying their resentment, they may be the more easily reconciled to him afterwards. 142

"The King of Hearts
"Call'd for those Tarts,
"And beat the Knave full sore!"

Here ends the second part, or *middle* of the poem; in which we see the character, and exploits of the Hero, pourtrayed with the hand of a master.

Nothing now remains to be examined, but the third part, or *End*. In the *End*, it is a rule pretty well established, that the Work should draw towards a conclusion, which our Author manages thus.

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“The Knave of Hearts
“Brought back those Tarts.”

Here every thing is at length settled; the theft is compensated; the tarts restored to their right owner; and *Poetical Justice*, in every respect, strictly, and impartially administered.

We may observe, that there is nothing in which our Poet has better succeeded, than in keeping up an unremitted attention in his readers to the main instruments, the machinery of his poem, viz. The *Tarts*; insomuch, that the aforementioned *Scriblerus* has sagely observed, that "he can't tell, but he doesn't know, but the tarts may be reckoned the heroes of the Poem." *Scriblerus*, though a man of learning, and frequently right in his opinion, has here certainly hazarded a rash conjecture. His arguments are overthrown entirely by his great opponent, *Hiccius*, who concludes, by triumphantly asking, "Had the tarts been eaten, how could the Poet have compensated for the loss of his Heroes?"

We are now come to the *denouèment*, the setting all to rights: and our Poet, in the management of his *moral*, is certainly superior to his great ancient predecessors. The moral of their fables, if any they have, is so interwoven with the main body of their work, that in endeavouring to unravel it, we should tear the whole. *Our Author* has very properly preserved his whole and entire for the *end* of his poem, where he completes his *main design*, the *Reformation* of his Hero, thus,

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“And vow’d he’d steal no more.”

Having in the course of his work, shewn the bad effects arising from theft, he evidently means this last moral reflection, to operate with his readers as a gentle and polite dissuasive from stealing.

“The Knave of Hearts
“Brought back those Tarts,
“And vow’d he’d steal no more!”

Thus have I industriously gone through the several parts of this wonderful Work; and clearly proved it, in every one of these parts, and in all of them together, to be a *due and proper Epic Poem*; and to have as good a right to that title, from its adherence to prescribed rules, as any of the celebrated master-pieces of antiquity. And here I cannot help again lamenting, that, by not knowing the name of the Author, I am unable to twine our laurels together; and to transmit to posterity the mingled praises of Genius, and Judgment; of the Poet, and his commentator.

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Having some space left in this paper, I will now, with the permission of my readers of the *great world*, address myself more particularly to my fellow-citizens.

To them, the essay which I have here presented, will, I flatter myself, be peculiarly serviceable at this time; and I would earnestly recommend an attentive perusal of it, to all of them whose muses are engaged in compositions of the Epic kind.—I am very much afraid that I may run into the error, which I have myself pointed out, of becoming too *local*,—but where it is evidently intended for the good of my fellow citizens, it may, I hope, be now and then pardonable. At the present juncture, as many have applied for my assistance, I cannot find in my heart to refuse it them. Were I to attempt fully explaining, why, at the *present juncture*, I fear it would be vain. Would it not seem incredible to the Ladies, were I to tell them, that the period approaches, when upwards of a hundred *Epic Poems* will be exposed to public view, most of them nearly of equal length, and many of them nearly of equal merit, with the one which I have here taken into consideration; illustrated moreover with elegant etchings, designed either as *hieroglyphical* explanations of the subject, or as *practical puns* on the name of the author?—And yet in truth so it is,—and on this subject I wish to give a word of advice to my countrymen.

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Many of them have applied to me by letter, to assist them with designs for prefixing to their poems; and this I should very willingly have done, had those gentlemen been kind enough to subscribe their real names to their requests: whereas, all that I have received have been signed, *Tom Long*, *Philosophus*, *Philalethes*, and such like. I have

therefore been prevented from affording them the assistance I wished; and cannot help wondering, that the gentlemen did not consider, that it was impossible for me to provide *typical references* for feigned names; as, for ought I know, the person who signs himself *Tom Long* may not be four feet high; *Philosophus* may be possessed of a considerable share of folly; and *Philalethes* may be as arrant a liar as any in the kingdom.

It may not however be useless to offer some general reflections for all who may require them. It is not improbable, that, as the subject of 147
their poems is the *Restoration*, many of my fellow-citizens may choose to adorn their *title-pages* with the representation of His Majesty, Charles the Second, escaping the vigilance of his pursuers in the *Royal Oak*. There are some particularities generally observable in this picture, which I shall point out to them, lest they fall into similar errors. Though I am as far as any other Briton can be, from wishing to "curtail" his Majesty's Wig "of its fair proportion;" yet I have sometimes been apt to think it rather improper, to make the Wig, as is usually done, of larger dimensions than the tree in which it and his Majesty are concealed. It is a rule in Logic, and I believe may hold good in most other Sciences, that "*omne majus continet in se minus*," that "every thing larger can hold any thing that is less;" but I own, I never heard the contrary advanced or defended with any plausible arguments, viz. "that every little thing can hold one larger."
I therefore humbly propose, that there should be at least an edge of foliage round the outskirts of the said wig; and that its curls should not exceed in number the leaves of the tree. There is also another practice almost equally prevalent, of which I am sceptic enough to doubt the propriety. I own, I cannot think it by any means conducive 148
to the more effectual concealment of his Majesty, that there should be three Regal Crowns stuck on three different branches of the tree. Horace says indeed,

> ————*Pictoribus atque Poetis,*
> *Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.*
> *Painters and Poets our indulgence claim,*
> *Their daring equal, and their art the same.*—FRAN.

And this may be reckoned a very allowable *poetical licence*; inasmuch as it lets the spectator into the secret, *who is in the tree*. But it is apt to make him at the same time throw the accusation of negligence and want of penetration on the three dragoons, who are usually depicted on the foreground, cantering along very composedly, with serene countenances, erect persons, and drawn swords, very little longer than themselves.

11. Thomas Purney's *Discourse on the Pastoral* (1717).
12. Essays on the Stage, selected, with an Introduction by Joseph Wood Krutch.

Third Year (1948-1949)

13. Sir John Falstaff (pseud.), *The Theatre* (1720).
14. Edward Moore's *The Gamester*(1753).
15. John Oldmixon's *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter to Harley* (1712); and Arthur Mainwaring's *The British Academy* (1712).
16. Nevil Payne's *Fatal Jealousy* (1673).
17. Nicholas Rowe's *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespeare* (1709).
18. "Of Genius," in *The Occasional Paper*, Vol. III, No. 10 (1719); and Aaron Hill's Preface to *The Creation* (1720).

Fourth Year (1949-1950)

19. Susanna Centlivre's *The Busie Body* (1709).
20. Lewis Theobold's *Preface to The Works of Shakespeare* (1734).
21. *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela* (1754).
22. Samuel Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749) and Two *Rambler* papers (1750).
23. John Dryden's *His Majesties Declaration Defended* (1681).
24. Pierre Nicole's *An Essay on True and Apparent Beauty in Which from Settled Principles is Rendered the Grounds for Choosing and Rejecting Epigrams*, translated by J. V. Cunningham.

Fifth Year (1950-1951)

25. Thomas Baker's *The Fine Lady's Airs* (1709).
26. Charles Macklin's *The Man of the World* (1792).
27. Out of print.

> 27. Frances Reynolds' *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Taste, and of the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty, etc.* (1785).

28. John Evelyn's *An Apologie for the Royal Party* (1659); and *A Panegyric to Charles the Second* (1661).
29. Daniel Defoe's *A Vindication of the Press* (1718).
30. Essays on Taste from John Gilbert Cooper's *Letters Concerning Taste*, 3rd edition (1757), & John Armstrong's *Miscellanies* (1770).

Sixth Year (1951-1952)

31. Thomas Gray's *An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard* (1751); and *The Eton College Manuscript*.
32. Prefaces to Fiction; Georges de Scudéry's Preface to *Ibrahim* (1674), etc.
33. Henry Gally's *A Critical Essay* on Characteristic-Writings (1725).
34. Thomas Tyers' A Biographical Sketch of Dr. Samuel Johnson (1785).
35. James Boswell, Andrew Erskine, and George Dempster. *Critical Strictures on the New Tragedy of Elvira, Written by Mr. David Malloch* (1763).
36. Joseph Harris's *The City Bride* (1696).

Seventh Year (1952-1953)

37. Thomas Morrison's *A Pindarick Ode on Painting* (1767).
38. John Phillips' *A Satyr Against Hypocrites* (1655).
39. Thomas Warton's *A History of English Poetry*.
40. Edward Bysshe's *The Art of English Poetry* (1708).
41. Bernard Mandeville's "A Letter to Dion" (1732).
42. Prefaces to Four Seventeenth-Century Romances.

Eighth Year (1953-1954)

43. John Baillie's *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747).
44. Mathias Casimire Sarbiewski's *The Odes of Casimire,* Translated by G. Hils (1646).
45. John Robert Scott's *Dissertation on the Progress of the Fine Arts*.
46. Selections from Seventeenth Century Songbooks.
47. Contemporaries of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*.
48. Samuel Richardson's Introduction to *Pamela*.

Ninth Year (1954-1955)

49. Two St. Cecilia's Day Sermons (1696-1697).
50. Hervey Aston's *A Sermon Before the Sons of the Clergy* (1745).
51. Lewis Maidwell's *An Essay upon the Necessity and Excellency of Education* (1705).
52. Pappity Stampoy's *A Collection of Scotch Proverbs* (1663).
53. Urian Oakes' *The Soveraign Efficacy of Divine Providence* (1682).
54. Mary Davys' *Familiar Letters Betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* (1725).

Tenth Year (1955-1956)

55. Samuel Say's *An Essay on the Harmony, Variety, and Power of Numbers* (1745).
56. *Theologia Ruris, sive Schola & Scala Naturae* (1686).
57. Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741).
58. Eighteenth Century Book Illustrations.
59. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. I, Comedies, Part I.
60. Samuel Johnson's *Notes to Shakespeare*. Vol. I, Comedies, Part II.

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