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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DEFORMITIES OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, SELECTED FROM HIS WORKS ***

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

The text indicated quotes by repeating the open quote character on each new line. This has not been followed in this transcription.

The text used the 'long s', as is common pre-1800. This has been converted to a standard 's'.

A number of alterations have been made with the aim of correcting printing errors, while altering the text as little as possible. They are shown in the text with mouse-hover popups. No attempt has been made to alter spellings, or to modernise punctuation or grammar.

The alphabetical list on pages 71-72 has several entries out of order. The order has been kept from the text, rather than corrected.

On page 73 there is a footnote, "Vide Rambler.", with no footnote marker on the page. This footnote has been placed where it is in the first edition.

THE AUGUSTAN REPRINT SOCIETY

DEFORMITIES
OF
DR SAMUEL JOHNSON.

SELECTED FROM HIS WORKS.

(1782)

Introduction by
GWIN J. KOLB AND J. E. CONGLETON

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INTRODUCTION

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During the early part of his literary career, James Thomson Callender (1758-1803)¹ belittled Samuel Johnson; during the later, he denigrated Thomas Jefferson. Thus his reputation as a Scots master of scurrility and a vicious scandalmonger was earned on both sides of the Atlantic.

Probably because his anonymous pamphlets about Johnson's writings—the *Deformities of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, *Selected from his Works* (1782) and *A Critical Review of the Works of Dr. Samuel Johnson* (1783)—were not both ascribed to him until 1940, Callender first came into public notice in 1792, when in Scotland he published *The Political Progress of Britain, or An Impartial Account of the Principal Abuses in the Government of this Country from the Revolution in 1688*. For these intemperate remarks, though anonymous, he was indicted in 1793 for sedition. He fled from Edinburgh and made his way, "with some difficulty," soon thereafter to Philadelphia.

During the first several years in Philadelphia, he was reporter of the Congressional debates for the *Philadelphia Gazette* and did some editorial hackwork. He also published the third edition of the *Political Progress*, which was favorably noticed by Jefferson. In 1797 he published *The History of the United States for 1796: Including a Variety of Particulars Relative to the Federal Government Previous to that Period*, which brought the charge against Alexander Hamilton of "a connection with one James Reynolds for purpose of improper pecuniary speculation." Hamilton, after making preliminary preparations for a duel, came to the conclusion that he would have to sacrifice his private reputation to clear his public actions. So he calmly wrote, "My real crime is an amorous connection with his [Reynolds'] wife for a considerable time, with his privity and connivance, if not originally brought on by a combination between the husband and wife with the design to extort money from me."²

In *The Prospect before Us* (1800), written under the secret patronage of Jefferson, Callender assailed John Adams and lashed through Adams at his predecessor, Washington. Ending his diatribe, he said, "Take your choice, between Adams, war and beggary and Jefferson, peace and competency." Because of his remarks about Adams, he was tried under the Sedition Law, fined \$200, and sent to prison for nine months. While in prison he wrote two fiery anti-Federalist pamphlets, for which Jefferson advanced money under ambiguous terms. When

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Jefferson became President in 1801, he pardoned Callender (and all others convicted under the unwise Sedition Law), and Callender's fine was remitted. But Callender was not satisfied; he wanted Jefferson to appoint him postmaster of Richmond, Virginia. Jefferson refused, in spite of the tone of blackmail which now pervaded Callender's importunities. Soon he turned his political coat and began editing the most scurrilous anti-Jefferson paper in the country, the Richmond *Recorder*, to the infinite delight of the Federalists, who immediately circulated the periodical far and wide. Callender accused Jefferson of dishonesty and cowardice, but pure malice inspired his most injurious charges.

It is well known that the man, *whom it delighted the people to honor*, keeps ... as his concubine, one of his own slaves. Her name is Sally. The name of her eldest son is Tom. His features are said to bear a striking resemblance to those of the president himself.... By this wench Sally, our President has had several children. There is not an individual in the neighborhood of Charlottesville who does not believe the story; and not a few who *know it*.... Behold the favorite! the first born of republicanism! the pinnacle of all that is good and great! If the friends of Mr. Jefferson are convinced of his innocence, they will make an appeal.... If they rest in silence, or if they content themselves with resting upon a *general denial*, they cannot hope for credit. The allegation is of a nature too *black* to be suffered to remain in suspense. We should be glad to hear of its refutation. We give it to the world under the firmest belief that such a refutation *never can be made*. The AFRICAN VENUS is said to officiate as housekeeper at Montecello. When Mr. Jefferson has read this article, he will find leisure to estimate how much has been lost or gained by so many unprovoked attacks upon J. T. Callender!³

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Callender's ignominious end came on 17 July 1803. The *Gentleman's Magazine* declared (LXXIII [September 1803], 882) that he, "after experiencing many varieties of fortune as Iscariot Hackney ... drowned himself ... in James River": the coroner's jury, however, declared that his death was accidental, following intoxication.

There can be scant doubt that the *Deformities* and *A Critical Review*⁴ have a common origin. The paper, type, and makeup of the title-pages indicate that they were issued from the same press. In the "Introduction" to *A Critical Review*, the statement is made that "The author of the present trifle was last year induced to publish a few remarks on the writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson.... Like the former essay, these pages will endeavour to ascertain the genuine importance of Dr. Johnson's literary character" (pp. iii, v). In the text on page 50, the *Deformities* is cited in proprietary tones; and it is also mentioned in notes on pages 19, 37, 55, and 63. Moreover, the tell-tale words "deformities" and "deformity" appear (pp. 31, 43) in the text, and there is an advertisement for the *Deformities* on page 72.

An attempt to identify the author of the *Deformities* was made by George Steevens when it appeared. In a letter to William Cole dated 14 May 1782, he says that it was "written by a Club of Caledonian Wits."⁵ The *Critical Review* for August 1782 (LIV, 140) surmised that "the pamphlet ... is apparently written by some angry Caledonian, who, warmed with the deepest resentment for some real or supposed injury, gives vent to his indignation, and treats every part of Dr. Johnson's character with the utmost asperity." A month later, the *Gentleman's Magazine* (LII [September 1782], 439), "reciting the circumstance" of the origin of the *Deformities*, contended that it was a revenge pamphlet inspired by an anti-Ossian publication by William Shaw ("Nadir" Shaw, in the *Deformities*), who "'denied the existence of Gaelic poetry....'" "Dr. Johnson was his patron; and THEREFORE this Essayist, 'by fair and copious quotations from Dr. Johnson's ponderous performances, has attempted to illustrate'" his extraordinary defects. And in February 1783 (LXVIII, 185-186), the *Monthly Review* briefly noted:

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This seems to be the production of some ingenious but angry Scotchman, who has taken great pains to prove, what all the world knows, that there are many exceptionable passages in the writings of Dr. Johnson. There are, however, few spots in this literary luminary now pointed out that have not been discovered before. So that the present map must be considered rather as a monument of the delineator's malignity, than of his wit.—His *personalities* seem to indicate personal provocation; though perhaps it may be all pure *nationality*.

Though Boswell mentions the pamphlet and quotes a letter in which Johnson comments on it,⁶ neither he nor any of his editors before L. F. Powell try to identify the incensed author. In 1815 Robert Anderson said that the *Deformities*, "an invidious contrast to 'The Beauties of Johnson,'" is "the production of Mr. Thomson Callender, nephew of Thomson the poet."⁷

When the *Deformities* was catalogued in the Bodleian Library in 1834,⁸ it was attributed to John Callender of Craigforth. In *A Critical Review of the Works of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, the statement is made (p. 4) that "Mr. Callender of Craigforth ... observes" that "'Had the laborious Johnson been better acquainted with the oriental tongues, or had he even understood the first rudiments of the northern languages from which the English and Scots derive their origin, his bulky volumes had not presented to us the melancholy truth, that unwearied industry, devoid of settled principles, avails only to add one error to another.'" This latter blast, taken from the "Introduction" to Callender's *Two Ancient Scottish Poems, The Gaberlunzie Man and Christ's Kirk on the Green* (Edinburgh, 1782), may well have been the evidence that caused *A Critical Review* to be attributed to John Callender of Craigforth; then, because of the interconnections between it and the *Deformities* and because of their convincing similarity, the *Deformities* was also assigned to him. On the other hand, one is puzzled by the Bodleian's failure to accept the passage from John Callender in *A Critical Review* as conclusive evidence that he was not the author of that work.⁹

When the *Deformities* and *A Critical Review* were catalogued in the British Museum, in 1854 and 1862, they were likewise attributed to John Callender of Craigforth. In 1915 Courtney and Smith seemed to doubt that John Callender wrote them; for, they noticed, "strangely enough no mention of them is made by Robert Chambers in his memoir of Callender."¹⁰ The *Catalogue of Printed Books in the Edinburgh Library* (1918) assigns *A Critical Review* to John Callender; it does not list the *Deformities*. Arthur G. Kennedy, in *A Bibliography of Writings on the English Language* (1927), attributes the *Deformities* to John Callender; he lists the 1787 issue of *A Critical Review* as anonymous. In their *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature* (1926-1932), Halkett and Laing assign *A Critical Review* to John Callender on the authority of the British Museum; the *Deformities* is also assigned to him on the authority of a note by Chalmers in 1782.

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Finally, L. F. Powell, *primus editorum*, in his revision of G. B. Hill's edition of Boswell's *Life* (1934-1950), quoted from a letter by James Thomson Callender to John Stockdale, dated 4 October 1783, which says: "I will be greatly obliged to you, for delivering the remaining Copies of *Deformities* of Johnson to the bearer, and

sending me his Receipt for them." Dr. Powell thinks—rightly, we believe, when all the other evidence is taken into account—that this letter "shows" that Callender "was the author of the book."¹¹

Then in 1940, D. Nichol Smith, no doubt having followed the suspicion he and W. P. Courtney expressed in 1915, and having available the proof unearthed by Dr. Powell, attributed both items to J. T. Callender in the *CBEL* (II, 627), listing two editions of the *Deformities* in 1782 and two of *A Critical Review* in 1783. The British Museum *Catalogue* also now credits the same Scotsman with both works.

The information in Callender's letter to Stockdale, Anderson's identification, a fairly plausible reason that the *Deformities* was so long attributed to John Callender, the similarity of the styles and contents of the two pamphlets, the parallel circumstances of publication, the virtual acknowledgement of the *Deformities* in *A Critical Review*—all point to a safe conclusion that the two works were the creations of James Thomson Callender.

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Though students of Johnson have frequently noticed the bitter ridicule in the *Deformities* and *A Critical Review*, they (since the author of the pamphlets was unknown) have seldom,¹² if ever, detailed Callender's turbulent career in America. Similarly, students of American history have studied Callender's attacks on early American statesmen; but they have been completely unaware, it seems, that the pamphleteer who wrote them began his career by making fun of Samuel Johnson. Now that the authorship of these two early productions has been established, a study of them provides details that illuminate the foreground of Callender's career in America. Likewise, of course, the particulars of his activities in America illuminate the background of his career in Great Britain.

Near the conclusion of the *Deformities*, Callender relates the "circumstances which," as he says, "gave ... birth" to the work.

In 1778, Mr William Shaw published an Analysis of the Gaelic language. He quoted specimens of Gaelic poetry, and harangued on its beauties.... A few months ago, he printed a pamphlet. He traduced decent characters. He denied the existence of Gaelic poetry, and his name was echoed in the newspapers as a miracle of candour. Is there in the annals of Grubæan impudence any parallel to this?... This incomparable bookbuilder, who writes a dictionary before he can write grammar, had previously boasted what a harvest he would reap from English credulity. He was not deceived. The bait was caught.... Mr Shaw wants only money.... But better things might have been expected from the moral and majestic author of the Rambler. He must have seen the Analysis of the Gaelic language, for Shaw mentions him as the patron of that work. He must have seen the specimens of Celtic poetry there inserted. That he is likewise the patron of this poor scribble, no man, I suppose, will offer to deny. From this single circumstance, Dr Johnson stands convicted of *an illiberal intention to deceive*. Candour can hardly hesitate to sum up his character in the vulgar but expressive polysyllable [pp. 86-87].

Readily available facts support some of the central assertions in this rather heated description of the inception of the *Deformities*. Specifically, as readers of Boswell's *Life* may recall, Johnson must be considered a—if not the—principal patron of the Scotsman William Shaw's *Analysis of the Gaelic Language*: he wrote the official proposals for the work, he solicited subscribers to it, and he received from the grateful author a public acknowledgement (in the "Introduction") that "To the advice and encouragement of Dr. Johnson, the friend of letters and humanity, the public is indebted for these sheets."¹³ It is probable, too, that he examined the book at least cursorily¹⁴ and that in doing so he caught sight of one or more of the references to Ossian's poetry, perhaps including the "specimen" on pages 145-149. Moreover, in the pamphlet Callender mentions, entitled *An Enquiry into the Authenticity of the Poems Ascribed to Ossian* (1781), Shaw, setting out to demolish the arguments favoring the ostensible origins of the purported translations, accords (p. 2) Johnson pride of place in starting "objections" to the poems and quotes (pp. 6-12) approvingly first a lengthy passage from *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) and then Johnson's famous letter to James Macpherson. In addition, Boswell records Johnson's later assistance to Shaw in composing a reply to John Clark's pro-Ossian *Answer to Mr. Shaw's Inquiry* (1781).¹⁵ But to admit all this is scarcely to "convict" Johnson of a deliberate "intention to deceive." On the contrary, since by 1778 his scepticism regarding the Ossianic writings was widely known, his *Journey* having appeared three years earlier, it could be argued that his patronage of Shaw's *Analysis* revealed a degree of understanding and tolerance not always associated with his name.

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For the irate Callender, however, such "shameful" conduct demanded countermeasures—even by "a private individual, without interest or connections." The self-appointed champion both of "virtue" and also of "a world ... weary of" the culprit's "arrogant pedantry" and "officious malice," he hoped "to humble and reform" Johnson by "glean[ing] the tittle of" his "absurdities," which, Callender declares, illustrate, among other defects, Johnson's "prolixity," "corruptions of our language," "want of general learning," "antipathy to rival merit," "paralytick reasoning," "adherence to contradictions," "defiance of decency," and "contempt of truth" (pp. 87-88).

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After garnering the supposed proofs of these multitudinous "deformities," Callender published his book at Edinburgh (where it was sold by "W. Creech") in the early part of 1782.¹⁶ The pamphlet, priced at a shilling and consisting of a two-page introduction and sixty-three pages of text, was also sold at London by "T. Longman, and J. Stockdale."¹⁷ Towards the end of the same year (probably in December),¹⁸ encouraged by the initial "reception," he brought out a second, enlarged edition of the work, which he had "perused ... with honest attention, from the first line to the last, that he might endeavour to supply its deficiencies, and to correct its errors" (p. vi). Selling for "eighteen pence"¹⁹ and appearing at both Edinburgh and London, this edition includes a separate preface and comes to a total of eighty-nine pages. We have chosen it as the text for the present reproduction of the *Deformities*.

Callender's very limited powers of ridicule and exposure reside largely in his amassment of material, not in his ability to arrange and synthesize that material. Indeed, one looks in vain at the work for anything more than the most obvious and elementary form of organization. The Preface begins with brief general remarks on "man's" incapacity to "reform" his "follies" and the "prejudice" and "good nature" of the "public" respecting this human frailty, offers "Dr. Samuel Johnson" as a capital example of the general observation, proceeds to "enquire" how "such a man crawled to the summit of classical reputation," and concludes, rather abruptly, with a short postscript on the second edition of the *Deformities* itself. The Introduction stresses the enormous differences that, according to Callender, often exist between a man's words and deeds—particularly, so the reader is told repeatedly if a bit obliquely, between Johnson's writings (especially the *Dictionary*) and actions.

The body of the pamphlet may be divided into five unequal parts. In the first (pp. 11-15), Callender launches a freewheeling attack on Johnson, accusing him of "ill-nature," a revengeful spirit, peevishness, and insolence (among other lamentable traits), and announces his chosen mode of chastisement: "From the Doctor's volumes I am to select some passages, illustrate them with a few observations, and submit them to the reader's opinion." In the second (pp. 15-47), he presents a disconnected string of quotations drawn from a number of Johnson's works and embellished with caustic strictures on their creator's presumed moral, intellectual, and literary shortcomings. In the third and longest section (pp. 47-82), separated from the second by a small printer's device, Callender, after "quoting [pp. 47-51] the remarks already made by a judicious friend,²⁰ on this subject," begins a series of disjointed, angry comments on the supposed weaknesses of "the Doctor's English Dictionary." Thirty-one pages later, having vented his ire on the choice and definitions of hundreds of words in the *Dictionary*, he "take[s] leave" of the "enormous compilation," stigmatized as "perhaps ... the strangest farrago which pedantry ever produced," and "return[s]" briefly, in part four (pp. 82-86; set off from part three by another small device), "to the rest of" Johnson's publications, extracts from which he again employs as a means of exhibiting his subject's supposed faults. Finally, he brings the rambling essay to a close (pp. 86-89) by recounting its origins, repeating his principal charges against Johnson, and reasserting his hopes for the Doctor's "reformation."

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Although it contains some lively reading (with the author himself being the center of our interest about as often as his subject) and should certainly be readily accessible to students of eighteenth-century literature, the *Deformities* merits only restricted attention as a valid critique of Johnson's character and writings. Ostensibly employing, by and large, an inductive argument, it professes to demonstrate the pronounced ethical and mental flaws of the Great Cham, who enjoys, so Callender freely confesses, an unrivalled reputation among his contemporaries for his achievements in letters and lexicography. Besides the deplorable qualities mentioned above and excluding for the moment a consideration of those most evident in the *Dictionary*, Johnson's faults are alleged to include dishonesty, pride, vulgarity, slovenliness, dullness, contempt for other persons, prejudice (especially against the Scots), ingratitude, "gross expressions," turgid language, and, above all, ignorance, "nonsense," and countless inconsistencies. To this sweeping broadside of invective, the modern reader must respond with steady, sometimes amused, sometimes annoyed disbelief. He recognizes, to be sure, certain points of likeness between Callender's abusive imputations and (say) Boswell's highly laudatory portrait. But the former's accusations are so irresponsible and intemperate, so obviously the outburst of a quivering Scotsman's intense indignation, and the evidence adduced is so often wrenched from its context and misapplied, that the reader inevitably finds himself a partisan of Johnson even when he might be occasionally inclined to admit the tenability of Callender's criticism.

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Among Johnson's works, the *Dictionary*, as already indicated, bears the brunt of Callender's heaviest, most sustained assault. Its principal "deformities," to judge from the amount of space devoted to them, occur in its definitions and word-list. In Callender's opinion, "most of the definitions ... may be divided into three classes; the erroneous, oenigmatical, and superfluous" (p. 58); many of them explicate "indecent," "blackguard" expressions (pp. 54, 74); and some, exemplifying the lexicographer's "political tenets," are downright "seditious and impudent" (p. 13). Of the word-list itself, probably "two thousand" members, comprising a "profusion of trash," are "not to be found at all in any other book" (p. 70).

A short introduction is scarcely the place to examine the presumed existence of these defects in the *Dictionary*. Nevertheless, a few facts, based on a random sampling of passages in the *Deformities*, may provide a partial historical perspective for Callender's censures. Of the group of 210 words on pages 71-72 whose real currency he doubts or denies, 190 also appear in the second edition (1736) of Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum*, a copy of which Johnson interleaved and used as he compiled his own *Dictionary*. Equally revealing, the *OED* includes 204 of the 210, the second edition of *Webster's International* 158, and the third edition 108. Again, of the 65 words on pages 51-53 whose definitions Callender objects to, 48 also appear, with comparable explanations, in Bailey's dictionary. Finally, an unsystematic comparison of Bailey's and Johnson's works reveals a much higher incidence of so-called "indecent"—at least sexual—terms in the former than in the latter. The author of the *Deformities*, it is quite obvious, knew what he disliked about the *Dictionary*; when pressing his strictures against the book, however, as when mounting his other attacks on Johnson, his violent passions rode roughshod over his faint pretensions to fairness and objectivity.

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NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

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1. The *DNB* and the *DAB* both contain accounts of Callender (complete, of course, with lists of their primary sources) to which we are indebted for various details in our own sketch of his life. However, neither mentions his pamphlets on Johnson.
2. Quoted from Hamilton by David Loth in *Alexander Hamilton: Portrait of a Prodigy* (New York, 1939), p. 249.
3. From the Richmond *Recorder* as printed in the New York *Evening Post*, 10 September 1802; quoted from *Jefferson Reader*, ed. Francis Coleman Rosenberger (New York, 1953), pp. 109-111.
4. There were apparently three editions of *A Critical Review*: (1) Edinburgh: Printed for J. Dickson, and W. Creech, 1783. (2) Second Edition. London. Printed for the Author, and sold by T. Cadell and J. Stockdale; at Edinburgh, by J. Dickson and W. Creech, 1783. (3) London. Printed for R. Rusted, 1787. We are indebted to the Pierpont Morgan Library for a photographic reproduction of its copy of the first edition of the pamphlet.
5. Brit. Mus. Addit. MS 6401, f. 175 b. Part of this letter is quoted by L. F. Powell in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, IV, 499 (cited hereafter as *Life*).
6. Writing to Boswell on 28 March 1782, Johnson remarks: "The Beauties of Johnson are said to have got money to the collector; if the 'Deformities' have the same success, I shall be still a more extensive benefactor" (*The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman [Oxford, 1952], II, 475).

7. *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. With Critical Observations on His Works* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh, 1815), p. 231. Anderson is apparently incorrect in saying that Callender was Thomson's nephew.
8. There is apparently no copy of *A Critical Review* in the Bodleian.
9. In his Introduction to a recent reprint (New York, 1965) of John Rae's *Life of Adam Smith* (1895), Jacob Viner (who expresses his indebtedness to "Herman W. Liebert for bringing *A Critical Review* to my attention and for warning me that J. T. Callender, its author, was probably also the author of *Deformities of Dr. Samuel Johnson*") concludes that the quotation from John Callender in *A Critical Review* is sufficient "to acquit John Callender of any responsibility for authorship of either *Deformities of Samuel Johnson* or *A Critical Review*" (p. 68; see also pp. 62-69).
10. William P. Courtney and D. Nichol Smith, *A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson* (Oxford, 1915; reissued with facsimiles, 1925), p. 136.
11. *Life*, IV, 499. Callender's letter itself, reproduced in the *R. B. Adam Library* (III, 48), is now in the Hyde Collection. Dr. Powell, like Robert Anderson, says that James Thomson Callender was a nephew of the poet James Thomson, and gives the *DNB* as the source of his information.
12. In 1962, one of the present writers, J. E. Congleton, published an article on "James Thomson Callender, Johnson and Jefferson" (*Johnsonian Studies* [Cairo, 1962], pp. 161-172) which forms the basis of a part of the present introduction.
13. *Life*, III, 106, 107, 214, 488.
14. *Ibid.*, III, 106.
15. *Ibid.*, IV, 252-253, 526.
16. The work appeared well before 28 March 1782 when Johnson referred to it in the letter of Boswell cited above in note 6. In the *Life* (IV, 148), Boswell remarks that he had previously "informed" Johnson "that as 'The Beauties of Johnson' had been published in London, some obscure scribbler had published at Edinburgh, what he called 'The Deformities of Johnson.'"
17. On p. 63, Callender calls the work "a shilling pamphlet." We are grateful to the Pierpont Morgan Library for a photographic reproduction of its copy of the first edition of the *Deformities*.
18. Since its Preface is dated 21 November 1782, the second edition was presumably published after that time but before the beginning of 1783.
19. At the end of the second edition, Callender declares: "To collect every particle of *inanity* which may be found in our *patriot's* works is infinitely beyond the limits of an eighteenth-century pamphlet" (p. 88).
20. In a footnote on p. 51, Callender tells us that the "remarks" of the "judicious friend" appear in No. 12 of the *Weekly Mirror*, a periodical which, according to the *CBEL* (II, 665, 685), was published at Edinburgh from 22 September 1780 through 23 March 1781, for a total of 26 numbers; the editor was apparently James Tytler, the publisher J. Mennons.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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DEFORMITIES

O F

DR SAMUEL JOHNSON.

SELECTED FROM HIS WORKS.

Nihil rerum mortalium tam instabile ac fluxum est, quam fama—TACITUS.

The diversion of *baiting* an AUTHOR has the sanction of all ages and nations, and is more lawful than the sport of teizing other *animals* because for the most part HE comes voluntarily to the stake.

P R E F A C E

(iii)

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Man is endowed with sagacity sufficient to discover his errors, but seldom has fortitude to forsake them. Hence it arises that even the weakest of the species can point out the follies of his companions, and fancies that he can reform his own. We are amazed that a being like ourselves should thus deliberately act below the dignity of reason, but we forget that our own conduct may also be reviewed with contempt and pity.

The world is buried in prejudice: Every department of knowledge is deeply infected by its fatal poison. Thus we frequently respect or reprobate a book without a perusal, merely on account of the Author's name. Not one in ten thousand of his panegyrist hath ever comprehended the system of Newton.—What then is the value of *their* approbation? The public have long heard that a late English Dictionary is a most masterly performance; but is there a single man in England who ever read it half through? No. The school-boy imagines that it is above his capacity: The man of letters feels it to be below his; but being considered as a fashionable decoration in a closet of books, it is bought without the least chance of being perused, and WE (for the *first* time to be sure) have been admiring we know not what.

However as the variety of our sentiments is without end, it often happens, that while a philosopher is celebrated by one part of his readers, he is despised by some of the rest. Almost all the great authors of the present age have been more bitterly reviled than any other subjects of England, the Ministry excepted. But in a matter so frivolous as the merit of a book, the public are seldom guilty of gross injustice. Indeed, when an acute historian continues, in contempt of his own conviction, to persist in a falsehood, merely because he hath once affirmed it—when an elegant poet, in search of sublimity, soars, or rather sinks beyond the kenn of common sense^[1]—when an astronomer treats his antagonist like a felon—when an advocate of piety impregnates his pages with slander, scurrility, and treason—then the world may be pardoned though they abate something of their veneration for the dignity of the learned.

(iv)

We can hardly produce a stronger evidence of the prejudice, and the good nature of the public, than their indulgence to the foibles of Dr Samuel Johnson; nor a stronger evidence of the force of self-conceit, than that disdain of admonition which forms the capital feature in his character. He seems to fancy that his opinions cannot be disputed; and many of his admirers acquiesce in his idea; yet his volumes are of no great value; his personal appearance cannot much recommend him; his conversation would shock the rudest savage. His ignorance, his misconduct, and his success, are a striking proof that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Let us enquire by what singular series of accidents, such a man crawled to the summit of classical reputation?

Most of his verses were among his early productions, and they merit abundant praise. His account of Savage compelled our approbation, and discovered a species of excellence but very little known in the annals of English literature. The force of language and of thought which he displayed in the Rambler, extended his reputation, and atoned for his numerous imperfections. He had by this time engaged to write an English Dictionary. Wise men are known by their work, says the Proverb. After many years he produced a performance of which I shall only say what can easily be proved, that few books are so unworthy of the title which they bear, and so void of every thing intellectual.

(v)

But Dr Johnson's credit was supported by something very different from intrinsic merit. As he was not worth a shilling, his work was printed and patronized by a phalanx of booksellers; and we can have no doubt that much of his success was owing to their vigorous but interested exertions. He had likewise other assistance, which would have been more than sufficient to support the reputation of an ordinary writer. He was protected by Mr. Garrick, the darling of mankind. England herself never produced a more generous friend: And though he seldom wrote lessons of morality, nothing could exceed the clearness of his understanding, but the benevolence of his heart. By him, it is probable, Dr Johnson was introduced to the late Earl of Chesterfield; a Minister, a man of letters, and a friend to merit. His Lordship was persuaded to celebrate, by anticipation, the merits of the Doctor's Dictionary^[2], and his condescension is said to have been repaid by the most ungrateful insolence. Of these two illustrious men it may almost be affirmed that their influence was universal, and when supported by the weight of the booksellers, opposition sunk before it. The Doctor soon after received a pension from the most unfortunate of all Statesmen, a Statesman whom North Britons ought to mention as seldom as possible, and his

name acquired additional splendour from the dignity of Independence.

Since that period his reputation, or at least his popularity, has been rather on the decline. His edition of Shakespeare was with difficulty forced upon the world by every artifice of trade. His political pieces have long since insured the detestation of his countrymen, a few individuals excepted. His Tour, considered as a whole, is a ridiculous performance. His lives of English Poets abound with judicious observations; but the great misfortune is, that our historian can very seldom conceal the narrowness of his soul. (vi)

Of the present trifle the Author has very little to say. The reception which it at first met with has induced him to risk a second edition. He has perused it with honest attention, from the first line to the last, that he might endeavour to supply its deficiencies, and to correct its errors. In the execution of this task, he has frequently had occasion to remark, that it is more easy to demolish a palace than to erect a cottage.

EDINBURGH,
Nov. 21, 1782. }

INTRODUCTION.

When a boy peruses a book with pleasure, his admiration riseth immediately from the work to its author. His fancy fondly ranks his favourite with the wise, and the virtuous. He glows with a lover's impatience, to reach the presence of this *superior being*, to drink of science at the fountain-head, to complete his ideas at once, and riot in all the luxuries of learning. (vii)

The novice unhappily presumes, that men who command the passions of others cannot be slaves to their own: That a historian must feel the worth of justice and tenderness, while he tells us, how kings and conquerors are commonly the burden and the curse of society: That an assertor of public freedom will never become the dupe of flattery, and the pimp of oppression: That the founder of a system cannot want words to explain it: *That* the compiler of a *dictionary* has at least a common degree of knowledge: *That* an inventor of *new terms* can tell what they mean: *That* he, who refines and fixes the language of empires, is able to converse, without the pertness of a pedant, or the vulgarity of a porter: *That* a preacher of morality will blush to persist in vindictive, deliberate, and detected falsehoods: *That* he who totters on the brink of eternity will speak with caution and humanity of the dead: And *that* a traveller, who pretends to veracity, dares not avow contradictions.

But in learning, as in life, much of our happiness flows from deception. Ignorance, the parent of wonder, is often the parent of esteem and love. While devouring Horace we venerate the Deserter of Brutus, and the Slave of Cæsar. Transported by his sublime eloquence, the reader of Cicero forgets that Cicero himself was a plagiarist and a coward: That Rome was but a den of robbers: That Cataline resembled the rest; and that this rebel was only revenging the blood of butchered nations, of Samnium, of Epirus, of Carthage, and of—HANNIBAL. (viii)

'The laurels which human praise confers are withered and blasted by the unworthiness of those who wear them.' There is often a curious contrast between an author and his books. The mildest, the politest, the wisest, and the most *worthy* man alive, pens five hundred pages to display the pleasures of friendship and the beauties of benevolence; but alas! he is a theorist only, for his sympathy never cost him a shilling. A party-tool talks of public spirit. A pedant commands our tears. A pensioner inveighs against pensions; and a bankrupt preaches public œconomy. The philosopher quotes Horace, while he defrauds his valet. A mimick of Richardson, is a domestic tyrant: A Sydenham, the rendezvous of diseases: A declaimer against envy, of all men the most invidious. The satirist has not a reformer's virtues. The poet of love and friendship is without a mistress, or a friend; while a time-server celebrates the valour of heroes, and exults in the *freedom* of England. Like Penelope, most writers employ part of their time to undo the labours of the rest. Judging by their lives one would think it were their chief study to render learning ridiculous. We lose all respect for teachers, who, when the lesson is ended, are 'no wiser or better than common men.' To be convinced that books are trifles, let us only remark how little good they do, and how little those, who love them, love each other. The monopolists of literary fame, for the most part, regard a rival as an enemy. Their mutual hostilities, like those of aquatick animals, are unavoidable and constant; and their voracity differs from that of the shark, but as a half-devoured carcass, from a murdered reputation. The existence of many books depends on the ruin of some of the rest; yet, with our *English Dictionary*, a few *immortal* compositions are to live unwounded by the shafts of envy, and to descend in a torrent of applause from one century to another. A thousand of their critics will exist and be forgotten; a thousand of their imitators will sink into contempt; but THEY shall defy the force of time; continue to flourish thro' every *fashion* of philosophy, and, like Egyptian pyramids, perish but in the ruins of the globe. (ix)

In the number of men who dishonour their own genius, ought to be ranked Dr Samuel Johnson; for his abilities and learning are not accompanied by candour and generosity. His life of Pomfret concludes with this maxim, that 'he who pleases many, must have merit;' yet, in defiance of his own rule, the Doctor has, a thousand times, attempted to prove, that they who please many, have *no* merit. His invidious and revengeful remark on Chesterfield, would have disgraced any other man. He said, and nobody but himself would have said it, that Churchill was a shallow fellow. And he once told some of his admirers, that SWIFT was a *shallow*, a *very shallow* fellow: reminding us of the Lilliputian who drew *his* bow to Gulliver^[3]. For the memory of this man, who may be classed with Cato and Phocion, the Doctor feels no tenderness or respect. And for that^[4], and other critical blasphemies, he has undergone innumerable floggings. No writer of this nation has made more noise. None has discovered more contempt for other men's reputations, or more confidence in his own. I would humbly submit a few hints for his improvement, if he be not 'too old to learn.' And, whatever freedoms I take, the Doctor himself may be quoted as a precedent for insolent invective, and brutal reproach. He has told us^[5], that 'the two lowest of all human beings are, a scribbler for a party, and a commissioner of excise.' This very man was himself the hired scribbler of a party; and why should a commissioner of excise be one of the meanest of mankind? In the preface to his octavo Dictionary, the Doctor affirms, that, 'by the labours of all his predecessors, not even the *lowest* expectation can be gratified.' The author of a revival of Shakespeare^[6] attacks (he says) with '*gloomy malignity*, as if he were dragging to justice an assassin or incendiary. He bites like a viper, and would be glad to leave inflammations and gangrene behind him.' For this shocking language, which could have been answered by nothing but a blow, the *primum mobile*, perhaps, was, that the critic had dedicated his book to Lord Kaims, (a Scotsman, and another very *shallow* fellow) 'as the truest judge, and most intelligent admirer of Shakespeare.'

His treatment of Colley Cibber is, if possible, worse. That great ornament of the stage was a man of genius, at least equal to Dr Johnson—but they had a quarrel, and though Cibber has been more than twenty years buried, the Doctor, in his life of Pope, studies to revenge it. His expressions are gross. 'In the Dunciad, among other *worthless* scribblers he (Pope) had mentioned *Cibber*. The dishonour of being shewn as *Cibber's* antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. *Cibber* had nothing to lose—The shafts of satire were directed in vain against *Cibber*, being repelled by the impenetrable impudence,' &c.^[7] We have been deafened about the Doctor's private virtues; of which these passages are a very poor evidence.

It is believed by some, that Dr Johnson's *admirable* Dictionary is the most capital monument of human genius; that the studies of Archimedes and Newton are but like a feather in the scale with this amazing work; that he has given our language a stability, which, without him, it had never known; that he has performed alone, what, in other nations, whole academies fail to perform; and that as the fruit of *his* learning and sagacity, our compositions will be classical and immortal. This may be true; but the book displays many proofs of his *ill-nature*, and evinces what I want to insist on, viz. that *he who despises politeness cannot deserve it*. For his seditious and impudent definitions^[8] he would, in Queen Anne's reign, have had a fair chance of mounting the pillory. Hume, Smith, and Chesterfield may be quoted to prove, that Walpole and Excise were improper objects of execration; but an *emanation* of royal munificence has, of late, relaxed the Doctor's *frigorific* virtue; and, in his *False Alarm*, he affirms, that our government approaches nearer to perfection, *than any other that fiction has feigned, or history recorded*. This is going pretty far; but the peevish, though *incorruptible* patriot, proceeds a great deal farther. His political pieces have great elegance and wit; yet, if the tenth part of what he advances in them be true, his countrymen are a mob of ignorant, ungrateful, rebellious ruffians. Every member in Opposition is a fool, a firebrand, a monster; worse, if that were possible, than Ravillac, Hambden, or Milton^[9]. Here is a short specimen:

'On the original contrivers of mischief let an insulted nation pour out its vengeance. With whatever design they have inflamed this pernicious contest, they are themselves equally detestable. If they wish success to the colonies, they are TRAITORS to this country; if they wish their defeat, they are TRAITORS at once to America and England. To them (Mess. Burke & Co.) and them only, must be imputed the interruption of commerce, and the miseries of war, the sorrow of those who shall be ruined, and the blood of those that shall fall^[10].'

From the Doctor's volumes I am to select some passages, illustrate them with a few observations, and submit them to the reader's opinion. These pages aim at *perspicacity*. They are ambitious to record TRUTH.

'He that writes the life of another, is either his friend or his enemy, and wishes either to exalt his praise, or aggravate his infamy^[11].' The Doctor betrays a degree of inconsistency incompatible with his reputed abilities. After such a confession, what have we to hope for in *his* lives of English poets?

Having thus denied veracity both to Plutarch and *himself*, this Idler, in the very next page, leaps at once from the wildest scepticism to the wildest credulity. The paragraph is too long for insertion; but the tenor of it is, that 'a man's account of himself, left behind him unpublished, may be *depended on*;' because, 'by self-love all have been so often betrayed, *that* (now for the strangest flight of nonsense) all are on the watch against its artifices.'

In his Dictionary, *temperance* is defined to be '*moderation opposed to gluttony and drunkenness*.'

And he has since defined 'sobriety or temperance' to be '*nothing* but the forbearance of *pleasure*^[12].' This maxim needs no comment.

'A man will, in the hour of darkness and fatigue, be content to leave behind him every thing but *himself*^[13].' Here the Doctor supposes, that a person can leave *himself* behind *himself*. When the reader examines the passage in the original, he will be convinced, that this cannot be an error of the press only. Had the Rambler, when he crossed Tweed, left behind him his pride, his indolence, and his vulgarity, he would have returned a much wiser, better, and happier man than he did. (16)

Form, he explains to be, 'the external appearance of any thing, shape;' but, when speaking of hills in the North of Scotland, he says, 'the appearance is that of matter incapable of *FORM*^[14]!' He has seen *matter*; not only destitute, but incapable of *shape*. He has seen an *appearance* which is incapable of *external* appearance. And yet, in the same book, he seems to regret the weakness of his vision.

Beauty is 'that assemblage of graces which pleases the eye.' But, in the Idler^[15], he displays his true idea of beauty; and it is a very lame piece of philosophy. Judge from a few samples: 'If a man, born blind, was to recover his sight, and the most beautiful woman was to be brought before him, he could not determine whether she was handsome or not. Nor if the most handsome and most deformed were produced, could he any better determine to which he should give the preference, having seen only these two.' And again, 'as we are then more accustomed to beauty than deformity, we may conclude *that* to be the reason why we approve and admire it.' Moreover, 'though habit and custom cannot be said to be the cause^[16] of beauty, *IT* is certainly the cause of our liking it^[17]. I have no doubt, but that, if we were more used to deformity than beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as if the whole world should agree that *yes* and *no* should change their meanings, *yes* would then deny, and *no* would affirm.' This is such a perfection of nonsense, that the reader will, perhaps, think it a forgery; but he will find it *verbatim et literatim*, and the whole number is in the same stile. (17)

'Swift in his *petty* treatise on the English language, allows that new words *must* sometimes be introduced, but proposes that *none* should be suffered to become obsolete^[18].' The Doctor has not given a fair quotation from Swift. One would imagine that Swift had proposed to retain every word which is to be found in any of our popular authors, but he neither said nor meant any such thing. His words are these: 'They' (the members of the proposed society) 'will find many words *that deserve to be utterly thrown out of our language!*' And the Dean says nothing afterwards which infers a contradiction^[19].

In his account of Lyttleton, the Doctor's good nature is evident. He speaks not a word as to the merit of the history of Henry II. but—'It was published with such anxiety as only *vanity* can dictate.' We are next entertained with a page of dirty anecdotes concerning its publication, which the Doctor seems to have picked up from some printer's journeyman. 'The Persian Letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius *always* catches when he enters the world, and *always* suffers to cool as he passes forward.' Of the admired monody to the memory of Lady Lyttleton, we are told only that it is *long*. 'His dialogues of the dead were very eagerly read, tho' the production rather, as it seems of leisure than of study, rather effusions than compositions. The names of his persons too often enable the reader to anticipate their conversation; and when they have met, they too often part without a conclusion.' These remarks apply with peculiar justice to Dr Johnson's dictionary, for that work is an *effusion* rather than a *composition*. His reader is for the most part able to anticipate his definitions, and they generally end without conclusion. Lord Lyttleton's poems 'have *nothing* to be *despised* and *little* to be *admired*.' But here, as usual, the Doctor contradicts himself, and in the very next line 'of his Progress of Love, *it is sufficient blame to say* that it is pastoral. His blank verse in Blenheim has neither much force, nor much elegance. His little performances, whether songs or epigrams, are sometimes spritely, and sometimes *insipid*—and of course *despicable*. The candid and accurate author of the Rambler has forgot the existence of that beautiful blossom of sensibility, that pure effusion of friendship, the prologue to Coriolanus. (18)

The life of Dr Young has been written by a lawyer, who conveys the meanest thoughts in the meanest language. His stile is dry, stiff, grovelling, and impure. His anecdotes and ideas, are evidently the cud of Dr Johnson's conversation. He continues in the same fretful tone from the first line to the last. He is at once most contemptuous and contemptible. Whatever he says is insipid or disgusting. He is the bad imitator of a bad original; and an honest man cannot peruse his libel without indignation. He steps out of his way to remind us of Milton's *corporal correction*, a story fabricated, as is well known, by his Employer. His ignorance has already been illustrated in a periodical pamphlet. Johnson himself, with all his imperfections, is often as far superior to this unhappy penman, as the author of the Night-Thoughts is superior to Johnson. And yet this critical assassin, this literary jackall, is celebrated by the Doctor^[20]. *Pares cum paribus facile congregantur*. (19)

'Dryden's poem on the death of Mrs Killigrew is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. All the stanzas, indeed, are not equal.' He proceeds to compare it with an imperial crown, &c. But, a little after, 'the ode on St Cecilia's day is allowed *to stand without a rival*^[21].' These are his identical words; and his admirers may reconcile them if they can. Indeed, he seems ashamed of his own inconsistency,

and is ready to relapse; but thinks, upon the whole, that Alexander's Feast 'may, *perhaps*, be pronounced superior to the ode on Killigrew.' Dr Johnson is said to be the greatest critic of his age; yet the verses on Mrs Killigrew are beneath all criticism; and, perhaps, no person ever read them through, except their author, and himself.

Dryden's fable 'of the Cock and Fox seems hardly worth the labour of *rejuvenescence*^[22].' Some *narcotic* seems to have *refrigerated* the red liquor which circulates in the Doctor's veins^[23], and to have *hebetated* and *obtunded* his powers of *excogitation*^[24], for elegance and wit never met more happily than here. Peruse only the first page of this poem, and then judge. The nonsense which has been written by critics is, in quantity and absurdity, beyond all conception. Perhaps his admirers may answer, that my remark is but the *ramification* of envy, the *intumescence* of ill-nature, the *exacerbation* of 'gloomy malignity.' However, it would not be amiss to commit that page of *inanity* to the power of *cremation*; and let not his fondest idolaters confide in its *indiscernibility*. In painting the sentiments and the scenes of common life, to write English which Englishmen cannot read, is a degree of insolence hardly known till now, and seems to be nothing but the poor refuge of pedantic dullness. (20)

His Abyssinian tale hath many beauties, yet the characters are insipid, the narrative ridiculous, the moral invisible, and the reader disappointed. '*Intercepting interruptions* and *volant animals*' are above common comprehension. The Newtonian system had reached the happy valley; for its inhabitants talk of the earth's *attraction* and the body's *gravity*^[25]. To tell a tale is not the Doctor's most happy talent; he can hardly be proud of his success in *that* species of fiction.

Speaking of Scotland, he says, 'The variety of sun and shade is here^[26] utterly unknown. There is no tree for either shelter or timber. The oak and the thorn *is* equally a stranger. They have neither wood for palisades, nor thorns for hedges. A tree may be shown in Scotland as a horse in Venice^[27].' An *English* reader may, perhaps, require to be told, that there are thousands of trees of all ages and dimensions, within a mile of Edinburgh; that there are numerous and thriving plantations in Fife; and that, as some of them overshadow part of the post-road to St Andrew's, the Doctor must have been blinder than darkness, if he did not see them. But why would any man travel at all, who is determined to believe nothing which he *hears*, and who, at the same time, cannot *see* six inches beyond his nose? (21)

'We are not very sure that the bull is ever *without horns*, though we have been told that such bulls there are^[28].' Who are the *we* he refers to? and who but the Doctor ever started so weak a question? His ignorance is below ridicule. It is true, that, in England, bulls which *want* horns are less numerous than husbands who *have* them; yet such bulls are always to be found. For the performance which contains this profound remark, this *agglomerated ramification of torpid imbecility*, be it known, that *we* have paid six shillings, which verifies the proverb, that *a fool and his money are soon parted*.

'We found a small church, clean to a degree unknown in any other part of Scotland^[29]!' Here the fact *may* be true; but Dr Johnson *must* be ignorant whether it is or not. It is certain, that some buildings of that kind in Edinburgh, are no high specimens of national taste; but, if the Rambler would insinuate that this want of elegance is general, we must impeach his veracity; we must remind him, that there are gloomy, dirty, and unwholesome cathedrals in *both* countries; and we must lament, that, when entering Scotland, the Doctor *left every thing behind him but HIMSELF*.

'Suspicion has been always considered, when it exceeds the common measure, as a token of depravity and corruption; and a Greek writer has laid it down as a standing maxim, that *he who believes not the oath of another, knows himself to be perjured*.—Suspicion is, indeed, a temper so uneasy and restless, that it is very justly appointed the concomitant of guilt. Suspicion is not less an enemy to virtue than to happiness. He that is already corrupt, is naturally suspicious, and he that becomes suspicious, will quickly be corrupt^[30].' This cannot always be true; but, if it were, the Rambler is by far the greatest miscreant who ever infested society. Speaking of Scotland, he says, 'I know not whether I found man or woman whom I interrogated concerning payments of money, that could surmount the illiberal desire of *deceiving me*, by representing every thing as dearer than it is.—The Scot must be a sturdy moralist who does not love Scotland better than truth^[31].' Apply the Doctor's maxims to his own conduct, and then judge of his honesty. He adds a little after: 'The civility and respect which we found at every place, it is *ungrateful* to omit, and tedious to repeat^[32].' He should not have spoke of ingratitude. The picture grows quite shocking. (22)

'How they lived without kail, it is not easy to guess. They cultivate hardly any other plant for common tables; and, when they had not kail, *they probably had NOTHING*^[33].' As the word *kail* is not to be found in his Dictionary, an English reader will be at a loss to find out what he means. His conjecture is ridiculous; and here a *new* contradiction must be swallowed by the Doctor's believers; for, if OATS be 'a grain, which, in England, is generally given to horses, but, in Scotland, *supports* the people^[34],' in that case, it is easy to guess how they lived without *kail*. Any thing else had surely been better than to fill up his heavy folios with such peevish nonsense.

In his life of Butler, the Doctor has confined his remarks to *Hudibras*, though the rest of that author's works, both in prose and verse, merit equal attention. What are we to think of this invidious and culpable omission? *Hudibras* itself would, perhaps, have been omitted, if the book had not tended to ridicule dissenters; for no man in England seems to hate that sect so heartily. In Watt's life, he takes care to tell us, that the author was to be praised in every thing but his (23)

non-conformity; and, in his ever memorable Tour, the Rambler says, 'I found several (Highland Ministers), with whom I could not converse, without wishing, as my respect increased, that they had not been presbyterians^[35].' Here a critic has very properly interrogated the Doctor, what he would have said or thought, if the Highland ministers had lamented that *he* was *not* a presbyterian? This man has no tincture of the liberal and humane manners of the present age; and yet, with his peculiar consistency, he laughs at the dissenter who refused to eat a Christmas pye^[36]. This quondam believer in the Cocklane ghost says, 'though I have, like the rest of mankind, many failings and weaknesses, I have not yet, by either friends or enemies, been charged with *superstition*^[37];' yet, with all the Doctor's 'contempt of old women and their tales^[38],' he would, if a Roman consul, have disbanded his army for the scratching of a rat^[39].

'We found tea here, as in every other place, but our spoons were of horn^[40].' This important fact had been hinted in a former page; and such is the Doctor's politeness!

Some rugged rock's hard entrails gave thee form,
And raging seas produc'd thee in a storm.

POPE.

'They do what I found it not very easy to endure. They *pollute* the tea-table by plates piled with large slices of Cheshire cheese^[41].' The happiness of this remark will be fully felt by those acquainted with the peculiar purity of Pomposo's person.

'M'Leod left them *lying* dead by families as they *stood*^[42].' This is *profound*; for no man can stand and lie at the same time. The line ought to be read thus: 'M'Leod left them lying *dead* by families as they *HAD stood*.' (24)

Of the Memoirs of Scriblerus, the Doctor says: 'If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches, perhaps, by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules, are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned: He raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away: He cures diseases that were never felt.

'For this reason^[43], the joint production of three great writers has never obtained *any* notice from mankind. It has been little read, or when read, has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier by remembering it.

'The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides its general resemblance to *Don Quixote*, there will be found in it particular imitations of the history of Mr Ouffle.

'Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed^[44].'

Here we have a copious specimen of the Doctor's *taste*; and all the volumes of English criticism cannot produce a poorer page.

The work thus condemned, displays a very rich vein of wit and learning. The follies which it exposes, though a little heightened, were, in that age, frequent, and perfectly well known. The writers whom it ridicules, have sunk into *nihilty*. The book is always reprinted with the prose works of Pope, and Swift, and Arbuthnot; and what stronger mark of *notice* can the public bestow? Every man who reads it, must be the wiser and the merrier; and the satire may be understood with very little learning. (25)

Dr Arbuthnot was a Scotsman, and, probably, a Presbyterian. He was an amiable man. He is *dead*. Dr Johnson feels himself to be his inferior; and, therefore, endeavours to murder the reputation of his works. To gain credit with the reader, he artfully draws a very high character of Arbuthnot, a few pages before, and here, in effect, overturns it. He had said that Arbuthnot was 'a scholar, with great brilliancy of wit.' But, if his wit and learning are not displayed in the Memoirs of Scriblerus, we may ask where wit and learning are to be found?

Of this extract, the style is as slovenly as the leading sentiments are false.

The book is said to be, the 'production of Arbuthnot.' Within ten lines, it is 'the joint production of *three* great writers.' How can follies be practised which are not known? or diseases cured, which were never felt? He claims the attributes of omniscience when saying, that 'it has been little read, or when read, has been forgotten;' for, as it has been so frequently reprinted, no human being can be certain that it has been little read, or forgotten; but there is the strongest evidence of the contrary. This period concludes, as it began, with a most absurd assertion. If 'the design cannot boast of much originality,' there is nothing original in the literary world. Who is Mr Ouffle? and who told the Doctor that Swift carried any part of Scriblerus into Ireland, to supply hints for his travels? When Gulliver was published, Dr Arbuthnot, as appears from their correspondence, did not know whether that book was written by Swift or not; so that we are sure the Dean carried *nothing* of Arbuthnot's along with him. Had Dr Johnson 'flourished and stunk' in their age, he would have been the hero of Martin's memoirs; and, to suppose him conscious of this circumstance, will account for the Rambler's malevolence, and explain why the bull broke into a china-shop. (26)

I beg particular attention to the following passage.

'His (Pope's) version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for, since its appearance, no writer^[45], however deficient in other powers, has wanted *melody*^[46].' This is wild enough; but, of Gray's two longest Odes, 'the language is laboured into *harshness*.' Hammond's verses 'never glide in a stream of *melody*.' The diction of Collins 'was often *harsh*, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. His lines, commonly, are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants.' Of the style of Savage, 'The general fault is, *harshness*.' The diction of Shenstone 'is often *harsh*, improper, and affected,' &c.

Of these five poets, some were not born when Pope's version was published; and, of the rest, not one had penned a line now extant. They are all here charged, in the strongest terms, with *harshness*; and yet, (*mirabile dictu!*) since the appearance of Pope's version, 'no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted *melody*.'

It is no less curious, that the author of this wonder-working translation is himself charged with want of melody; and that too in a poem written many years after the appearance of Pope's Homer. 'The essay on man contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more *harshness* of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength,^[47]' &c.

'Gray thought his language more poetical, as it was more remote from common use^[48].' This assertion is not entirely without foundation, but it is very far from being quite true.

'Finding in Dryden, honey *redolent of spring*, an expression that reaches the utmost limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehension, by making *gale* to be *redolent of joy and youth*^[49].' The censure is just. But Dr Johnson is the last man alive, who should blame an author for driving our language to its utmost limits: For a very great part of his life has been spent in corrupting and confounding it. In some verses to a Lady, he talks of his *arthritic* pains^[50], an epithet not very suitable to the dialect of Parnassus. Dr Johnson himself cannot always write common sense. 'In a short time many were content to be shewn beauties which *they could not see*^[51].' He must here mean—'Beauties which they could not have seen!'—for it is needless to add, that no man can be shewn what he cannot see. (27)

It is curious to observe a man draw his own picture, without intending it. Pomposo, when censuring some of Gray's odes, observes, That 'Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. The mind of the writer seems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble*.' He (the author of an Elegy in a country church-yard) 'has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tip-toe. His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease, or nature. In all Gray's odes, there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away^[52].' We may say like Nathan, *Thou art the man*.

Mr. Gray, and Mr. Horace Walpole, are said to have *wandered* through France and Italy^[53]. And as a contrast to this polite expression, I shall add some remarks which have occurred on the Doctor's own mode of wandering.

'It must afford peculiar entertainment to see a person of his character, who has scarcely ever been without the precincts of this metropolis (London), and *who has been long accustomed to the adulation of a little knot of companions of his own trade*, sallying forth in quest of discoveries— Neither the people nor the country that he has visited will perhaps be considered as the most extraordinary part of the phænomena he has described.—The Doctor has endeavoured to give an account of his travels; but he has furnished his readers with a picture of himself. He has seen very little, and observed still less. His narration is neither supported by vivacity, to make it entertaining, nor accompanied with information, to render it instructive. It exhibits the pompous artificial diction of the Rambler with the same *vacuity of thought*.—The reader is led from one Highland family to another merely to be informed of the number of their children, the barrenness of their country, and of the kindness with which the Doctor was treated. In the Highlands he is like a foolish peasant brought for the first time into a great city, staring at every sign-post, and gaping with equal wonder and astonishment at every object he meets^[54].' (28)

'At Florence they (Gray and Walpole) quarrelled and parted; and Mr. Walpole is *now* content to have it told that it was by his fault^[55].' This is a dirty insinuation; and the rant which follows in the next period is of equal value.

He observes, That '*A long story* perhaps adds little to Gray's reputation^[56].' *Perhaps* was useless here, and indeed the Doctor has introduced it in a thousand places, where it was useless, and left it out in as many where it was necessary. In justice to Gray, he ought to have added, that their Author rejected, from a correct edition of his works, this insipid series of verses.

'Gray's reputation was now so high that he had the honour of refusing the laurel^[57].' No man's reputation has ever yet acquired him the laurel, without some particular application from a courtier. What honour is acquired by refusing the laurel? An hundred pounds a-year would have enabled an œconomist like Mr Gray to preserve his independence and exert his generosity. The office of laureat is only ridiculous in the hands of a fool. Mr. Savage in that character produced nothing which would dishonour an Englishman and a poet. It is probable that Mr. Gray, a very costive writer, could hardly have made a decent number of verses within the limited time. From the passage now quoted the reader will not fail to remark, that the Rambler 'nurses in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings^[58].' (29)

Mr. Gray 'had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantastic foppery to which *my* kindness for a man of learning and of virtue wishes him to have been superior^[59].' Milton, who was no doubt a shallow fellow compared with the Reformer of our language, had the same 'fantastic foppery.' Mr Hume remarks that Milton had not leisure 'to watch the returns of genius.'—Every man feels himself at some times less capable of intellectual effort, than at others. The Rambler himself has, in the most express terms, contradicted his present notion. In Denham's life he quotes four lines which must, he says, have been written 'in some *hour propitious to poetry*.' In another place in the same lives his tumid and prolix eloquence disembogues itself to prove, what no man ever doubted, viz. 'That a tradesman's hand is often out, he cannot tell why.' And an inference is drawn, That this is still more apt to be the case with a man straining his mental abilities.

In Gray's ode on spring, 'The thoughts have nothing new, the morality is natural, but too stale^[60].' Read the poem, and then esteem the critic if you can. Speaking of *the Bard* he says, 'Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but *technical* beauties can give praise only to the inventor^[61].' The question here is, What he means by a *technical* beauty? That word he explains, 'Belonging to arts; not in common or popular use'—How can this word in either of these senses apply here with propriety? (30)

What he says of 'these four stanzas^[62]—conveys, I think, no sentiment. Every word may be understood separately, but in their present arrangement they seem to have no meaning, or they mean nonsense, and perhaps, contradiction; but this passage I leave to the supreme tribunal of all authors—to the reason and common sense of the reader. He can best determine whether he has 'never seen the notions in any other place, yet persuades himself that he always felt them.' These ideas are very beautifully expressed in many passages of Gaelic poetry: and Mr. Gray, let it be remembered, to the honour of his taste and candour, was the warm admirer of Fingal.

Comparing Gray's ode with an ode of Horace^[63], he says, 'there is in *the Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety'—as indeed there very well may, for in the one there are thirty-six lines only, and in the other one hundred and forty-four. His whole works are full of such trifling observations. 'But to copy is less than to invent, theft is always dangerous.' If he means to insinuate that Gray's Bard is a copy of Horace, (and this is the plain inference from his words) I charge him in direct terms as *an atrocious violator of TRUTH*.

'The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; (NO) but its revival disgusts *us* with apparent and unconquerable falsehood, *Incredulus odi*^[64].' How will the Doctor's verdict be digested at Aberdeen by 'a poet, a philosopher, and a good man^[65].' It is diverting to remark how these *mutual admirers* clash on the clearest point, with not a possibility of reconciliation. (31)

I pass by five or six lines, which are not worth contradiction, though they cannot resist it. 'I do not *see* that *the Bard* promotes any truth moral or political^[66].' The Rambler's intellect is *blind*.—He seems to have stared a great deal, to have seen little or nothing. The Bard very forcibly impresses this moral, political, and important truth, that eternal vengeance would pursue the English Tyrant and his posterity, as enemies to posterity, and exterminators of mankind. Dr Johnson, a stickler for the *jus divinum*, did not relish this idea.

He commends the 'Ode on Adversity,' but the hint was at 'first taken from Horace^[67].' The poem referred to has almost no resemblance to Mr Gray's. And if we go on at this rate, where will we find any thing original? He mistakes the title of this poem, which is not an 'Ode on,' but a 'Hymn to' Adversity. This is a clear though trifling proof of his inattention. As he dare not condemn this piece, it is dismissed in six lines, to make room for '*The wonderful wonder of wonders*, the two Sister Odes, by which many have been persuaded to think themselves delighted^[68].' He chews them through four tedious octavo pages. We come then to Gray's Elegy, which occupies an equal share of a paragraph containing only fourteen lines. So much more plentiful is the critic in gall than honey! And in reading this fragment we may remark that *nonsense* is not *panegyric*. (32)

Speaking of Welsh Mythology, he says, 'Attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was *first* heard, was heard with scorn^[69].' There is no reason to think that the Welsh disbelieved these fictions. It is much more likely that many believe them at this day. Shakespeare has from this superstition made a whimsical picture of Owen Glendower: He painted nature. This is one of those assertions which our dictator should have qualified with a *perhaps*, an adverb, which, wherever it *ought* to be met with in the Doctor's pages, 'will not easily be found^[70].'

'But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be observed that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but suicide is always to be had without expence of thought^[71].'

The lines objected to are these:

'He spoke, and headlong from the mountains height,
Deep in the roaring tide, he plung'd to endless night.'

Let the Doctor, if he can, give us a better conclusion.

'*The Prospect of Eaton College* suggests nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally

think and feel^[72]. 'He might as well have said, that every man in England is capable of producing Paradise Lost.

We have seen with what tenderness Dr Johnson speaks of the dead, we shall now see his tenderness to the living. 'Let us give the Indians arms, and teach them discipline, and encourage them now and then to plunder a plantation. Security and leisure are the parents of sedition^[73].' The Doctor seems here to be serious. The proposal must reflect infinite honour on his wisdom and humanity.

(33)

'No part of the world has yet had reason to rejoice that COLUMBUS found at last reception and employment^[74].' This wild opinion is fairly disproved by Dr Smith, a philosopher not much afraid of novelty; for he has advanced a greater variety of original, interesting, and profound ideas, than almost any other author since the first existence of books.

'Such is the unevenness of Dryden's compositions that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which the reader is ashamed^[75].' This is a very wide *aberration* from truth. In Dryden's fables we may frequently meet with five hundred lines together, without *ten* among them, which could have disgraced the most eminent writer. His prologues and epilogues are a never failing fountain of good sense and genuine poetry. But it were insulting the taste of the English nation to insist any farther on this point. We shall presently see how far Dr Johnson's Dictionary will answer the foregoing description.

Dryden it is said discovers 'in the preface to his fables, that he translated the first book of the Iliad without knowing what was in the second^[76].' This insinuation revolts against all probability; and whoever peruses that elegant and delightful preface will find it to be NOT TRUE.

'The highest pleasure which nature has indulged to sensitive perception is that of rest after fatigue^[77].' And *sensitive* is defined '*having sense or perception; but not reason.*' If I understand the meaning of this passage, it is, that no pleasure communicated through any of the organs of sense is equal to that of *rest*. This assertion leads to the most absurd consequences. In man, to separate sensitive from rational perception appears to be simply impossible. Even rest is not in strict language any pleasure. It is merely a mitigation of pain. The reader will decide whether I do the Doctor justice, while I say, that he must have been petrified when he composed this maxim. Thirst and hunger had been long forgot. Handel and Titian had no power to charm. We learn that a lover can receive, and his mistress can bestow nothing which is equal to the rapturous enjoyment of an *easy chair*. The thought is new; no human being ever did, or ever will conceive it, except this immortal IDLER.

(34)

'Physicians and lawyers are no friends to religion, and many *conjectures* have been formed to discover the *reason* of such a *combination* between men who agree in *nothing else*, and who seem to be less affected in their own provinces by religious opinions than any other part of the community^[78].' He then proceeds in the tone of an author, who has made a discovery to inform us of the cause. 'They have all seen a parson, seen him in a habit different from their own, and therefore *declared war* against him.' But *this* can be no motive for peculiar antipathy to parsons, allowing such antipathy to exist; for in habit all other classes differ no less from the clergy, than the lawyer and physician. But the remark itself is frivolous and false. Boerhaave and Hale were men of eminent piety. Physicians and lawyers have as much regard for religion as any other people generally have. Their *agreeing in nothing else* is another of the blunders crowded into this passage. But I have too much respect for the reader's understanding to insist any farther on this point. The *conjecturers*, the *combination*, and the *declaration of war*, exist no where but in the Doctor's pericranium. He was at a loss what to say, and the position is only to be regarded as a *turbid ebullition of amphibological inanity*. But while we thus meet with something which is ridiculous in every page, we are not to forget even for a moment, what we have often heard, and what is most unquestionably *true*, viz. That Dr Johnson is the father of British literature, capital author of his age, and the greatest man in Europe^[79]!!!

(35)

'We are by our occupations, education, and habits of life, divided almost into different species, who regard one another for the most part with scorn and malignity^[80].' The Doctor is himself a proof, that a man may look upon almost all of his own profession with scorn and malignity: So that between his precept and his practice, the world seems bad enough. But I hope every heart revolts at this gross insult on the characters of mankind. He brings as an instance the aversion which subsists between soldiers and sailors. There no doubt have been jealousies and bloodshed between these two classes of men, but the same accidents fall out more frequently between soldiers themselves. The *scorn* and *malignity* of admirals seldom affect any line of service but their own. His captain of foot^[81], who saw no danger in a sea-fight was a fool, and just such a specimen of English officers, as the Doctor himself is of English travellers. Our repulse at Carthagena was not owing to an antipathy between the *common* men. Our late victory at Savannah proves with what ardour they can unite. The Doctor has insulted almost every order of society.

Coblers with coblers smoke away the night,
Even players in the common cause, unite.
AUTHORS alone with more than mortal rage,
Eternal war with brother authors wage^[82].

'To raise esteem we must benefit others,' is an assertion advanced in the same page. But the

Doctor, if he knows any thing, must know that *esteem* is often felt for an enemy. We value for his courage or ingenuity the man who never heard our name, or who would not give a guinea to save us from perdition. We can esteem the hero who butchers nations, and the pedant who perplexes truth. Marlborough's avarice led him to continue the continental war, till he had laid the great foundation of our public debt. He was detested as much as any general *now* in England, and yet 'he was so great a man (said one of his enemies) that I have forgot his faults.' Posterity, while they suffer for his baseness, pay the due tribute of esteem to his genius and intrepidity. (36)

In every point of view this maxim is 'the baseless fabrick of a vision.' And what had so far *obumbrated* the Rambler's powers of *ratiocination*, it is not easy to guess. We sometimes feel it impossible to esteem even our benefactor. 'I have received obligations (said Chatterton) without being obliged.' And of consequence, his benefactors had forfeited his esteem. The father of British literature has in forty other places contradicted his own words. He has proved that esteem is involuntary, and that benefits do not always procure it.

The Doctor says, 'That Cowley having, when very young, read Spenser, became *irrecoverably* a poet^[83].' And he adds a remark that shows his good sense: 'Such are the accidents which, sometimes remembered, and sometimes perhaps forgotten, PRODUCE that particular designation of mind and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called genius. The true genius is a mind of large general powers, *accidentally* determined to some particular direction. The great painter of the present age had the first fondness for his art excited by a perusal of Richardson's treatise.' This drawing definition contradicts common sense. Does the Doctor mean that Cowley would have become a painter by perusing Richardson? or that Reynolds would have become a poet by perusing Spenser? This is the clear inference from his words, and its absurdity is 'too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation^[84].' At this rate Garrick might have eclipsed Newton, and Voltaire defeated Frederick. Plato possessed 'a mind of large general powers.' He read Homer. He wrote verses, and he found that he could not be a poet. The Doctor himself has 'large general powers;' but he could never have been made a decent dancing master. Marcel might have broke his heart, before his pupil had acquired three steps of a minuet. In his dictionary the Doctor, without a word of *accidental* determination, defines genius to be 'disposition of *nature*, by which any one is qualified for some peculiar employment.' And here I cannot help adding, that 'the great painter' has by stepping out of his own line, discovered the narrowness of even a great man's knowledge. He affirms^[85], 'That scarce a poet from Homer down to Dryden ever felt his fire diminished merely by his advance in years. There is nothing more absurd, says Cicero, than what we hear asserted by some of the philosophers. Even in painting, the President's own profession, that rule does not hold. Cellini tells us, that Michael Angelo's genius decayed with years; and he speaks of it as common to all artists. His notion was perhaps grafted on an opinion of the Doctor's about the durability of Waller's genius^[86]. But Waller was a feeble poet; he never had a genius, so that we need not wonder he never lost it. All his verses are hardly worth one of Dr Johnson's imitations of Juvenal. (37) (38)

Rowe (the famous tragic poet) 'seldom moves either pity or terror^[87].' Paradise Lost is a work which 'the reader admires, and lays down, *and forgets to take up again*^[88].' But Rowe's Lucan, which is very little read, the Doctor pronounces to be 'one of the *greatest* productions of English poetry.' Dr Johnson's sycophants have asserted, that 'in the walks of criticism and biography he has long been without a rival.' And they are no doubt willing to support their idol in his infamous assertion, that Swift 'excites neither surprise nor admiration^[89].' The Doctor's disregard for the unanimous sentiments of mankind often excites surprize, but never admiration. Let us here apply his own observation, that 'there is often found in commentaries a spontaneous train of invective and contempt, more eager and venomous than is vented by the most furious controvertist in politics, against whom he is hired to defame^[90].' We may illustrate the Rambler's remark by his own example: 'Theobald, a man of narrow comprehension, and small acquisitions, with no native and intrinsic splendour of genius, with little of the artificial light of learning—his contemptible ostentation I have frequently concealed^[91].' The definer of a fiddlestick proceeds thus: 'I have in some places shewn him, as he would have shewn himself for the reader's diversion, that the *inflated* emptiness of some notes may justify or excuse the contraction of the rest.'—The advocate for tenderness and decorum goes on to tell us, that 'Theobald, thus weak and ignorant, thus *mean* and FAITHLESS, thus petulant and ostentatious, by the good luck of having Pope for his enemy, has escaped, and escaped *alone* with reputation from this undertaking. So easily is he praised whom no man can envy^[92].' How does it appear that Theobald was weak and ignorant? The Doctor himself had in the preceding page told us, that 'he (Theobald) collated the antient copies, and rectified *many* errors.' This assertion our author, with his wonted consistency, has flatly contradicted in the very next line. 'What *little* he (Theobald) did was commonly right.' Has the Doctor adduced, or has he attempted to adduce evidence, that Theobald was *mean* and *faithless*, or what provocation has he to load this man's memory with such injurious epithets? His burst of vulgarity can reflect disgrace on nobody but himself. It is evident, tho' he thinks proper to deny it, that he considered Theobald as an object of envy; yet he is obliged to confess that Theobald 'escaped, and escaped *alone*, with reputation,' from the talk of amending Shakespeare. In assigning a reason for this applause of Theobald, Dr Johnson pays a very poor compliment to the penetration of the public, for surely to combat a writer of so much merit and popularity as Pope, was not the plainest road to eminence in the literary world. (39)

'In his (Shakespeare's) tragic scenes there is *always something wanting*'—NO^[93]—'In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful, when he engages his characters in *reciprocations* of

smartness, and contests of sarcasms; their ideas are *commonly gross*, and their pleasantry *licentious*.' This accusation is cruel and unjust, as all the world knows already. But a great part of that preface is an incoherent jumble of reproach and panegyric^[94]. If any thing can be yet more faulty than what we have just now seen, it is what follows: 'Whenever he (Shakespeare) solicits his invention, or strains his faculties^[95], the offspring of his *throes* is *tumour* (i. e. *puffy grandeur*^[96]), *meanness*, *tediousness*, and *obscurity*. His declamations or set speeches are *commonly cold and weak*.' The *set speeches* (as the Doctor elegantly terms them) of Petruchio, of Jacques, of Wolsey, and of Hamlet, are *perhaps* neither cold nor weak. The conclusion of this period is worthy of such a beginning; he mentions certain attempts from which Shakespeare 'seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.' The Doctor himself is an object of pity. Shakespeare has been in his grave near two centuries—His life was innocent—His writings are immortal. To feel resentment against so great a man because his works are not every where equal, is an idea highly becoming the generosity of Dr Johnson. (40)

What 'truth, moral or political,' is promoted by telling us, that, when Thomson came to London, *his first want was a pair of shoes*; that Pope 'wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen, with fine sleeves^[97];' and a long string of such tiresome and disgusting trifles, which make his narrative seem ridiculous. Had Dr Johnson been Pope's apothecary, we would certainly have heard of the frequency of his pulse, the colour of his water, and the quantity of his stools.

'Though Pope seemed angry when a dram was offered him, he did not forbear to drink it^[98].' And who the Devil cares whether he did or not? The Doctor needed hardly to have told us, that 'his petty peculiarities were communicated by a female domestic;' for no gentleman would have confessed that they came within the reach of his observation.

The *truly illustrious* author of the RAMBLER, has exerted his venomous eloquence, *through several pages*, in order to convince us, that 'never were penury of knowledge and *vulgarity* of sentiment so happily disguised,' as in Pope's Essay on Man. For this purpose, the Doctor celebrates the character of Crousaz, whose intentions 'were *always* right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure^[99].' In opposition to such authorities, let us hear the great and immortal citizen of Geneva. (41)

'M. de Crousaz has lately given us a refutation of the ethic epistles of Mr Pope, which I have read; but it did not please me. I will not take upon me to say, which of these two authors is in the right; but I am persuaded, that the book of the former will never excite the reader to do any one virtuous action, whereas *our zeal for every thing great and good is awakened by that of POPE*^[100].'

The Essay on Man, he says, 'affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns NOTHING; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother, and his nurse^[101].' If the conversations of Dr Johnson's mother and his nurse were equal to Mr Pope's verses, it is a pity the Doctor had not preserved them. He could hardly have spent his time so well. And it is a wonder that with so many rare opportunities of improvement, the Doctor has never yet eclipsed his nurse. Voltaire pronounces Pope's Essay to be the finest didactic poem in the world, and he would no doubt have replied to the Doctor's objections in that tone of contempt with which the Doctor replied to some of his—'These are the petty cavils of petty minds^[102].'

In the Essay on Man 'so little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspecting, many read it for a manual of piety^[103];'—and will continue to read it, when the cavils of Dr Johnson are forgotten or despised. (42)

'He (Pope) nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of Kings.' And again, 'He gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great^[104].'

Dr Johnson himself is by no means remarkable for his respect to the great. In the preface to his folio Dictionary, he tells us, that it was written 'without any patronage of the *great*,' which is a mistake; for he had published a pamphlet, some years before, wherein he acknowledges, that Chesterfield had patronized him; and why the Doctor should retract his own words, it is hard to say; for Chesterfield continued his friend to the last; and such a man was very likely *the strongest spoke in the Doctor's wheel*. But his Lordship is now dead, and the Doctor is always and eminently *grateful*.

'It has been maintained by some, *who love to talk of what they do not know*, that pastoral is the *most antient* poetry.' But in the next period, 'pastoral poetry was the *first* employment of the human imagination^[105].' The Doctor, therefore, by his own account, is one of those, *who love to talk of* (and what is yet worse, to assert) *what they do not know*. In North America, the natives have no conception of pastoral life among themselves, and their poetry, such as it is, hath no relation to that state of society.

Pastoral poetry 'is generally pleasing, because it entertains the mind with representations of scenes, familiar to *almost every* imagination, and of which *all* can equally judge whether they are well described, or not^[106].'

This period is so closely interwoven with nonsense, that it will take some pains to disentangle it.

Rural scenes are not familiar to *almost every* imagination. In England half the people are shut up in large towns, and such is the gross ignorance of some of them, that an old woman in London once asked, *whether potatoes grew on trees*. Neither is every man an equal judge even of what is familiar to him. Observe how the Rambler confounds the distinction between *all*, and *almost every*. The whole number is in the same stile. (43)

'At this time a long course of opposition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty which was not in danger^[107].'

No man was more violent than Dr Johnson in abusing Walpole. We have already seen some of those political definitions, which at this hour deform the Doctor's Dictionary. His late zeal for government could arise from self interest only. And to take his own words, he comes under suspicion *as a wretch hired to vindicate the late measures of the Court*^[108]. He accuses Milton as a tool of authority, as a forger hired to assassinate the memory of Charles I. These charges came with a very bad grace from the Rambler. They are long since refuted in a separate publication, and yet they will be reprinted in every future edition of his book.

Will any man be the wiser, the better, or the merrier, by reading what follows—'Lyttleton was his (Shenstone's) neighbour, and his rival, whose empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the *petty state* that appeared behind it. For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the *little fellow* that was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitants perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain^[109].' The paragraph closes with a *deep* observation. (44)

As the Doctor's own associates^[110] have lamented the existence of this beautiful and important passage, I have only to say, that *Poor* Lyttleton (as the Doctor calls him) patronized Fielding, and that the Rambler patronizes William Shaw: That his Lordship was an elegant writer: That he did not adopt Johnson's new words: That *Lexiphanes* was dedicated to him: That he was a great and an amiable man: And that he is *dead*.

With all his affectation of hard words, the Doctor becomes at once intelligible when he wishes to reprobate a rival genius, or insult the ashes of a benefactor. In defiance of Addison, and a thousand other *shallow fellows*, he asserts that Milton 'both in prose and verse had formed his stile by a *perverse* and *pedantick* principle^[111].'

Speaking of Mr Walmsley, he says, 'At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and agreeable hours, with companions such as are not often to be found.—I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. He never received *my* notions with contempt.—He was one of the first friends whom literature procured me,—and I hope that at least my *gratitude* made me worthy of his notice. It may be doubted whether a day now passes, in which I have not some advantage from his friendship^[112].' But then, 'He was a WHIG with ALL the virulence and malevolence of *his* party.' This is a most beautiful conclusion; and quite in the Doctor's stile. His accusation is incredible. A monster, such as he draws here, can seldom deform existence.

We are told that at St. Andrews Cardinal Beaton 'was murdered by the ruffians of Reformation^[113].' And it seems to be the fashion of the day, to censure that action. Yet it is allowed on all hands that Wishart's doctrine, in spite of its *incomprehensibilities*, was better than Popery—that Beaton, a profligate usurping Priest, had committed every human vice—that, without civil authority, he dragged our Apostle to the stake—and that his avowed design was to expell or exterminate the whole Protestant party. Had the Cardinal been permitted to complete his plan, we durst not at this day have disputed, 'Whether it is better to worship a piece of rotten wood^[114], or throw it in the fire?' It is therefore evident that to kill this tyrant was highly proper and laudable. We may just as well censure the centurion who slew Caligula. When a philosopher, who truly deserves that title, was once in conversation reprobating Melvil, he was interrupted by this, simple question, Whether if his own antagonist had conducted *him* to the stake, he would not have pardoned a pupil for avenging his blood? 'I would most certainly,' he replied, and such must be the real sentiments of all men, whatever they may chuse to print. When we attempt to hide the feelings of nature, that we may support a favourite system, we never fail to become ridiculous. In this age and nation, if a magistrate shall rise above the law; if he rob us of life with the most barbarous exulation; if his guilt equal whatever history hath recorded; if he want nothing but the purple and the legions to rival Domitian, the voice of nature will be heard. The brave will reject such unmanly, such fatal refinements of speculation. Like Hambden and Melvil, they will stand forth in defence of themselves, and their posterity. They will relieve their fellow citizens from temporal perdition. They will drive insolence and injustice from the seat of power. They will exult in danger, and rush to revenge or death. They will plunge their swords in the heart of their oppressor; or they will teach him, like Charles, to atone upon the scaffold for the tears and the blood of his people; and while in the eyes of their countrymen, they read their glory^[115], they will perhaps reflect with a smile, that some slavish pedant, some pensioned traitor to the rights of mankind, is one day to mark them out as objects of public detestation^[116]. (46)

'The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind.—Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all

good and evil is distributed, and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harrass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy, and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered, is the business of a modern dramatist. For this probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved^[117].' The weakest of Dr Johnson's admirers will blush in reading this passage. He very fairly denies every degree of merit, to every dramatic writer, of every age or nation, Shakespeare alone excepted. What can be more ridiculous than this? (47)

'Every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than of any other writer; others please us by particular speeches, but he always makes us anxious for the event, by exciting restless and *unquenchable*^[118] curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through^[119].' But the Doctor overthrows all this within a few pages, for Shakespeare has '*perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a cotemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion*^[120].' The Rambler cannot always suppress his thorough contempt for the taste of the public. He no doubt laughs internally at their folly in admiring him.

I proceed to the Doctor's English Dictionary, and shall begin with quoting the remarks already made by a judicious friend, on this subject.

'Among the many foibles of the human race, we may justly reckon this to be one, that when they have once got any thing really useful, they apply it in all cases, proper or improper, till at last they make it quite ridiculous. Nothing can possibly be more useful than a just and accurate *definition*, because by this only we are able to distinguish one thing from another. It is obvious, however, that *in definitions we ought always to define a thing less known, by one which is more so, and those things which are known to every body, neither can be defined, nor ought we to attempt a definition of them at all; because we must either explain them by themselves, or by something less known than themselves, both of which give our definitions the most ridiculous air imaginable.* (48)

'A certain right reverend gentleman, not many miles from Edinburgh, and whom, out of my great regard for the cloth, I put in the first place, gave the following definition of a thief. "A thief," says he, "my friends, is a man of a *thievish disposition*." Now though this definition is somewhat imperfect, for a thief also exerts that *thievish disposition* which lurks in his breast, I intend to take it for my model, on account of its great conformity to many of the definitions given by the most celebrated authors.—I remember to have seen in one of the Reviews a definition of *Nature*, which began in the following manner. "Nature is that *innate* celestial fire."—The rest has in truth escaped my memory, though I remember the Reviewers indecently compared it to the following lines, which they say were a description of a dog-fish.

'And his evacuations
Were made *a parte post*.
A parte post! these words so hard
In Latin though I speak 'em,
Their meaning in plain English is,
He made pure *Album Græcum*.

'This definition rather goes a step beyond that of the clergyman, as it explains the words *a parte post* by *Album Græcum*, which are more obscure than the former, and neither of which, out of my great regard to decency, I choose to translate.—Whether Dr Johnson composed his dictionary, after hearing the above-mentioned clergyman's sermon, or not, I cannot tell, but he seems very much to have taken him for his model, even though the said clergyman was a Presbyterian, and Dr Johnson has an aversion at Presbyterians. Thus, when he tells us, that *short* is *not long*, and that *long* is *not short*, he certainly might as well have told us that a thief is a man of a thievish disposition. I am surprised indeed how the intellects of a human creature could be obscured by pedantry, and the love of words, to such a degree, as to insert this distinction in a book, pretended to be written for the instruction and benefit of society. Much more am I surprised how the authors of all dictionaries of the English language have followed the same ridiculous plan, as if they had positively intended to make their books as little valuable as possible. Nay, I am almost tempted to think, that the readers have a natural inclination to peruse nonsense, and cannot be satisfied without a considerable quantity of that *ingredient* in every book which falls into their hands. *Long* and *short* are terms merely relative, and which every body knows; to explain them therefore by one another, is to explain them by themselves. But besides this ridiculous way of explaining a thing by itself, pedants, of whom we may justly reckon Dr Johnson the Prince, have fallen upon a most ingenious method of explaining the English by the *Latin*, or some other language still further beyond the reach of vulgar ken. Thus, when Dr Johnson defines *fire*, he tells us it is the *igneous element*. *To water* (the verb) he tells us, is to *irrigate*, by which no doubt we are greatly edified. *To do* is to *practise*, and *to practise* is *to do*, &c. (49)

'But the most curious kind of definitions are these œnigmatical ones of our author, by which he industriously prevents the reader from knowing the meaning of the words he explains. Thus, the

hair he tells us is one of the common *teguments* of the body; but this will not distinguish it from the skin, and shews the extreme poverty of judgment under which the Doctor laboured, when he could not point out the distinguishing mark between the hair and skin. A dog is "a domestic animal remarkably various in his species," but this does not distinguish him, except to natural historians, from a cow, a sheep, or a hog; for of these there are also different *breeds* or species. A cat is "a domestic animal that catches mice;" but this may be said of an owl, or a dog; for a dog will catch mice if he sees them, though he does not watch for them as a cat does. Nay, if we happen to overlook the word *animal*, or not to understand it, we may mistake the cat for a mouse-trap. The earth, according to our learned author, is "the element distinct from fire, air, or water;" but this may be light or electricity as well as earth.—Air is "the element encompassing the terraqueous globe;" but an unlearned reader would be very apt to mistake this for the ocean, &c. (50)

'When the Doctor comes to his *learned* definitions, he outdoes, if possible, his *œnigmatical* ones. Network is "any thing *reticulated* or *decussated* at equal distances." A nose is "the prominence on the face which is the organ of scent, and the emunctory of the brain."—The heart is "the muscle which by its contraction and dilatation propells the blood through the course of circulation, and is therefore considered as the source of vital motion."—Now let any person consider for whom such strange definitions can possibly be intended. To give instruction to the ignorant they certainly are not designed; neither can they give satisfaction to the learned, because they are not accurate. The nose, for instance, he says is the emunctory of the brain; but every anatomist knows that it performs no such office, neither hath the nose any communication with the brain, but by means of its nerves.—Yet this dictionary is reckoned the best English one extant. What then must the rest be; or what shall we think of those who mistake a book, stuffed with such stupid assemblages of words, for a *learned* composition? Definitions undoubtedly are necessary, but not such as give us no information, or lead us astray. Neither can any thing shew the sagacity, or strength of judgment, which a man possesses, more clearly than his being able to define exactly what he speaks about; while such blundering descriptions as these, above quoted, shew nothing but the Doctor's insignificance^[1211].' (51)

That the courteous reader may be qualified to judge for himself, I shall now insert a variety of quotations from this wonderful, amazing, admirable, astonishing, incomparable, immortal, and inimitable book. Too much cannot be said in its praise. I shall however let it speak for itself. Every page, indeed, is so pregnant with superexcellent beauties, that in selecting them, the critic's situation resembles that of the schoolman's ass between two bundles of hay; his only difficulty is where to begin. The pious husband of Bathsheba had asked 'What is MAN?' But let it be told in Rome, and published in the streets of Paris, to the honour of the English nation, that her greatest philosopher has received 300l. a-year for informing us that—

MAN is a 'Human being. 2. Not a woman. 3. Not a boy. 4. *Not a beast.*' Woman. 'The female of the human race.' Boy. '1. A male child; not a girl. 2. One in the state of *adolescence.*' Girl. 'A young woman or child.' (*Female* child he should have said.) Damsel. 'A young gentlewoman; a wench; a country lass.' Lass. 'A girl; a maid; A young woman.' Wench. '1. A young woman. 2. A young woman in contempt. 3. A strumpet.' Strumpet. 'A whore, a prostitute.' Whore. '1. A woman who converses unlawfully with men; a fornicatress; an adultress; a strumpet. 2. a prostitute; a woman who receives men for money.' To whore, *v. n.* (from the noun) 'To converse unlawfully with the other sex.' To whore, *v. a.* 'To corrupt with regard to chastity.' Whoredom, *s.* (from whore) 'Fornication.' (Here follow several other definitions on the same pure subject, which every body understands as well as Dr Johnson.) Young. 'Being in the first part of life. *Not old.*' Youngster, younker. 'A young person.' (I pass by *ten* other articles, about *youthful* compounded of *youth* and *full*, &c. &c. because young people are in no danger of thinking themselves old.) Yuck, *s.* (*jocken*, Dutch.) 'Itch,' Old. 'Past the middle part of life; *not young*; not new; ancient; not modern. OF OLD. Long ago; from ancient times.' Hum, interj. 'A sound implying doubt and deliberation, *Shakespeare.*' Fiddlefaddle, *s.* (a cant word) 'Trifles.' Fiddlefaddle, *a.* 'Trifling; giving trouble.' (52)

(—His own example strengthens all his laws,
Sam is himself the true sublime he draws.)

Fiddler, *s.* (from *fiddle*) 'A musician, one that plays upon a fiddle.' Here follow fiddlestick, compounded of fiddle and stick, and warranted an English word by Hudibras; and Fiddle-string, *s.* (Fiddle and string) 'the string of a fiddle. *Arbutnot.*' Sheep's eye. 'A *modest and diffident look, such as lovers cast at their mistresses.*' Love. 'Lewdness.' And *thirteen* other explanations. Lovemonger. 'One who deals in affairs love.' (Besides about twenty other articles concerning this subject of equal obscurity and importance.) Sweetheart. 'A lover or mistress.' Mistress. 'A woman beloved and courted; a whore, a concubine.' Wife. 'A woman that has a husband.' A Runner. 'One who runs.' Husband. 'The *correlative* to wife.' Shrew. 'A *peevish, malignant, clamorous, spiteful, vexatious, turbulent woman.*' Scold. 'A *clamorous, rude, mean, low, foul mouthed woman.*' Henpecked, *a.* (*hen* and *pecked*) 'Governed by the wife.' Strap. 'A narrow long slip of cloth or leather.' Whip. 'An instrument of correction *tough* and *pliant.*' Cuckingstool, *s.* 'An engine invented for the punishment of scolds and *unquiet* women.' Cuckoldom. 'The state of a cuckold.' (Cuckold, *s.* Cuckold, *v. a.* Cuckoldy, *a.* and Cuckoldmaker, *s.* (compounded of *cuckold*, and *maker*) I leave out, as the reader is, perhaps, already initiated in the mysteries of that subject.) Arse, *s.* 'The buttocks' To hang an arse. 'To be tardy, sluggish' Buttock. 'The rump, the part near the *tail*' Rump. '1. The end of the backbone. 2. The buttocks.' Thimble. 'A metal cover by which women (yea and *taylors* too Doctor) secure their fingers from the needle.' Needle. 'A small instrument pointed at one end to pierce cloth, and *perforated* at the other to receive the thread.' Gunpowder. 'The powder put into guns to be fired.' Maidenhead. Maidenhode. Maidenhood. (53)

'Virginity, virgin purity, freedom from contamination.' Oh, *interj* 'An exclamation denoting pain, sorrow, or surprise.' Hope '*That which gives HOPE. The object of HOPE.*' Fear. '1. Dread; horror; apprehension of danger. 2. Awe; dejection of mind. 3. Anxiety, solicitude,' &c. Impatience. 'Heat of passion; *inability* to suffer delay, eagerness.' Virgin. '*A woman not a mother.*' Virginity. 'Maidenhead; unacquaintance with man.' Fart. 'Wind from behind. *Suckling*' To fart. 'To break wind behind. *Swift.*' Marriage. 'The act of uniting a man and woman for life.' Repentance. 'Sorrow for any thing past.' Kiss. 'Salute given by joining lips.' Kisser. 'One that Kisses.' To piss, *v. n.* 'To make water. *L'Estrange.*' Piss *s.* (from the verb) 'Urine; animal water. *Pope.*' Pissburnt, *a.* 'Stained with urine.' Pedant. 'A man vain of *low* knowledge.'

Of these extracts, I suppose opinion is uniform. Every man who reads them, reads them with contempt. To tell us that a *man* is not a *beast*, seems to be an insult, rather than a definition. To say, that *young* is *not old*, and, that *old* is *not young, of old*, &c. is to say nothing at all. There is a medium; there is a state between these periods of life. And his definitions convey no meaning; for a man may be *not old* tho' he is *not young*. Many articles, such as whoring, whoremaster, whoremonger, whorishly, &c. are as indecent, as they are impertinent, and seem only designed to divert school boys. Hum, Yuck, Fiddle, Fiddler, Fiddlefaddle, *s.* Fiddlefaddle, *a.* Fiddlestick, Fiddlestring, Thimble, Needle, Gunpowder, Hope, O, and O—and Oh, and twenty-eight or thirty explanations of the particle *on*, are left without remark to the reader's penetration. Some are well enough acquainted with a *maidenhead*, and such as are not, will be no wiser by reading Dr Johnson: For he says, That it is *virginity*, and that again is explained (like more than half the words in his book) by the word it explains. Neither can a *maidenhead* ensure freedom from *pollution*; for a girl may be polluted, without losing her *maidenhead*; and on the other hand, the Doctor dare not say that a *married* woman is, for that reason, *polluted*. Love, he calls *lewdness*, and he may as well say, that *light* is *darkness*. His admirers will answer, that he also gives the right meaning; but let them tell, why he gave any besides the right meaning, and why he collected such a load of blunders into his book. Or since he did collect them, why he did not mark them down as wrong. For in the preface to his octavo, he tells us, that it is written for 'explaining terms of science.' But to select twenty barbarous misapplications of a word, is not explaining the word, but only *confusion worse confounded*. Indeed that whole preface is a piece of the most profound nonsense, which ever insulted the common sense of the world. A virgin, is *a woman not a mother*. But many wives, and many concubines too, have never propagated the species, though they had (as Othello says) a thousand times committed the act of shame. From this literary chaos, a foreigner would be apt to imagine that *they* were *virgins*.

(54)

Corking pin. 'A pin of the largest size.' Bum. '*The part upon which we sit.*' Butter. 'An *unctuous* substance.' Buttermouth. '*The great broad foretooth.*' Off. prep. '*Not on.*' Potato. 'An *esculent* root.' Turnip. 'A white *esculent* root.' Parsley, 'A plant.' Parsnep. 'A plant.' Colliflower. '*Cauliflower.*' Cauliflower. 'A species of *cabbage.*' Cabbage. 'A plant.' Pit. 'A hole in the ground.' Pin. 'A short wire, with a sharp point, and round head, used by women to fasten their cloaths.' Plate. 'A small shallow vessel of metal (or of stone or wood Doctor) on which meat is eaten.' Play. '*Not work.*' Poker. 'The iron bar with which *men* stir the fire.' Pork. 'Swine's flesh *unsalted.*' (Here you may find *Porker, Porkeater, Porket, Porkling*, with all their derivations, definitions, and authorities.) Porridge. 'Food made by boiling meat in water.' Porridge-pot, (*porridge* and *pot*) 'The pot in which meat is boiled for a family.' Porringer, (from *porridge*) 'a vessel in which broth is eaten.' Part. '*Some thing less than the whole.*' And *thirteen* other *ramifications*. Pulse. '*Oscillation; vibration.*' Puff. 'A quick blast with the mouth.' Vid. in same page, Pudding, *s.* from the *Swedish*, (which is a mistake, for it is from the French *boudin*) *Pudding Pie*, from *Pudding* and *Pie*, and *Pudding-time*, from *Pudding* and *time*. Puddle, *s.* Puddle, *v. a.* & Puddly, &c. Shadow. '*Opacity, darkness, Shade.*' Shade. 'The cloud or *opacity* made by interception of the light.' Darkness. 'Obscurity. *Umbrage.*' Shadiness, 'The state of being *shady; umbrageousness.*' Shady. 'Full of *shade; MILDLY gloomy.*'

(55)

(No light, but rather darkness visible.)

Sevenscore. 'Seven times twenty.' Shadowy. 'Dark, *opaque.*' To yawn. 'To gape, to *oscitate,*' Yawn, *s.* '*Oscitation, HIATUS.*' Yea. 'Yes.' Yes, 'A term of affirmation, the affirmative particle opposed to *no.*' See also in the same place, Yest. Year. (12 months) Yesterday, *s.* The day last past, the next day before to-day. Yesterday, *ad.* Yesternight, *s.* Yesternight, *ad.* Yet, *con.* Yet, *ad.* Nine times explained. Vent. 'A small *aperture*; a hole; a *spiracle.*' Wind. 'A *flowing* wave of air; *flatulence*; windiness.' Winker. 'One who winks.' To wink. 'To shut the eyes.'

(56)

(No, Sir, unless you open them again directly.)

Window. 'An *aperture* in a building by which air and light are *intromitted.*' *N. B.* Almost the whole of the same page is daubed over with such jargon. Said. 'Aforesaid.' Scoundrel. 'A mean rascal; a low petty villain.' Rascal. 'A mean fellow; a scoundrel.' Villain. 'A wicked wretch.' Wretch. 'A miserable mortal.' No, *ad.* 'The word of refusal. 2. The word of denial.' No, *a.* '1. Not any; NONE. 2. *No one*; NONE: *not any one.*' (Had this word *none* altered its meaning, before the Doctor got to the end of the line?) Nobody. (*No* and *body*) 'No one; not any one.' (See also Nod, *v. a.* Nod, *s.* Nodder. Nodder. Noddy, &c.) None. '1. Not one. 2. Not any. 3. Not other.' Nothing. '*Negation* of being; not any thing,' and *seventeen* other definitions. Afore. (*a* and *fore*) '*before*, nearer in place to any thing.'

'There is a certain line, beyond which, if ridicule attempts to go, it becomes itself ridiculous, and there is a sphere of criticism in that particular region, in which, if the critic plays his batteries on too *contemptible* objects, he must unavoidably depart from his proper dignity, and must himself

be an object of the raillery he would convey^[122].'

HEAR THE DOCTOR ON MUSIC.

Music. '1. The science of *harmonical* sounds. 2. Instrumental, or vocal *harmony*.' Harmony. 'Just proportion of sound.' Melody. 'Music; *harmony* of sound.' Tune. '*Tune* is a diversity of notes put together.' *Locke, Milton, Dryden*. Tenour, *s.* 'A *sound* in music.'

One requires little skill in music to see that the Doctor knows nothing of that science. He confounds *melody* with *harmony*; the one consisting in a succession of agreeable sounds, and the other arising from coexisting sounds. His account of a *tune* is curious. And we may say in his own (57)
stile, that his dictionary is 'a diversity of *words* put together.' His numerous omissions on this head will neither afflict, nor surprise us; but we must be mortified and amazed to reflect on the partial and injurious distribution of fame. For his book exhibits in every page, perhaps without a single exception, a variety of errors and absurdities. They are clear to the darkest ignorance. They are level to the lowest understanding, and yet our language is exhausted in praise of *their* author. *Pronis animis audiendum!*

Poem. 'The work of a poet; a *metrical* composition.' Poet. 'An inventor; an author of fiction; a writer of poems; one who writes in measure.' Poetess. 'A *she* poet.' Poetry. '*Metrical* composition; the art or practice of writing poems. 2. Poems, poetical pieces.' *To circumscribe poetry by a DEFINITION will only shew the narrowness of the definer*^[123]. Tragedy. 'A dramatic representation of a *serious* action.' Comedy. 'A dramatic representation of the *lighter faults* of mankind.' Eclogue. 'A pastoral poem, so called, because Virgil called his pastorals eclogues.' Tragic-comedy. 'A drama compounded of *merry* and *serious* events.' Farce. 'A dramatic representation written *without* regularity.' Elegy. '1. A mournful song. 2. A funeral song. 3. A short poem, without points or turns.' Idyl. 'A small short poem.' Epigram. 'A short poem terminating in a *point*.' Epic, *a.* 'Narrative; comprising narrations, not acted, but rehearsed. It is usually supposed to be heroic.' Epistle. 'A letter;' and a letter again is 'an epistle.' Ode. 'A poem written to be *sung* to music; a lyric poem.' Ballad. 'A song.' Song. 'A poem to be *modulated* by the voice.' Catch. 'A song sung in *succession*.'

I believe that Dr Johnson has written better verses than any man now alive in England. He is said to be the first critic in that country, and therefore we had the highest reason to expect elegant (58)
entertainment and philosophical instruction, when the poet and critic was to speak in his own character.

But here, as in the rest of this work, the native vigour of his mind seems entirely to leave him. We look around us in vain for the well known hand of the Rambler, for the sensible and feeling historian of Savage, the caustic and elegant imitator of Juvenal, the man of learning, and taste, and genius. The reader's eye is repelled from the Doctor's pages, by their hopeless sterility, and their horrid nakedness.

Most of the definitions in this work may be divided into three classes; the erroneous, enigmatical, and superfluous. And of the nineteen last quoted, every one comes under some, or all of these heads.

A poem is said to be the work of a *poet*: And so were Dryden's prefaces. Again it is a *metrical composition*. No age had ever a greater profusion of rhimes than the present. In Oxford there are two thousand persons all of whom can occasionally make verses. Yet in this abundance of *metrical composition*, we have very few poems.

A poet is—1. '*An inventor*;' but so was Tubal Cain. 2. '*An author of fiction*;' but so was Des Cartes. 3. '*A writer of poems*;' but as he has not been able to point out what a poem is, the definition goes for nothing. 4. 'One who writes *in measure*.' But in Cowley's life, the Doctor himself speaks of men, who thought they were writing *poetry*, when they were only writing *verses*. We are still exactly where we set out.

The third definition is superfluous, and the fourth is very clumsy. The fifth and sixth are still worse, for comedy^[124] is frequently very *serious* and tender, as well as tragedy; and that again represents the *lighter faults* of mankind, as well as comedy. By the way, what are these *lighter faults*, which our comedy is said to represent. In our comic scenes, adultery, and profaneness, (59)
appear to be the chief pulse of merriment. What the Doctor says of a farce is not true, nor is elegy *always* mournful^[125]. What can he mean by a poem without points or turns? An Idyll is a small short poem. An Epigram is a *short* poem; but so is an Epitaph, or a Sonnet, and often an Ode, a Fable, &c. An Epigram terminates in a *point*. Wonderful! Of the rest of these definitions, the reader will determine whether they be not every one of them pitiful; and if it was possible for the Doctor, or any other man, to convey *less* information, on so plain a subject.

'In comparing this with other dictionaries of the same kind, it will be found that the senses of each word are more *copiously* enumerated, and more *clearly* explained^[126].'

Of his *clear* and *copious* explanations, here is an additional specimen.

Beast. 'An animal distinguished from birds, insects, fishes, and man.' It is also distinguished from *reptiles*, though the Doctor cannot tell us *how*. A Reptile is (but sometimes only) '*An animal that creeps upon many feet*.' A Snail is 'A slimy animal that creeps upon plants.' Many animals creep

on plants besides a Snail. He dare not venture to say that a Snail is a *Reptile*, for he had said that a Reptile creeps upon many feet, and a Snail has none. Locke is quoted to prove that a *Bird* is a *fowl*, and we are edified by hearing that a *fowl* is a '*bird*, or a *winged* animal.' But this may be the butterfly, the bat, or the flying fish. He should have said a *feathered* animal. We are informed from Creech and Shakespeare, that a fish is *an animal that inhabits the water*. But besides amphibious animals, from the crocodile down to the water-mouse, we have seen *Erucae Aquaticæ*, or Water Caterpillars, which are truly aquatic animals, yet are perfectly different from all fish. Insects are 'so called from a separation in the middle of their bodies, whereby they they are cut into two parts, which are joined together by a small ligature, as we see in common flies.' (60)

Quere. How many insects answer this description?

Dr. Johnson had certainly no great occasion to quote Peacham and Swift before he durst tell us, (as he does) that a *Lily* is a *flower*, and *Posteriors* the *hinder* parts. He forgot to introduce the Dean when affirming, that a T—d is *excrement*; but both Pope and Swift (among others) are cited for P—ss and F—t.

His learning and his ignorance amaze us in every page. Pox are, '1. *Pustules; efflorescencies; exanthematous* eruptions. 2. The venereal disease.' A particular species of it *only*. The first part of this *clear* explanation would puzzle every old woman in England, though most of them know more of small pox than the Rambler himself.

Day. '1. The time between the rising and the setting of the sun, called the *artificial* day. 2. The time from noon to noon, called the *natural* day.' Natural. 'What is produced by nature,' therefore as the day from sunrise to sunset is 'produced by nature,' *that*, and that only, must be the *natural* day. Artificial. 'Made by *art*, not natural, fictitious, not genuine.' The day from noon to noon is certainly *not* natural, and of consequence, *that*, and that only, must be the *artificial* day.

Night is, '1. The time of darkness. 2. The time between sunset, and sunrise.' When the Doctor acquires the first elements of geography, he will learn, that in no climate of the world is the time between sunset and sunrise all of it a time of *darkness*. Even at the equator, night does not succeed till half an hour after sunset. If he has ever seen the sun rise here, he must also have seen that we have always day light long before the sun appears. In June our nights are never entirely dark. Neither is *night*, when it really comes on, constantly the 'time of darkness,' for the Doctor may frequently see to read his own mistakes by moonshine. Of this profound period, the first part contradicts the second, and every body sees the absurdity of both. What are we to think of such a definer of 'scientific terms,' when his errors have not even the negative merit of consistency. (61)

Snowbroth, *s. (snow and broth)* 'very cold liquor.' And Shakespeare is quoted; but when the poet said^[127] that the blood of an old courtier was as cold as *Snowbroth*, he meant *melted snow*. Now it is somewhat odd that every body can see Shakespeare's idea exactly, except this learned commentator. Lion. 'The fiercest and most magnanimous of four-footed beasts.' But fierceness cannot consist with magnanimity^[128]. Other animals exceed the Lion in fierceness; and a Horse, an Elephant, or a Dog, equal his magnanimity. This definition contains nothing but a glaring contradiction, of which neither end is true! Thunder 'Thunder is a most *bright flame* rising on a sudden, moving with great violence, and with a very *rapid* velocity, through the air, *according* to any determination, and commonly ending with a loud noise or rattling.' *Shakespeare. Milton*.

It is needless to say that the learned and ingenious Pensioner has confounded thunder with lightning. The inelegance and tautology of this definition I pass by; but why should he profane the names of Milton and Shakespeare to support such monstrous nonsense?

Stone. 'Stones are bodies insipid, hard, not *ductile* or *malleable*, nor *soluble* in water.' This definition answers wood, or glass, or the bones of an animal. One. 'Less than two; single; denoted by an unit.' *Raleigh*.

Without consulting Raleigh, we know that a man may have 'less than *two*' guineas in his pocket, and yet have more than *one*. But still we are not sure, that he has even a single farthing. One is *single*, but we are only where we started, for *single (more Lexiphatico)* is '*one*, not double; not more than one.' The matter is little mended, when he subjoins that one is *that which is expressed by an unit*, for this may be the numerator of *any* fraction. Take his book to pieces, put it into the scales of common sense, and see how it kicks the beam. (62)

A circle is, '1. A line continued till it ends where it began. 2. The space inclosed in a *circular* line. 3. A round body, an orb.'

The first of these definitions does not distinguish a circle from a triangle, or any other plain figure. He might have found a circle properly defined in Euclid, and a hundred other books. What are we to think of the rest of his mathematical definitions? Well, but he clears up this point, for a circle is 'the *space inclosed* in a *circular* line,' The third definition is no less erroneous than the second, for if a man were to mention the circle of the earth, we could not suspect that he meant the globe itself.

Botany and the electrical fluid, are not inserted. Electricity he terms a *property* in bodies. From this expression, and from all he says on the subject, we can ascertain his ignorance of that most curious and important branch of natural philosophy. *Electricity* in general signifies 'the operations of a very subtle fluid, commonly invisible, but sometimes the object of our sight and other senses. It is one of the chief agents employed in producing the phænomena of nature.' Its

identity with lightning was discovered in 1752, three years before the publication of Dr. Johnson's folio dictionary. For the author then to talk of it as 'a *peculiar* property, supposed once to belong chiefly to amber,' is shameful. It shews us the depth of his learning, and the degree of attention which he thought proper to bestow on his *great* work.

Elasticity. 'Force in bodies, by which they endeavour to *restore* themselves.' To what? To their former figure, after some external pressure? And without adding some words like these the definition conveys no meaning. (63)

Of Water, we get a very long winded account, which neither Dr. Johnson nor any body else can comprehend, for he sinks into mere jargon. Canst thou conceive (gentle reader) what are 'small, *smooth*, hard, *porous*, spherical particles' of water! *Water*, says Newton, 'is a fluid tasteless salt, which nature changes by heat, into vapour, and by cold into ice, which is a hard fusible brittle stone, and this stone returns into water by heat^[129].' Boerhaave calls water, 'a kind of glass that melts at a heat any thing greater than 32 degrees of Farenheit's thermometer. The boundary between water and ice^[130].'

Claw. 'The *foot* of a beast or bird armed with sharp nails.' Nail. 'The talons of birds or beasts.' Talon. 'The claw of a bird of prey.' *Dict. 4th edit.*

Here a *nail* is *talons*; Talons are a *claw*; and a claw is said to be a *foot* (alias a *nail*) armed with *nails*. The quotations are literal and complete. The words are all plain English. And if you cannot comprehend a *nail armed with nails*, wait upon Dr. Johnson, and perhaps he will explain it.

Legion. 'A body of Roman soldiers, consisting of about *five* thousand.'

This is not accurate. The number of men in a Roman legion rose by degrees from about 3200 to about 7000.

Decemvirate. 'The dignity and office of the *ten* governors of Rome.' Tribune. 'An officer of Rome chosen by the people.' Censor. 'An officer of Rome, who had the power of correcting manners.' Consul. 'The chief magistrate in the Roman republic.'

Wherein did the Decemviri differ from the King, the Consul, the Dictator, the Triumvir, the Military Tribune, the Cæsar, and the Emperor, for all these were likewise 'Governors of Rome?' The Decemviri were also an inferior set of men appointed to take care of the Sybil's books, to conduct colonies, &c. So that this definition is very incompleat. A Tribune was 'chosen by the people.' But this does not distinguish him from many other magistrates. The Censor had 'the power of correcting manners;' but he had other powers beside that, and every magistrate had that power as well as he, though it was a province more peculiarly his. The Censor is an officer still known in Venice, and in countries where the liberty and abuse of the press are unknown, the licensers of books are called Censors, though the Doctor does not give us these two explanations of the word. A Consul is 'the chief magistrate in the Roman republic.' He was a magistrate long after the republic was dissolved; for Caligula made his horse a Consul! But tho' the Consul was commonly *one* of the chief magistrates in Rome, he was never the *chief*, as the Doctor roundly expresses it, for he had always a colleague. The Censor was at least his equal, and the Dictator was by law his superior. What we learn of the Centurion, the Triumvir, and the Lictor, is very trifling. Innumerable words which puzzle the plain reader of a Roman historian are wanting, such as an Ædile, a Prætor, a Quæstor, a Cæsar, a Military Tribune, the Hastati, Principes, Triarii, Velites, the Labarum, or Imperial Standard, the Balistæ, the Balearians, &c. A *Maniple* is 'a small band of soldiers.' And a Cohort is 'a troop of soldiers, containing about 500 foot.' A Cohort was in general the tenth part of the foot in a Roman Legion, consequently their number varied, and the Prætorian Cohort, or that to which the standard was intrusted, contained, at least in latter ages, many more men than any of the rest. But in the very page where this concise author thus blunders about a Cohort, he takes care to tell us, that *Coition*, is *copulation; the act of generation*. That cold is '*not hot*, not warm, chill, having sense of cold, having cold qualities.' That *coldly* is '*without heat*.' that coldness is '*want of heat*;' and a heap of similar jargon. Blot. 'A blur.' Blur. 'A blot.' (64) (65)

The Doctor's admirers will answer, that in so large a work there was no room for full definitions. I reply, that his account of Whipgrafting, of Will-with-a-Wisp, of a Wood-louse, and of the Stool of Repentance, are very full; that if he was to say no more of a Roman Consul, he should have said nothing at all; but that there are other books of the same kind, and of half the price too, which find room for copious and useful definitions. Pardon's dictionary is not much less than the Doctor's octavo, though its price is only six shillings; (7th edition) and of many useful articles, such as the Roman Legion, there is a very clear and full explanation. Besides which, it contains a description of the counties, the cities, and the market towns in England; and in the end of the book there is inserted a list of near 7000 proper names, none of which are to be found in the Doctor's dictionary. With what then has Dr. Johnson filled his book? With words of his own coining, with roots, and authorities often ridiculous, and always useless; or with definitions impertinent and erroneous. A Bashaw he calls 'the viceroy of a province;' and he might as well have said that every man in England is six feet high. A Condoler is 'one who *compliments* another upon his misfortunes.'

From the Rambler's *accurate* and *profound* knowledge of anatomy, we must form very high expectations as to his knowledge of medicine, and we are not disappointed; for ARTHRITIS is 'the Gout' and the GOUT is 'Arthritis; a *periodical* disease attended with great pain.' The first part of this definition is not true; and the second will not distinguish the Gout from the Gravel, the Tooth-

ach, &c. &c. GRAVEL is 'sandy matter concreted in the kidneys,' and as often in the bladder too. (66)
His account of a Gonorrhœa is no less incomplete. A *Headach* is 'a pain in the head.' *Jaundice* is 'a distemper from obstructions of the glands of the liver, which prevent the gall being duly separated from the blood.' The Doctor seems to have borrowed his system of anatomy from the ancients; for the moderns have discovered that the liver (which he ingeniously calls 'one of the entrails') is itself an indivisible gland. The Jaundice arises from an obstruction in the biliary ducts. Tympany is 'a kind of obstructed *flatulence*, that swells the body like a drum.' *Flatulence* is not inserted; but Flatulency is said to be 'windiness; fulness of wind.' And what does he mean by an obstructed fullness of wind, or by his elegant simile of a drum? His descriptions of the Rickets, Rupture, Rheumatism, Scrophula, Dropsy, Scurvy, &c. are equally perspicuous and perfect. The Doctor had no great occasion to attest, that '*the English dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned*'^[131]. For in almost every department of learning, from astronomy down to the first principles of grammar, his ignorance seems amazing. His book is a mass of words without ideas. Through the whole there runs a radical corruption of truth and common sense. It is most astonishing that the *Idler* has hardly ever been attacked in this quarter by any of his innumerable invidious and inveterate enemies.

I anticipate the answer of his admirers, viz. That 'the *nature* of his work did not admit of a copious explanation for every word.' But let them first tell why he gave such a strange jumble of quotations, to support a word of which he himself knows not the meaning, and are we to be told that the *nature* of *any* work whatever, can entitle its author to write nonsense, or to write on a subject of which he knows nothing. Indeed the Doctor himself has repeatedly declared, that his book is deformed by a profusion of errors, and those who decline to credit my assertion, ought, (67)
PERHAPS, to credit *his own*. He says, 'I cannot hope, in the warmest moments to preserve so much caution through so long a work, as not OFTEN to *sink into negligence*, or to obtain so much knowledge of all its parts as not FREQUENTLY to *fail by ignorance*. I expect that sometimes the desire of accuracy will urge me to superfluities, and sometimes the fear of prolixity betray me to *omissions*; that in the extent of such variety, I shall be OFTEN *bewildered*, and in the mazes of such *intricacy*'^[132], be *frequently entangled*, &c.'^[133] Here is a beautiful confession, which he afterwards recants: for 'despondency has never so far prevailed, as to depress me to *negligence*,' &c.'^[134] But his recantation is in effect immediately *re-recanted*, and we are informed, 'That a few *wild blunders*, and *RISIBLE absurdities*, from which no work of such multiplicity was ever free, may for a time furnish folly with laughter, and harden ignorance into contempt'^[135]. That this distrust of his own merit did not arise from want of pride or vanity we discover within a few lines: For 'in this work' (*the English dictionary*, as its author modestly terms it) 'when it shall be found that *much is omitted*, let it not be forgotten that *much likewise is performed*. If our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt, which no human powers have hitherto completed.—I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which *if* I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude' (*London*, or its neighbourhood) 'what would it avail me'^[136]? And again, 'I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country'^[137]. *Item*. 'I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness.' But after all this parental fondness, this zeal for the honour of his country, the Doctor's extraordinary preface concludes in perhaps the most (68)
extraordinary language that ever flowed from an author's pen. 'Success and miscarriage are *empty sounds*, I therefore dismiss it' (his dictionary) 'with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or *hope* from censure, or from praise.' All this is surely despicable. The booksellers had paid their workman on the nail, or the Doctor would have had something to hope and fear. But an honest and sensible tradesman, though paid before-hand, will always wish and endeavour to please his employers. From this writer's own words, it would appear that he is incapable of a sentiment so generous.

Bawd 'A Procurer, or Procuress.' To bawd, *v. n.* 'To procure.' Bawdily (from *bawdy*) 'obscenely.' Bawdiness (from *bawdy*) 'obsceneness.' Bawdry, *s.* '1. A wicked practise of procuring and bringing whores and *rogues* together. 2. Obscenity.' Bawdy, *a.* (from *bawdy*) 'Obscene, unchaste.' Bawdyhouse. 'A house where traffic is made by wickedness and debauchery.' Baggage. 'A worthless woman.' Bitch. '1. The female of the *canine* kind. 2. A name of reproach for a woman.' Blackguard^[138]. 'A dirty fellow.' Block. 'A Blockhead.' Blockhead. 'A stupid fellow; a dolt; a man without parts,' Blunderer. 'A blockhead.' Blockhead 'A stupid fellow' Bloodletter. '*A Phlebotomist*.' Suds. '*A Lixivium* of soap and water.' Sun. 'The luminary that makes the day.'

The English dictionary is prodigiously defective—*Nervi desunt*. It has no force of thought. This wilderness of words displays a mind, patient, but almost incapable of reasoning; ignorant, but oppressed by a load of frivolous ideas; proud of its own powers, but languishing in the last stage of hopeless debility. We have long extolled it with the wildest luxuriance of adulation, and we pretend to despise the worshippers of *the golden calf*. (69)

No man has done more honour to England, than Mr Locke. What would he have said or thought, had Dr Johnson's dictionary been published in his days? We can easily determine his opinion from several passages in his works. I select the following, because it is both short and decisive; and he who feels any respect for Mr Locke will retain little for the author of the *Rambler*. His words are these: 'If any one asks *what this solidity is*'^[139], I send him to his senses to inform him. Let him put a flint, or a football between his hands, and then endeavour to join them *and he will know*. If he thinks this not a sufficient explication of *solidity*, what it is, and wherein it consists, I promise to tell him, what it is, and wherein it consists, when he tells me, what *thinking* is, or wherein it consists, or explains to me what *extension* or *motion* is, which perhaps seems much easier. The

simple ideas we have are such as experience teaches them us; but *if, beyond that, we endeavour by words to make them clearer* in the mind, we shall succeed no better, than if we went about to clear up the darkness of a blind man's mind by talking, and discourse into him the ideas of light and colours^[140].'

In the title page of his octavo, we learn, that 'the words are deduced from their originals.' And in the preface, he adds, that 'the etymologies and derivations, whether from foreign languages or native roots, are more diligently traced, and more distinctly noted, than in other dictionaries of the same kind.' Mr Whitaker assures us that in this single article the Doctor has committed upwards of *three thousand* errors: And the historical pioneer produces abundant evidence in support of his assertion^[141]. But independent of this curious circumstance, let us ask the Doctor what he means by crowding such trifles into an abstract, which is, he says, intended for those who are 'to gain degrees of knowledge suitable to lower characters, or necessary to the common business of life.' To tell such people, that the word *porridgepot* is compounded of *porridge*, and *pot*, is to insult their understandings; and of his Greek and Saxon roots, not one individual in a thousand can read even a single letter. The preface commences with a pitiful untruth. Having mentioned the publication of his folio dictionary, he subjoins, 'it has *since* been considered that works of that kind are by no means necessary for the bulk of readers.' Here he would insinuate that the *abstract* was an *after-thought*: But every body sees, that its publication was delayed, only to accelerate the sale of his folio dictionary. There is not room now left, to dissect every sentence in the preface to his octavo. I shall therefore conclude that subject with one particular, wherein the Doctor's taste, learning, and genius, blaze in their meridian. (70)

In the title page to his octavo dictionary, we are informed, that the words are 'authorised by the names of the writers in whose works they are found.' And this tale is repeated at greater length in the preface, where 'it will be found that truth requires him to *say less*^[142]': For under letter A only, there are between four and five hundred words, for which the *Idler* has not assigned any authority—and of these one hundred and eighty are to be found in no language under heaven. He boasts indeed that his dictionary 'contains many words not to be found in any other.' But it also contains many words, not to be found at all in any other book. If we compute that letter A has a thirteenth part of these *recruits*, we shall find that the whole number scattered through his compilation exceeds two thousand. A purchaser of his *abstract* has a title to ask the Doctor, why the work is loaded with such a profusion of trash, which serves only to testify the folly of him who collected or created it. Men of eminent learning have been consulted, who disown all acquaintance (in English) with most articles in the following list: (71)

Abacus, Abandonement, Abarticulation, Abcedarian, Abcedary, Aberrant, Aberuncate, Abject, *v. a.* Ablactate, Ablactation, Ablation, Ablegate, Ablegation, Ablepsy, Abluent, Abrasion, Abscissa, Absinthiated, Abitention, Absterge, Accessariness, Accidentalness, Accipient, Acclivious, Accolent, Accompanable, Accroach, Accustomarily, Acroamatical, Acronycal, Acroters, or Acroteria, Acuate, Aculerate, Addulce, Addenography, Ademption, Adiaphory, Adjectitious, *Adition*, Abstergent, Acceptilation, Adjugate, Adjument, Adjunction, Adjunctive, Adjutor, Adjutory, Adjuvant, Adjuvate, Admensuration, Adminicle, Adminicular, Admix, Admonishment, *Admurmuration*, Adscititious, Adstriction, Advesperate, Adulator, Adulterant, Adulterine, Adumbrant, Advolution, Advolution, Adustible, Aerology, Aeromancy, Aerometry, Aeroscopy, Affabrous, Affectuous, Affixion, Afflation, Afflatus, Agglomerate, Agnation, Agnition, Agreeingness, Alate, Abb, Alegar, Alligate, Alligation, Allocution, Amalgmate, Amandation, Ambidexterity, Ambilogy, Ambiloquous, Ambry, Ambustion, Amende, Amercer, Amethodical, *Amphibological*, *Amphibologically*, Amphisch, Amplificate, Amygdalate, Amygdaline, Anacamptick, Anacampticks, *Analecticks*, Anadiplosis, Anagogetical, Anagrammatize, Anamorphosis, Anaphora, Anastomosis, Anastrophe, Anathematical, Androgynal, Androgynally, Androgynus, Anemography, Anemometer, *Anfractuosity*, Angelicalness, *Angiomonospermous*, Angularity, Angularness, Anhelation, Aniented, Anileness, Anility, Animative, Annumerate, Annumeration, Annunciate, Anomalously, Ansated, Antaphroditick, Antapoplectick, Antarthritick, Antasthmatick, Anteact, Auscultation, Antemundane, Antepenult, Antepredicament, Anthology, Anthroposophy, Anthypnotick, Antichristianity, Auxiliation, Antinephritick, Antinomy, Antiquatedness, Apert, Apertly, Aphilanthropy, Aphrodisiacal, Aphrodisiack, Apocope, Apocryphalness, Apomecometry, Appellatory, Apsis, Aptate, Aptote, Aqua, Aquatile, Aqueousness, Aquose, Aquosity, Araignee, Aratory, Arbuscle, Archchanter, Archaiology, Archailogick, Archeus, Arcuation, Arenose, Arenulous, Argil, Argillaceous, Argute, Arietate, Aristocraticallness, Armental, Armentine, Armigerous, Armillary, Armipotence, Arrentation, Arreptitious, Arrison, Authentickness, Arroasion, Articular, Articulateness, Austral, Arundinaceous, Arundineous, Asbestine, Ascriptitious, Asinary, Asperation, Asperifolious, Aspirate, *v. a.* Assassinator, Assumptive, Astonishingness, Astrography, Attiguous, Attinge, Aucupation, Avowee. (72)

Of these words about forty only are proper, yet though they are so, and though they are frequently to be found in the best authors, yet the Doctor has not given any authority for them. His reading therefore must have been very circumscribed, or his negligence very great. Is the word *Avowee*, for instance, one of those which 'are however, to be yet considered as resting only upon the credit of former dictionaries^[143].' Besides these forty, there are under letter A, some hundreds of the most common words, for which no author's name is quoted. A gross omission according to the plan which he lays down.

Let us put the case, that a foreigner sits down to compose a page of English, by the help of Dr Johnson's work. The strange combinations of letters (for I dare not call them words) which swell his book to its present bloated size, are not marked with an asterisk, to distinguish them as

barbarous: The novice would therefore adopt a stile unknown to any native of England. Here is a short specimen of what he would say.

(73)

'An *Admurmuration* has long wandered about the world, that the pensioner's political principles are *anfractuouſ*. Their *anfractuouſneſs*, their *inſipience*, and their *turpitude*, are no longer *amphibological*. His *nefarious repercuſion* of *obloquy* muſt *contaminate*, and *obumbrate*, and who can tell but it may even *aberuncate* his *feculent* and *excrementitious celebrity*. His *perſpicacity* will ſee without *comity*, or *hilarity*, that his character as an author and a gentleman, requires *reſuſcitation*, for it is neither *immane* nor *immarceſſible*. This is a *homogeneous truth*^[144]. Let him diſtend, like the *flaccid* ſides of a football^[145], his *ſal*, his *ſapience*, and his powers of *rationation*. The *mellifluous* and *numeroſe cadence* of *equiponderant* periods cannot ensure him from a *luxation*, a *laceration*, and a *reſiliency* of his *adminicular concatenation* with the *rugged mercantile race*^[146]. The loſs of this *adſcitiouſ adminicle* would make the ſage's *impeccable*, but *lugubrious* boſom vibrate with the horrors of *dilution* and *dereliction*. His organs of viſion would guſh with *ſalsamentariouſ* torrents of ſpherical particles, of equal diameters, and of equal ſpecific gravities, as Dr Cheyne obſerves—their ſmoothneſs—their ſphericity—their frictions, and their hardneſs,^[147] &c.

To the laſt edition (the 4th) of the folio dictionary, there is prefixed an advertisement, from which I have extracted a few lines: 'Finding my dictionary about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured by a reviſal to make it leſs reprehensible. I will not deny that I found *many parts requiring emendation*, and *many more capable of improvement*. *Many faults* I have corrected, ſome ſuperfluities I have taken away, and ſome deficiencies I have ſupplied. I have methodiſed ſome parts that were *diſordered*, and illuminated ſome that were *obſcure*. Yet the changes or additions bear a very ſmall proportion to the whole.' That his improvements, bear a very ſmall proportion to the quantity of errors ſtill in his book is true, for after a long and painful ſearch, I have only been able to trace out ONE alteration. The word *Gazetteer* is now defined without that inſolent ſcurrility formerly quoted. But in this correct edition, thunder continues to be a *moſt bright flame*. Whig is ſtill the name of a faction; and a Tory is ſaid to be an adherent to the antient conſtitution of England. Oats, Excize, *Monarch*, &c. are all in the ſame ſtile. Nowiſe, *n. s.* '(no and wiſe: this is commonly ſpoken and written by IGNORANT BARBARIANS, *noways*). Not in any manner, or degree.' Theorem, *n. s.* 'A poſition laid down as an acknowledged truth.'

(74)

Here a ſchoolboy can detect the Doctor's ignorance, for every body knows that this word has the *opposite* meaning, which is indeed evident from the quotations that are intended to exemplify it.

'Having found this the head *theorem* of all their diſcourſes, we hold it neceſſary that the *proofs* thereof be weighed.' *Hooker*. 'Here are three *theorems*, that from thence we may draw ſome concluſions^[148].' *Dryden*. No words can paint the Doctor's want of attention.

To piſs, *v. n.* (piſſer Fr. piſſen Dutch) 'To make water. I charge the *piſſing conduit* run nothing but claret. *Shakespeare*. One aſs piſſes, the reſt *piſs* for company. *L'Eſtrange*. The wanton boys *piſs* upon your grave. *Dryden*.' Whoredom, *n. s.* (from *whore*) 'Fornication. Some let go *whoredom* as an indifferent matter. *Hale*.' Whoriſh, *a.* (from *whore*) 'Unchaſte, incontinent. By means of a *whoriſh* woman a man is brought to a piece of *bread*. *Proverbs*. I had as lief you ſhould tell me of a meſs of *porridge*^[149].'

The reader has ſeen what a profuſion of low, and even blackguard expreſſions are to be met with in the Doctor's celebrated work. I ſhall now give an additional ſpecimen of his *great* work; and if, like ſome American ſavages, we cannot count our fingers, Dr Johnson himſelf will teach us how to do it; for he tells us, on *Shakespeare's* authority, that two is, 'one and one,' Pope and Creech are quoted to prove, that three is, 'two and one.' Four is, 'two and two;' and, if you have the leaſt doubt that 'four and one' make five, or that five is, 'the half of ten,' you will be ſilenced by the name of *Dryden*. Six is, 'twice three, one more than five.' Seven is, 'four and three, one more than ſix.' Eight is, 'twice four, a word of number.' Nine is, 'one more than eight.' Ninth is, 'that which precedes the tenth.' Ten is, 'the decimal number, twice five.' Tenth is, 'firſt after the ninth, the ordinal of ten.' Eleven is, 'ten and one.' Eleventh is, 'the next in order to the tenth, and is derived from eleven.' Twelve is, 'two and ten;' and twelfth, 'ſecond after the tenth, the ordinal of twelve.' Thirteen is, 'ten and three.' Fourteen is, 'four and ten.' Fifteen is, 'five and ten.' Fifteen, 'the ordinal of fifteen, the fifth after the tenth;' and, if you entertain any ſuſpicion as to the verity of theſe definitions, read over Boyle, Brown, *Dryden*, *Moses*, *Raleigh*, *Sandys*, *Shakespeare*, and *Bacon*. Thirdly is, in the 'third place.' Thrice, 'three times,' threefold, 'thrice repeated, conſiſting of three.' Threepence, (*three* and *pence*) 'a ſmall ſilver coin, valued at thrice a penny.' Threſcore, *a.* (*three* and *ſcore*) 'thrice twenty, ſixty.' Pope, *Raleigh*, *Wiſeman*, *Shakespeare*, *Brown*, *Dryden*, and *Spencer*, are cited to convince you, that theſe explanations are accurate. And the other articles of numeration, with all their derivations, definitions, and the paſſages which are quoted to ſupport them, would fill a ſixpenny pamphlet. And this is one recipe for making a book worth four guineas!

(75)

A farthing is, 'the fourth part of a penny, and a penny is, a *ſmall coin*^[150], of which twelve make a ſhilling.' A ſhilling is 'now twelve pence.' A Pound is, 'the ſum of twenty ſhillings;' and, if thou haſt forgot the worth of a Guinea, know that it is 'a gold coin, valued at one and twenty ſhillings;' for *Dryden*, *Locke*, and *Cocker*, have ſaid all this. A Punk is, 'a whore, a common prostitute;' and a Puppy is, 'a whelp, the progeny of a bitch, a name of contemptuous reproach to a man.' To *Mew* is, 'to cry as a cat.' To *Kaw* is, 'to cry as a Raven, Crow, or Rook; and the cry of a Raven or Crow (and he might have added, of a Jack Daw too) is kaw.'

(76)

'There are men (says Dr Johnson) who claim the name of authors, merely to disgrace it, and fill the world with volumes, only to bury letters in their own rubbish. The traveller who tells, in a pompous Folio, that he saw the *Pantheon* at *Rome*, and the *Medicean Venus* at *Florence*; the natural historian, who, describing the productions of a narrow island, recounts all that it has in common with every other part of the world; the collector of antiquities, that accounts every thing a curiosity, which the ruins of Herculaneum happen to emit, though an instrument already shown in a thousand repositories, or a cup common to the antients, the moderns, and all mankind, may be justly censured as the persecutors of students, and the *thieves* of that time, which never can be restored^[151].'

The traveller who visits Rome and Florence, and gives an account of what he saw to the world, without describing the Pantheon and the Medicean Venus, will, very properly, be censured as an ignorant and tasteless wanderer. The historian who describes an island, whether wide or narrow, ought to begin by telling if it produces water, grass, wood, and corn. A sword, a bow, and a dagger, are common to the antients, the moderns, and almost all mankind; yet, if any Roman military weapon were discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum, it would deservedly be the object of curiosity, and a collector of antiquities might describe it without being censured, in Dr Johnson's polite style, as a *thief of time*. Of this passage, however, the leading idea is just; and, had the Doctor been able to express himself with precision, it would have served, in an admirable manner, to delineate the character of the author of those passages which we have just now been reading from his Dictionary. (77)

A Puppy is said to be, 'the progeny of a bitch,' but so is the bitch herself. Repleviable is, 'what may be *replevined*.' Repair is, 'reparation;' and reparation is, 'the act of repairing.' A Republican is, 'one who thinks a commonwealth, without monarchy, the best government.' But this is only half a definition; for every subject of a republic, is a republican, whether he think it the best government or not. Republican, a. (from republic) is, 'placing the government in the people.' Is Venice under the government of the people? It is curious enough to hear such an author as Ben Johnson cited to prove what a republic is. The reader will compute what title the Doctor has to the character given him by a late writer, viz. that 'his great learning and genius render him one of the most *shining* ornaments of the present age.' A Looking-glass is, 'a glass which shews forms reflected;' but so will a common glass bottle; though we never term it a looking-glass. He says it is compounded of *look* and *glass*; but, if the reader happens to think it is derived from *looking* and *glass*, the Doctor cannot confute him. A knave is, 'a petty rascal, a scoundrel.' A *Loon* is, 'a sorry fellow, a scoundrel.' A *Looby* is, 'a lubber, a clumsy clown.' A *Lubber* is, 'a sturdy drone, an idle, fat, bulky *losel*, a booby.' A *Losel* is, 'a scoundrel, a sorry worthless fellow.' A *Lubbard* is, 'a lazy sturdy fellow.' A *Booby* is—but you must know what it is, while you read, in these elegant definitions, the taste and genius of Dr Johnson. He says, that Bone is, 'the solid parts of the body of an animal.' Are not the fat and the muscles also solid? A Volume is, 'something rolled or convolved;' and so is a barrel, a foot-ball, and a blanket. But a volume is likewise '*as much as seems convolved at once*;' an expression hardly intelligible; and it is a book. A Book, we are told, is, 'a volume, in which we read or write;' and whether we read and write in it or not. (78)

'V has two powers expressed in English by two characters, v, consonant, and u, vowel.' One would think these were two different letters, as much as any others in the alphabet. The same remark applies to letters I and J, which the Doctor has blended. It is remarkable that this *English* Dictionary begins with a *Latin* word; and the Doctor has inserted it without giving an authority.

A Ketch is, 'a *heavy ship*;' and a Junk is, 'a *small* ship of China.' A Sloop is, 'a small ship;' and a Brigantine is, 'a light vessel;' but, it would have required little learning or ingenuity to have said, that, in our marine, a sloop has only one mast, except sloops of war, which have three; and, that a brigantine is a merchant ship with two. A brig, a lugger, a hooker, a schooner, a galliot, a galleon, a proa, a punt, a xebeque, and a snow, are not inserted in this *complete* English Dictionary; but a Cutter is, 'a nimble boat that *cuts* the water.' Did we ever hear of a boat that did not cut the water? This explanation, like that of at least twenty thousand others, is defective; because, besides a man of war's boat, the word Cutter is applied to a small vessel with one mast, rigged as a sloop, that sails very near the *wind*; from which peculiarity, its appellation is derived.

A Cannon is, 'a gun larger than can be managed by the hand.' Cannon-ball and Cannon shot are, 'the balls which are shot from great guns.' Mr Locke is cited to shew, that *cannot* is compounded of *can* and *not*. Menstruous is, 'having the catamenia;' and this last word is wanting, a frequent mode of *definition* in this book. The Eye is, 'the organ of vision.' Eye-drop, (*eye* and *drop*) 'tear.' See also Eye-ball, Eye-brow, Eye-glance, Eye-glass, Eyeless, Eye-lid, Eye-sight, Eye-sore, Eye-tooth, Eye-wink, Eye-witness. Eye-string is, 'the string of the eye'^[152]. The following names are cited to support the explanations: Dryden, Spencer, Newton, Milton, Garth, Bacon, Samuel, Peter, and Shakespeare four times. The man who can make such a pedantic parade of erudition, must be a mere quack in the business of book-building; and the reader who thinks himself edified by hearing, that an eye-wink is, 'a wink as a hint or token,' must be an object of pity. But there is no such reader. *Quere*. Do we never wink but as a hint or token? Anchor is, 'a species of the *Herpes*;' and Hey, 'an expression of joy.' A Mocker is, 'one who mocks;' and a Laughing-stock, (*laugh* and *stock*) a 'butt, an object of ridicule.' Iron, a. is, 'made of iron;' and Iron, s. is said to be, 'a metal common to all parts of the world;' which is not the fact. (79)

Numskull, *s.* (*numb* and *skull*) 'a *Dullard*; a dunce; a dolt; a blockhead.' Numskulled, *a.* (from *Numskull*) 'dull; stupid; doltish.' Nun, *s.* 'a woman dedicated to the severer duties of religion, secluded in a cloister from the world.' The Nuns of London were *not* employed in the severer

duties of religion, which has nothing to do with severity. The institution of nunneries is the most atrocious insult upon human feelings, that ever disgraced the selfish and brutal policy of the Roman priesthood, and its consequences are the most shocking and criminal. The man who would palliate such an outrage on Christianity, deserves no quarter^[153]. From this sample of his good sense and piety, one would hardly rank the Rambler above 'a domestic animal, that catches mice.' (80)

Jack is, '1. The diminutive of John. 2. The name of *instruments*, which supply the place of a boy, as an *instrument* to pull off boots.' Bronchocele, *s.* 'a tumor of that part of the *aspera tertia*, called the *Bronchos*,' and this last word is wanting. Broom is 'a shrub;' and Brogue 'a kind of shoe.' See also Broomstaff, Broomy, Broth, Brothel, and Brothelhouse. Bubo, 'the groin from the bending of the thigh to the *scrotum*;' but the *scrotum* is not explained.

Snot. 'The mucus of the nose.' Nose. 'The prominence on the face, which is the organ of *scent*, and the emunctory of the brain.'

He should have said the organ of *smell*, for we do not say the sense of *scenting*. But from what he says of them, it appears that he is ignorant of the distinction between these two words. If the nose were the emunctory of the brain (which every surgeon's apprentice knows that it is *not*), in that case snot could not be the mucus of the nose, but the mucus of the brain. It belongs to neither. It is entirely, or principally formed in the glands of the throat, as we see every day in coughing. To contradict such inconsistencies, would be below the dignity of any writer, if they were found in a book less famous than the English Dictionary. (81)

Rust. 'The red *Desquamation* of old iron.' Desquamation. 'The act of scaling foul bones.' Sinew. '1. A tendon; the ligaments by which the joints are moved. 2. *Muscle* or *nerve*!' Other metals rust as well as iron, and rust is not always red; that of copper for instance is blue or green. It is not quite clear why the word *Desquamation* is introduced. But his account of *sinew* exceeds every thing of the kind.

Highflier. 'One that carries his opinion to extravagance.' The word relates to a particular set of men in this country, and to them only. A Dervise, a Friar, and a Bramin, profess extravagant opinions; but an English writer would not call them *Highfliers*, nor would he be understood if he did.

Chervill. 'An *umbelliferous* plant.' Periwig. '*Adscititious* hair.' Chemist, and Chemistry are omitted, but Chymistry is, 'philosophy by FIRE;' and Chymist, 'a philosopher by FIRE!' With what inexpressible contempt would the youngest of Dr Black's audience hear these definitions? The folly of the man, who can scribble such jargon is eclipsed by the superlative ignorance of those who vindicate and admire him. Dr Johnson asserts, that Shakespeare 'has corrupted language by every mode of depravation^[154].' The remark applies to himself. And his advocates must allow, that 'they endure in *him* what they should in another loath and despise^[155].' Indeed I can very well believe the Doctor, when he says, that his book was composed while he was in a state of DISTRACTION^[156]. For the honour of his veracity, we may hope, that he was likewise *distracted* when he observed of the social, facetious, and celebrated John Wilkes, Esq; that 'Lampoon would disdain to speak ill of him, of whom no man speaks well^[157].' (82)

Part of his book has merit; but take it altogether, and perhaps it is the strangest farrago which pedantry ever produced. It will be said that these are partial specimens, but we have traced him through various *ramifications* of learning, and found his ignorance extreme. A sensible reader will try his own abilities, in judging of the Doctor's *great* performance. Nor will he throw down this pamphlet without a candid perusal, because, by some unaccountable infatuation, the dictionary has for twenty seven years been admired by thousands and ten thousands, who have never *seen* it. Let us exert that courage of thought, and that contempt of quackery, which to feel, and to display, is the privilege and the pride of a Briton. In a country where no man fears his king, can any man fear the sound of a celebrated name, or crouch behind the the banner of Dullness, because it is born by SAMUEL JOHNSON, A. M. & LL.D.?

I shall now take leave of this enormous compilation, and return, for a few pages, to the rest of his works.

Speaking of Pope's edition of Shakespeare, Dr Johnson observes, 'That on this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds, twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards *without vexation*^[158].' The Doctor ought never to reflect 'without vexation' on his own edition of Shakespeare. He published his proposals in 1756, but the work itself did not appear till 1768, and then, though the world was warmly prejudiced in his favour, and tho' he had plundered every thing which he thought valuable, from all his predecessors, yet his performance was received with general disregard. His preface was the particular butt of censure; his deficiencies were detected 'with all the insolence of victory;' and the public were, for once, inclined to say of him, what he says of Mr Theobald, viz. that he was 'a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers^[159].' (83)

Indeed the Doctor persecutes the name of Theobald with the most rancorous spirit of revenge. In his proposals for printing Shakespeare, he tells us, 'that Mr Theobald, if fame be just to his

memory, considered his learning only as an instrument of gain, and made no farther enquiry after his authour's meaning, when once he had notes sufficient to embellish his page with the expected decorations.' If Theobald was poor, he was certainly prudent in considering his learning as an instrument of gain. In this point, he has been exactly copied by no less a personage than Dr Johnson himself. But the Doctor has not ventured to say that Theobald was a venal prostituted dabbler in politics; that he insulted his King, till he received a pension; and that when he had received his pension, he insulted his country. No. 'The old books, the cold pedantry, and sluggish pertinacity of Theobald,' never excited the serious contempt or indignation of mankind. Dr Johnson asserts, 'That when Theobald published Shakespeare in opposition to Pope, the *best* notes were supplied by Warburton^[160].' This is an assertion without a proof, and merits no regard; for his veracity keeps pace with his candour.

The admirers of Pope will be sensible of the good nature and honesty of Dr Johnson, from the following unqualified assertion: 'The great object of his (Pope's) ridicule is *poverty*; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion, not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing^[161].' The crimes with which Pope reproaches the Duncenian heroes are slander and *forgery*^[162], most of them were not only bad writers, but bad men; and it is only in the latter point of view, that the poet considered them as fair objects of ridicule. Had Pope been capable of insulting honest indigence, his reputation and his glory must have been for ever blasted. The humanity of Englishmen would have rejected, with horror, such impious wit. The last part of this malicious paragraph is, after a few pages, contradicted by Dr Johnson himself. Had Pope been of opinion, that *to want money is to want every thing*, he would not have assisted Dodsley 'with a hundred pounds that he might open a shop—of the subscription of forty pounds a-year that he raised for Savage, TWENTY were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it. In the duties of friendship, he was zealous and constant. It does not appear that he lost a *single* friend by coldness, or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness^[163].' This cannot be the picture of a man who insulted innocent misery. (84)

The Doctor is perpetually giving us strokes of his own character. Thus, of Mr Thomson we are informed, 'that he was "more fat than bard beseems," of a *dull* countenance, and a *gross, unanimated, uninviting* appearance.' This is the Rambler's portrait, but when applied to the author of the Seasons, it is not true, for Mr Murdoch assures us, 'that his worst appearance was, when you saw him walking alone, in a thoughtful mood; but let a friend accost him, and enter into conversation, he would instantly brighten into a most amiable aspect, his features no longer the same, and his eye darting a peculiar animated fire. His looks always announced, and half expressed what he was about to say^[164].'

The Doctor fills up several pages with blotted variations from Pope's manuscript translation of the Iliad. He exults in this precious production, and foresees that the wisest of his readers will wish for more. Having perused a few lines of it only, I cannot pretend to rate the value of this commodity: But a plain reader will be apt to suspect that the Doctor has on this, as on former occasions, adopted the prudent proverb, *multum scribere, multum solvere*. If Lexiphanes *overflows with Greek*, he may, by comparing Pope with Homer, afford much entertainment. (85)

'Wives and husbands are, indeed, incessantly complaining of each other^[165].'—Not unless both are fools, nor always then. For the credit of its author, I suppress the sequel of this unhappy period.

Dr Johnson observes, that Mr Addison, 'by a serious display of the beauties of Chevy Chase, exposed himself to the ridicule of Wagstaff.—In Chevy Chase there is *not much* of either bombast or affectation, but there is chill and lifeless imbecility. The story cannot possibly be told in a manner that shall make *less* impression on the mind^[166].' This is a most scandalous criticism; no man who ever heard the ballad, will hear it with patience. The Doctor's pious intention seems to have been to lessen the reputation of Addison. Let him who falsifies without shame, be chastised without mercy^[167]. (86)

Though Dr Johnson long acted as Reviewer of books for the Gentleman's Magazine, and though he often exercised his pen in that capacity with the most grovelling insolence, yet he cannot speak with patience of his rivals in that branch of trade. 'We have now,' says he, 'among other disturbers of human quiet, a numerous body of Reviewers and Remarkers^[168].' He is angry with Lord Lyttleton, for having once condescended to correspond with the Critical Reviewers. He observes, that the CRITICAL REVIEWERS, 'can satisfy their hunger only by devouring their brethren. I am far from imagining that they are naturally more ravenous or blood-thirsty, than those on whom they fall with so much violence and fury; but they are *hungry*, and *hunger* must be satisfied; and these SAVAGES, when their bellies are full, will fawn on those whom they now bite^[169].' They have lately^[170] celebrated the Doctor's great candour, of which this passage is the best evidence that 'will easily be found.'

I finish this essay by reciting the circumstance which gave it birth.

In 1778, Mr William Shaw published an Analysis of the Gaelic language. He quoted specimens of Gaelic poetry, and harangued on its beauties, with the aukward elocution of one who did not understand them. A few months ago, he printed a pamphlet. He traduced decent characters. He

denied the existence of Gaelic poetry, and his name was echoed in the newspapers as a miracle of candour. Is there in the annals of Grubæan impudence any parallel to this? Is there any nation in the world except *one*, perpetually deluded by a succession of impostors? Are these the blessed fruits of that freedom which patriots perish to defend? If there be no pillory, no whipping post for such accumulated guilt, we may truly say with Shakespeare, that 'Liberty plucks Justice by the nose.' This incomparable bookbuilder, who writes a dictionary before he can write grammar, had previously boasted what a harvest he would reap from English credulity. He was not deceived. The bait was caught; and the voice of truth was for some time drowned in the clamours of the rabble. Mr Shaw wants only money. He thinks only how to get it, and with a courage that is respectable, avowed his intentions. But better things might have been expected from the moral and majestic author of the Rambler. He must have seen the Analysis of the Gaelic language, for Shaw mentions him as the patron of that work. He must have seen the specimens of Celtic poetry there inserted. That he is likewise the patron of this poor scribble, no man, I suppose, will offer to deny. From this single circumstance, Dr Johnson stands convicted of *an illiberal intention to deceive*. Candour can hardly hesitate to sum up his character in the vulgar but expressive polysyllable.

(87)

It will be demanded, why a private individual, without interest or connections, presumes to interfere in the quarrels of the learned? But when the most shameless of mankind, is *hired* to abuse the characters of his countrymen, to blast the reputations of the living and the dead; when *such* a tool is employed for *such* a purpose, that those who are insulted cannot with propriety stoop to a reply,—THEN the highest degree of goodness may degenerate into the lowest degree of weakness, silence becomes approbation, and tenderness and delicacy deserve different names. He is unfit to be the friend of virtue who cannot defend her dignity; who dares not execute her vengeance. In this shameful affair, one circumstance does honour to Dr Johnson. *His friendship is not exhausted in a compliment*. He does not excite expectation merely to disappoint it. He resembles not some perfidious wretches, whom his intrepid eloquence hath so properly pointed out to public indignation. Exerting the generosity which often ennobles the character of an Englishman, he engages not his dependant in a performance for which he scruples to pay.

(88)

To glean the tittle of this man's absurdities cannot be of peculiar consequence to me: But the world is long since weary of his arrogant pedantry, his officious malice, his detested assiduity to undermine his superiors, and overbear his equals. Reformation is never quite hopeless, and by submitting to make a catalogue of his errors, there is a chance to humble and reform him. Perhaps indeed, like '*The drudges of sedition*, HE will hear in sullen silence, HE will feel conviction without shame, and be confounded, but not abashed^[171].' I have not arrested a few careless expressions, which, in the glow of composition, will sometimes escape, but by fair, and copious quotations from Dr Johnson's ponderous abortions, have attempted to illustrate his covetous and shameless prolixity; his corruptions of our language; his very limited literature; his entire want of general learning; his antipathy to rival merit; his paralytick reasoning; his solemn trifling pedantry; his narrow views of human life; his adherence to contradictions; his defiance of decency; and his contempt of truth. I have not been sporting in the mere wantonness of assertion. I have produced such various, such invincible, such damning proofs, that the Doctor himself must feel a burst of conviction. To collect every particle of *inanity* which may be found in our *patriot's* works is infinitely beyond the limits of an eighteen-pence pamphlet. I stop at present here, but the subject seems *inexhaustible*^[172]!

(89)

FINIS.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Read Mr Mason's Ode to Truth, and pick out a single sentiment if you can.
- [2] World, No. 100.
- [3] Swift had the splendid misfortune to be a man of genius. By a very singular felicity, he excelled both in verse and prose. He boasted, that no *new* word was to be found in his volumes; though, in glory above all writers of his time, he did not fancy *that* entitled him to ingross or insult conversation. He was no less remarkably clean, than *some* are remarkably dirty. His love of fame never led him into the lowest of all vices; and a sense of his own dignity made him respect the importance and the feelings of others. He often went many miles on foot, that he might be able to bestow on the poor, what a coach would have cost him. He raised some hundreds of families from beggary, by lending them five pounds a-piece only. He inspired his footmen with Celtic attachment. Whatever was his pride, he shewed none of it in 'the venerable presence of misery.' Though a poet he was free from vanity; though an author and a divine, his example did not fall behind his precepts; though a courtier, he disdained to fawn on his superiors; though a patriot, he never, like our successive generations of blasted orators, sacrificed his principles to his passions. 'His meanest talent was his wit.' His learning had no pedantry, his piety no superstition; his benevolence almost no parallel. His intrepid eloquence first pointed out to his oppressed countrymen, that path to Independence, to happiness, and to glory, which their posterity, at this moment, so nobly pursue. His treatise on the conduct of their foreign allies, first taught the English nation the dangers of a continental war, dispelled their delusive dreams of conquest, and stopt them in the full career to ruin.
- [4] See parallel between Diogenes and Dr Johnson in Town and Country Magazine. In his life

of Swift, the Doctor tells us, that 'he relieved without pity, and assisted without kindness.'

[5] Idler, No. 70.

[6] Preface to Shakespeare.

[7] Life of Pope.

[8] The following extracts from the Doctor's Dictionary are a key to his political tenets: *Excise*, a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged, not by the common judges of property, but *wretches* hired by those to whom excise is paid. *Gazetteer*, was lately a term of the utmost infamy, being usually applied to wretches that were *hired* to vindicate the court. *Pension*, an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country. *Pensioner*, a slave of state, hired by a stipend to obey his master. *King*, monarch, supreme governour. *Monarch*, a governour invested with *absolute* authority, a *King*. *Whig*, 1. whey, 2. the name of a *faction*. *Tory*, one who adheres to the *antient* constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the church of England, opposed to a *whig*. *Johnson's fol. Dic.* The word *faction* is always used in a *bad* sense; though, in defining it, the Doctor did not, and, after what he had said of a whig, perhaps durst not say, that a faction is always a term for the supposed disturbers of public peace. 'The most obsequious of the slaves of pride, the most rapturous of the gazers upon wealth, the most officious of the whisperers of greatness, are collected from seminaries appropriated to the study of wisdom and of virtue;' *Rambler*, No. 180. That is to say, men of learning are a set of the most sneaking, pitiful, time-serving rascals. The reader will make his own applications.

[9] See *Political tracts by the author of the Rambler*. His character of Hambden, the reader will find in the 1st page of Waller's life. Of Milton, he says, that 'his impudence had been at least equal to his other powers. Such was his malignity, that hell grew darker at his frown. He thought women born only for obedience, and men only for rebellion.' There is much more in the same tone; and, with what justice his epithets are applied, let Englishmen judge.

[10] Taxation no tyranny.

[11] *Ibid*, No. 89.

[12] Idler, No. 85.

[13] Tour, p. 59.

[14] Tour, p. 84.

[15] Idler, No. 82.

[16] He should have said *causes*, for he mentions *two*.—What is the Doctor's distinction here between habit and custom?

[17] *Quere*, Are we more accustomed to beauty than deformity? or is not the fact otherwise.—Did habit ever make a sick man fond of disease, or a poor man fond of poverty?

[18] Vide Preface to folio Dict.

[19] Dr Campbell of Aberdeen, on the use of new words, says, 'That nothing can be juster than Johnson's manner of arguing on this subject, in regard to what Swift a little chimerically proposeth, that though new words be introduced, none should be suffered to become obsolete.' This Gentleman ought to have consulted Swift himself. Let him peruse the 'petty treatise,' and then let him blush for having trusted an author void of fidelity.

[20] As the venerable and admirable father of *the* English Dictionary has treated the names of such men as Young and Lyttleton with so little ceremony, the reader will perhaps forgive the insertion of his own character, as drawn by Chesterfield. 'I am almost in a fever, whenever I am in his company. His figure (without being deformed) seems made to disgrace or ridicule the common structure of the human body. His legs and arms are never in the position, which, according to the situation of his body, they ought to be in; but constantly employed in committing acts of hostility upon the graces. He throws any where but down his throat, whatever he means to drink; and only mangles what he means to carve. *Inattentive to all the regards of social life*, he mistimes, or misplaces every thing. He disputes with heat, and indiscriminately, mindless of the rank, character, and situation, of those with whom he disputes; absolutely ignorant of the several gradations of familiarity or respect, he is exactly the same to his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors; and therefore by a necessary consequence absurd to two of the three. Is it possible to love such a man? No. The utmost I can do for him, is to consider him as a respectable Hottentot.' Churchill's account of our hero comes nearly to the same. And I presume that the inimitable Dr Smollet, has exhibited a third picture of this illustrious original in Humphry Clinker, Vol. 1.—Dr Johnson's letter to the Earl of Chesterfield concludes in these words: 'Whatever be the event of my endeavours, I shall *not easily* regret an attempt which has procured me the honour of appearing thus publicly, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient, and most humble servant, Sam. Johnson.' These

extracts afford a striking contrast between the severity of the polite peer, and the humble politeness (for *once*) of the rugged pedant.

- [21] Lives of English poets, vol. iii. p. 243 and 284. 12*mo* edit.
- [22] Vide Life of Dryden.
- [23] Vid. Dict. article Blood.
- [24] *Excogitation*, this combination of letters is to be found in the Doctor's works, though not in his Dictionary.
- [25] Rasselas, chap. vi.
- [26] He meant to say *there*.
- [27] Tour, p. 16. and 18. &c.
- [28] Tour, p. 186.
- [29] Ibid, p. 21.
- [30] Rambler, No. 79.
- [31] Tour, p. 369 &c.
- [32] Tour, p. 373.
- [33] Ibid, p. 55.
- [34] Vid. folio Dictionary.
- [35] Tour, p. 242.
- [36] Butler's life.
- [37] Rambler, No. 59.
- [38] Ibid.
- [39] Vid. Plutarch.
- [40] Tour, p. 283.
- [41] Tour, p. 124.
- [42] Ibid, p. 154.
- [43] The Doctor ought to have said, 'For these reasons,' as he mentions several.
- [44] Pope's life.
- [45] He should have said, *no poet*; for that was his meaning, if he had any. No *writer*, includes prose as well as verse; and this sample may give us a fair idea of the Doctor's *accuracy* in point of style.
- [46] Life of Pope.
- [47] Ibid.
- [48] Gray's life.
- [49] Gray's life.
- [50] Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. XVII.
- [51] Gray's life.
- [52] Ibid.
- [53] Ibid.
- [54] Edinburgh Review, Vol. III. P. 55. *et seq.*
- [55] Gray's life.
- [56] Ibid.
- [57] Ibid.
- [58] Life of Pope.

- [59] Gray's life.
- [60] Ibid.
- [61] Gray's life.
- [62] Ibid.
- [63] Pastor cum traheret per freta navibus, &c.
- [64] Gray's life. Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen differs very widely from Dr. Johnson on the merit of this poem. He says, 'I have heard the finest Ode in the world (meaning Gray's Bard) blamed for the boldness of its figures, and for what the critic was pleased to call obscurity.' Beattie's *Essays on poetry and musick*, 3d edit. p. 269. This is, certainly very strong; yet he seems in some danger of contradicting himself, when he says in another place, That 'for energy of words, vivacity of description, and *apposite* variety of numbers, Dryden's Feast of Alexander is superior to any ode of Horace or Pindar now extant.' Ibid, p. 17. One would have been apt to suppose that the Lyrick Poem which eclipsed Horace, if not the finest, is at least one of 'the finest in the world.'—But an author has novelty to recommend him, when he affirms that Gray is superior to Dryden, and Dryden to all Antiquity.
- [65] Gray's life.
- [66] Ibid.
- [67] Ibid.
- [68] Gray's life.
- [69] Gray's life.
- [70] A favourite phrase of the Rambler's.
- [71] Gray's life.
- [72] Ibid.
- [73] Taxation no Tyranny.
- [74] Taxation no Tyranny.
- [75] Dryden's life.
- [76] Ibid.
- [77] Rambler, No. 150.
- [78] Rambler, No. 9.
- [79] Vide the life of Garrick by Mr Davies.
- [80] Rambler, No. 160.
- [81] Ibid.
- [82] Churchill's Apology.
- [83] Vide Life of Cowley. His impressions had been very slight, for Crowley has nothing of the melody, or magnificence of the Fairy Queen. Of its great author we know little but that he was praised, and neglected, unfortunate, and poor: and, from his epitaph, that he died young. His subject is not happy, his words are often obsolete, and his stanza can hardly please us long. But we may presume that he wanted leisure to study the great models of antiquity: That he wanted that tranquillity of mind so requisite to the success of a poet: And that his defects are owing to the bad taste of his age, and the hardships of his life. Had he lived longer, and had he enjoyed that competence which a prudent shoeblack seldom fails to enjoy, Spenser would have been second in fame to Shakespeare only.
- [84] Dr Johnson on Cymbeline. The same sentiment is started in his account of Pope, 'To the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendant planet, or predominant humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.'—The Doctor is in this passage censuring Pope's ignorance of human nature—while his own marvellous and extreme stupidity makes him almost beneath censure. The reader will not realize Montesquieu's remark, That *when we attempt to prove things so evident we are sure never to convince*.
- [85] Annual Register 1779, Part II. p. 148. I abridge his words, but give their full meaning.
- [86] Life of Waller.
- [87] Life of Rowe.

- [88] Life of Milton.
- [89] Life of Swift.
- [90] Preface to Shakespeare.
- [91] Ibid.
- [92] Preface to Shakespeare.
- [93] 'He has scenes of *undoubted* and *perpetual* excellence.' Ibid. Is there not some inconsistency in these various assertions.
- [94] See in the same style his observations on Prior, Akenside, and others.
- [95] *Quere*. Did ever Shakespeare, or any other man, compose a single page, or even a single line, on any subject, without either straining his faculties, or at least soliciting his invention. It is very possible that the Doctor did not suspect the full extent of his expression.
- [96] Vide Dictionary.
- [97] Life of Pope.
- [98] Ibid.
- [99] Pope's life.
- [100] Eloisa, Letter 83.
- [101] Pope's life.
- [102] Preface to Shakespeare.
- [103] Pope's life.
- [104] Ibid.
- [105] Rambler, No. 36.
- [106] Ibid.
- [107] Thomson's life.
- [108] The author has no intention here to disseminate political opinions—His only meaning is to prove, that *somebody* has neither principle, nor consistency, nor shame.
- [109] Life of Shenstone.
- [110] Gentleman's Magazine.
- [111] Vide life of Milton.
- [112] Life of Smith.
- [113] Tour, p. 8, 12mo edit.
- [114] The Crucifix—Gulliver's Travels.
- [115] 'And read their history in a nation's eyes.' GRAY'S ELEGY.
- [116] On this subject nothing liberal could be expected from Dr Johnson, who, in spite of his murmurs about Excise, and his actual benevolence in private life, has always been the firm advocate of oppression. His project of hiring the Cherokees to massacre the North Americans (vide supra p. 32) may serve to inform us what he himself would have done, had he been seated in the saddle of authority. But what shall be said for some Scottish historians who have adopted the same ideas? One of them tells us, that Beaton had prepared a list of three hundred and sixty of the leaders of the Protestant party, whose lives and fortunes were to be sacrificed to the rapacity and the pride of this ambitious prelate. Yet he pronounces the killing of such a dangerous monster to be a most execrable deed. He dwells with studied exultation on the execution of Charles I. but if our King really deserved his fate, Was not Beaton by many degrees more criminal? An author can hardly spend his time worse, than in writing to flatter the prejudices, and to corrupt the common sense of the world.
- [117] Preface to Shakespeare.
- [118] *Quere*. What is *unquenchable* curiosity? and how can a play excite curiosity which cannot be satisfied by its conclusion?
- [119] Preface to Shakespeare.

- [120] Ibid.
- [121] Weekly Mirror, No. 12.
- [122] Monthly Review, on Dr Graham's Pindaricks.
- [123] Dr Johnson's life of Pope.
- [124] Vide Terence and the Careless Husband.
- [125] Vide Dr Johnson's life of Shenstone.
- [126] Vide Preface to Dr Johnson's octavo Dictionary, 4th edition.
- [127] Vide Measure for measure.
- [128] Vide Dictionary.
- [129] Optics, P. 349.
- [130] Chem. I. P. 399. 614.
- [131] Preface to Folio Dictionary.
- [132] Perhaps he means, in defining *Thunder*, *Plum porridge*, the particle *But*, &c.
- [133] Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield.
- [134] Preface to folio dictionary.
- [135] Ibid.
- [136] Ibid.
- [137] Ibid.
- [138] It is said that this word is not to be found in any book previous to the reign of James II. and that it was derived from the Priests who surrounded him.
- [139] SOLIDITY. '1. Fullness of matter; *not hollowness*. 2. Firmness; hardness; compactness; *density*;' &c. &c. Dr Johnson's dictionary. Every page is replete with jargon of this kind.
- [140] Essay, &c. Book II. Chap. iv. Sect. 6.
- [141] History of Manchester, Vol. II.
- [142] Preface to the octavo dictionary.
- [143] Vid. Preface to folio Dictionary.
- [144] Vide Life of Pope.
- [145] Vide Rambler.
- [146] The Booksellers, vide Life of Dryden.
- [147] Vide Dictionary, article WATER.
- [148] Dr Johnson's Dictionary, 4th edition, folio.
- [149] Ibid.
- [150] It is needless to observe, that there is no such coin in existence.
- [151] Idler, No. 94.
- [152] What string does the Doctor mean? for, besides the optic nerve, there are six muscles, four straight, and two oblique, and other small nervous branches.
- [153] It is surprising how some persons acquire the reputation of piety. The fervour of Dr Johnson's devotion cannot be denied by those who have seen him rise in the midst of a large company—fall down on his knees behind his chair, repeat his Pater noster, and then resume his seat. This is one way to get a character for holiness, and it is an absolute fact.

Laud proved his title to the dignity of a saint, by doing all the mischief that lay in his power. He lighted up the flames of discord through three kingdoms. They were extinguished in the course of twenty years, by rivers of blood.

'Knocking Jack of the North' founded his reputation, by railing at the damnable sin of fornication, destroying great numbers of fine buildings, and insulting the person of his Sovereign. His character was completely detestable, which is evident from the whole

tenor of his life and writings, from his 'Blast against Women,' and above all, from his insolence to Queen Mary, a Princess the most admired, the most beautiful, the most injured, and the most unfortunate of her age.

[154] Preface to Shakespeare.

[155] Ibid. Dr Johnson on Shakespeare.

[156] Preface to Folio Dictionary.

[157] False Alarm.

[158] Life of Pope.

[159] Life of Pope.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Let Budgell charge low Grubstreet on my quill—
And write whate'er he please, *except my WILL!*

Epistle to Arbuthnot.

[163] Life of Pope.

[164] Vide life prefixed to his works.

[165] Rambler, No. 45.

[166] Life of Addison.

[167] Dr Johnson's reputation is raised to such a height, that many writers do not think their productions can be successful, unless they have his liberty to acknowledge their obligations to him. This tribute of gratitude generally occupies a splendid dedication, or the second paragraph in the author's preface, and we are sometimes reminded in a marginal note of his particular respect for the Doctor. By a man of tolerable information, such eulogiums cannot be perused without intense disgust. But one of these gentlemen has boasted of the Doctor's approbation of a work, which, had he ever been consulted, he would have *damned beyond all depth*. Dr Percy has published three volumes of English ballads, and as an apology for this work, he says in his preface, that he could refuse nothing to such judges as the late Mr Shenstone, and—the author of the RAMBLER. Now take notice, that the very first poem in the collection, and one of the very best in the whole of it, is Chevy Chase! Dr Percy admires it. Dr Johnson ridicules it in the roughest terms. What are we to think of this; and what must Dr Percy feel when he reads the passage just now quoted from his friend? If Dr Johnson thinks Chevy Chase so insufferably dull, how must he have sickened in the perusal of many pieces in that collection.

[168] Fugitive pieces. Vol. II. p. 136.

[169] Ibid, p. 26.

[170] Review for August 1782.

[171] Vide False Alarm.

[172] Though Dr Johnson has on all occasions expressed the utmost contempt and aversion for the Scots, yet they have in general been solicitous to soothe his pride. Dr Smollet says, that 'Johnson, inferior to none in philosophy, philology, and poetry, stands foremost as an essayist, justly celebrated for the strength, dignity, and variety of his stile, &c.' And Beattie affirms, that his dictionary, considered as the work of one man, is a *most wonderful* performance! The Doctor's capital enemies have likewise been Caledonians. The great author of Lexiphanes was a Scot, and the Rambler is yet smarting under the rough but irresistible *remarks* of a Highland reviewer.

Our ingenious advocate for the second sight (vid. Tour) has long been duped by a succession of rascals. Lawder persuaded him to believe, that Paradise Lost was compiled from scraps of modern Latin poetry; his pamphlet bears strong internal evidence that part of it at least (as has been long alledged) is the production of the Doctor's pen. Compare in particular the preface with such attempts in prose as we know to be Lawder's own. Vide Gentleman's Magazine.

Mr Shaw has of late renewed his *enquiries*. They are only to be regarded as the desperate ravings of a man who believes that, in consequence of the *new light*, his moral and his literary character have sunk together into final perdition; that his name, like Lawder's, will be remembered only to his infamy, and *that* Dr Johnson himself despises and abhors him. Do you think me too severe on the Doctor's infirmities? Can you forgive his injustice to the memory of his benefactors—his political duplicity—his thirst for blood—his inveterate antipathy to the most sacred rights of mankind?

Dr Johnson says, that one of the lowest of all human beings is a Commissioner of Excise. This can hardly be the case, unless himself or his reverend friend Mr Shaw shall arrive

at that dignity. But in the meantime, there is a Commissioner of Excise, or Customs, (no matter which) who in the scale of human beings is not much *lower* than Lexiphanes himself. This couple stand in the most striking contrast: and to draw the character of the first is to write an oblique but most severe censure on the character of the second. Dr Smith's language is a luscious and pure specimen of strength, elegance, precision, and simplicity. His *Enquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* deserves to be studied by every member of the community, as one of the most accurate, profound, and persuasive books that ever was written. In *that* performance he displays an intimate and extensive knowledge of mankind, in every department of life, from the cabinet to the cottage; a supreme contempt of national prejudice, and a fearless attachment to liberty, to justice, and to truth. His work is admired as a mass of excellence, a condensation of reasonings, the most various, important, original, and just.

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