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THE  
OBSERVER:

BEING A COLLECTION OF  
MORAL, LITERARY AND FAMILIAR  
ESSAYS.

VOLUME THE FIRST

*by R. Currieland*

—MULTORUM PROVIPT'S URBS  
ET MORES HOMINUM INSERIT.—

(HORAT.)

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L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR C. DILLY IN THE POULTRY,

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OBSERVE:

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friend himself very readily to the good success  
of his new acquaintance; and if his conver-  
sation furnishes him with any new argu-  
ment, if he has no new topics, or does not  
call for any new topics, he will be  
does not make his exit as abruptly as he en-  
ter'd.

In like manner, every author finds a mate-  
rial difference in his first approaches to the  
public, whether his subject recommends him-  
self.

N<sup>o</sup>. I.

**W**HEN a man breaks in upon a com-  
pany of strangers, to which he is not  
invited, the intrusion does or does not demand  
an apology, according to the nature of the  
business which brings him thither: If it im-  
ports the company only, and he has no interest  
in the errand, the less time he spends in cere-  
mony the better; and he must be a very silly  
fellow indeed, who stands shuffling and apolo-  
gizing, when he ought either to warn people  
of their danger, or inform them of their good  
fortune: But where this is not the case, and  
the man, so intruding, has nothing more to  
say for himself, than that he is come to sit  
down in their company, to prattle and tell  
stories, and club his share to the general festi-

B

vity

vity of the table, it will behove him to recommend himself very speedily to the good graces of his new acquaintance; and if his conversation furnishes neither instruction nor amusement, if he starts no new topics, or does not talk agreeably upon old ones, 'tis well if he does not make his exit as abruptly as he entered.

In like manner, every author finds a material difference in his first approaches to the public, whether his subject recommends him, or he is to recommend his subject: If he has any thing new in art or science to produce, any thing important to communicate for the benefit of mankind, he need be under no difficulty in demanding their attention to a business, which it is so much their interest to hear and understand; on the contrary, if he has nothing to tell his readers, but what they knew before he told it, there must be some candor on their part, and great address on his, to secure to such an author a good reception in the world.

I am at this instant under all the embarrassments incident to a man in the last-mentioned predicament: I am exceedingly desirous to make my best bow to the good company

pany I am intruding myself upon, and yet equally anxious, that in so doing I may neither make my first advances with the stiff grimace of a dancing-master, nor with the too familiar air of a self-important. As I pretend to nothing more in these pages, than to tell my readers what I have observed of men and books, in the most amusing manner I am able, I know not what to say to them more than humbly to request a hearing; and, as I am in perfect charity and good-humour with them, sincerely to hope that they on their parts will be in like good-humour and charity with me.

My first wish was to have followed the steps of those Essayists, who have so successfully set the fashion of publishing their lucubrations from day to day in separate papers. This mode of marching into the world by detachments has been happily taken up by men of great generalship in literature, of whom some are yet amongst us. Though Mr. Addison, in his Spectator, N<sup>o</sup> 124, has asserted, that *a man who publishes his works in a volume, has an infinite advantage over one who communicates his writings to the world in loose sheets and single pieces,* it does not appear that he is serious in

his assertion; or, if he is, it is plain that his argument draws one way and his example another; *I must confess*, says he, *I am amazed that the press should be only made use of in this way by news-writers and the zealots of parties; as if it were not more advantageous to mankind to be instructed in wisdom and virtue, than in politics; and to be made good fathers, husbands, and sons, than counsellors and statesmen.* This will suffice to convince us that Mr. Addison saw the advantages of this mode of publication in such a light as led him to make choice of it himself, and to recommend it to others; for it is not to be supposed, that he would have prefixed a motto to this very paper, purporting that *a great book is a great evil*, and then argued seriously in recommendation of that evil.

Some of the most pleasing volumes now in our hands are collections of essays published in this manner, and the plan is still capable of a variety, that is in no danger of being exhausted; add to this, that many years have now elapsed since any papers of this sort have been published: the present time therefore on this account, as well as from other circumstances peculiar to it, may seem favourable to



the undertaking: but there are good reasons, why writers have desisted from pursuing any further these attempts of working through a channel, which others are in possession of, who might chance to levy such a toll upon their merchandize as would effectually spoil their market.

The miscellaneous matter I propose to give in these sheets naturally coincides with the method I have taken of disposing them into distinct papers, and I shall proceed to publish in like manner till my plan is compleated, or till any unforeseen event cuts short the prosecution of it. For me to conceive, in an age so enlightened as the present, that I can offer any thing to the public, which many of my readers will not be as well informed of as myself, would be a very silly presumption indeed: simply to say that I have written nothing but with a moral design would be saying very little, for it is not the vice of the time to countenance publications of an opposite tendency; to administer moral precepts through a pleasing vehicle seems now the general study of our Essayists, Dramatists, and Novelists. The Preacher may enforce his doctrines in the stile of authority, for it is his profession

## 6 THE OBSERVER. N° 1.

to summon mankind to their duty; but an uncommissioned instructor will study to conciliate, whilst he attempts to correct. Even the Satirist, who declares war against vice and folly, seldom commits himself to the attack without keeping some retiring-place open in the quarter of panegyric; if he cuts deep, it is with the hand of a surgeon, not of an assassin. Few authors now undertake to mend the world by severity, many make it their study by some new and ingenious device to soften the rigour of philosophy, and to bind the rod of the moralist with the roses of the muse.

I have endeavoured to relieve and chequer these familiar essays in a manner that I hope will be approved of; I allude to those papers, in which I treat of the literature of the Greeks, carrying down my history in a chain of anecdotes from the earliest poets to the death of Menander; to this part of my work I have addressed my greatest pains and attention. I believe the plan is so far my own, that nobody has yet given the account in so compressed and unmixed a state as I shall do, and none I think will envy me the labour of turning over such a mass of heavy materials for the sake of selecting what I hoped would be acceptable in  
the

N<sup>o</sup> I. THE OBSERVER. 7

the relation. Though I cannot suppose I am free from error, I can safely say I have asserted nothing without authority; but it did not suit the purpose of the work to make a display of those authorities, as it was my wish to level it to readers of all descriptions. The translations I shall occasionally give will be of such authors, or rather fragments of authors, as come under few people's review, and have never been seen in an English version; these passages therefore will have the merit of novelty at least with most readers, and if I succeed in naturalizing to any degree authors, whose names only float amongst us, I shall not think that what has been the heaviest part of my undertaking has been the most unprofitable. As I mean this to be a kind of *liber circumcurrens*, I have thought it not amiss to intitle it *The Observer*.

---

N<sup>o</sup> II.

**T**HERE is a pretty numerous sect of philosophers in this kingdom, whom I cannot describe by any apter denomination, than that of *Dampers*. They are to be known

in society by a sudden damp, which they are sure to cast upon all companies, where they enter. The human heart, that comes within their atmosphere, never fails to be chilled; and the quickest sense of feeling is as effectually benumb'd, as the touch is with the torpedo. As this sect is of very ancient standing in the world, and has been taken notice of by several heathen writers, I have sometimes thought that it might originate in the school of Thales, who held water to be the first principle of all things. If I were certain that this ancient philosopher always administered his water cold to his disciples, I should incline to think the present sect of *Dampers* was really a branch from the Thalesian root, for it is certain they make great use of his first principle in the philosophy they practise.

The business of these philosophers in society is to check the flights and fallies of those volatile beings, who are subject to be carried away by imagination and fancy, or, in other words, to act as a counterpoise against genius; of the vices of mankind they take little notice, but they are at great pains to correct their vanity. They have various receipts for curing this evil; the ordinary method is by keeping  
 stern

stern silence and an unmoved visage in companies which are disposed to be chearful. This taciturnity, if well kept up, never fails in the end to work a cure upon festivity according to the first principle of Thales: if the *Damper* looks morose, every body wonders what the moody gentleman is displeas'd with, and each in his turn suspects himself in the fault; if he only looks wise, all are expecting when the dumb oracle will utter, and in the mean time his silence infects the whole circle; if the *Damper* seasons his taciturnity with a shrug of the shoulders, or a shake of the head, judiciously thrown in, when any talkative fellow raises a laugh, 'tis ten to one if the mortified wit ever opens his mouth again for that evening; if a story is told in his company, and the teller makes a slip in a date, or a name, a true *Damper* may open, provided it is done agreeably to the rules of his order, by setting the story-teller right with much gravity, and adjusting the mistake so deliberately, that the spirit of the story shall be sure to evaporate, before the commentator has properly settled his correction of the text. If any lucky wit chances to say what is called a *good thing*, and the table applauds, it is a *Damper's* duty to ask

ask an explanation of the joke, or whether that was all, and what t'other gentleman said, who was the butt of the jest, and other proper questions of the like sort. If one of the company risques a fally for the sake of good-fellowship, which is a little on the wrong side of truth, or not strictly reducible to proof, a *Damper* may with great propriety set him right in the matter of fact, and demonstrate, as clear as two and two make four, that what he has said may be mathematically confuted, and that the merry gentleman is mistaken. A *Damper* is to keep strict watch over the morals of the company, and not to suffer the least indiscretion to escape in the warmth of conviviality; on this occasion he must be ready to call to order, and to answer for his friend to the company, that he has better principles than he affects to have; that he should be sorry such and such an opinion went out against him; and that he is certain he forgot himself, when he said so and so. If any glance is made at private characters, however notorious, a *Damper* steps in with a recommendation of candour, and inveighs most pathetically against the sin of evil-speaking. He is never merry in company, except when any one in it is apparently

N° 2. THE OBSERVER. 11

parently out of spirits, and with such an one he is always exceedingly pleasant.

A *Damper* is so profest an enemy to flattery, that he never applies it in ever so small a degree even to the most diffident: he never cheers a young author for fear of marring his modesty, never sinks truths because they are disagreeable, and if any one is rashly enjoying the transports of public fame on account of some successful production in art or science, the *Damper* kindly tells him what such and such a critic has scoffingly said on the occasion, and, if nothing better offers, lowers his triumphs with a paragraph from a news-paper, which his thoughtless friend might else have overlooked. He is remarkably careful not to spoil young people by making allowances for spirits or inexperience, or by indulging them in an opinion of their persons or accomplishments. He has many excellent apothegms in his mouth ready to recommend to those, who want them, such as *to be merry and wise*;—*a grain of truth is better than an ounce of wit*;—*a fool's bolt is soon shot, but a wise man keeps his within the quiver*;—*he that was only taught by himself had a fool to his master*;—and many more of the like sort.

The

The following letter will serve to shew in what sort of estimation this sect of *Dampers* was held by a Roman author, who was one of the finest gentlemen of his time.

PLINY to RESTITUTUS\*.

*I cannot forbear pouring out my indignation before you in a letter, since I have no opportunity of doing so in person, against a certain behaviour which gave me some offence in an assembly, where I was lately present. The company was entertained with the recital of a very finished performance; but there were two or three persons among the audience, men of great genius in their own and a few of their friends estimation, who sat like so many mutes, without so much as moving a lip or a hand, or once rising from their seats, even to shift their posture. But to what purpose, in the name of good sense, all this wondrous air of wisdom and solemnity, or rather indeed (to give it its true appellation) of this proud indolence? Is it not downright folly, or even madness, thus to be at the expence of a whole day merely to commit a piece of rudeness, and leave him an enemy, whom you visited as a friend? Is a man*

\* MELMOTH'S Translation.

conscious



conscious that he possesses a superior degree of eloquence than the person whom he attends upon on such an occasion? So much the rather ought he to guard against every appearance of envy, as a passion that always implies inferiority, wherever it resides. But whatever a man's talent may be, whether greater or equal or less than his friend's, still it is his interest to give him the approbation he deserves: if greater or equal, because the higher his glory rises, whom you equal or excel, the more considerable yours must necessarily be; if less, because if one of more exalted abilities does not meet with applause, neither possibly can you. For my own part, I honour and revere all, who discover any degree of merit in the painful and laborious art of oratory; for eloquence is a high and haughty dame, who scorns to reside with those that despise her. But perhaps you are not of this opinion; yet who has a greater regard for this glorious science, or is a more candid judge of it than yourself? In confidence of which, I chose to vent my indignation particularly to you, as not doubting you would be the first to share with me in the same sentiments.

Farewell.

The

The Romans were much in the habit of reading their unpublished performances to select parties, and sometimes no doubt put the patience and politeness of their hearers to a severe trial: I conceive that this practice does not obtain to any great degree amongst us at present; neither is it a thing to be recommended to young authors, except under peculiar circumstances; for they certainly expose themselves and their hearers to a situation very delicate at best, and which sometimes leads to unpleasant consequences. I am aware how much is to be expected from the judicious remarks of a critic, who will correct *with all the malice of a friend*; yet a man so qualified and disposed is not easily found, and does not often fall within the list of an author's acquaintance; men, who read their works in circles, or to any but the most select friends, read for no other purpose but for admiration and applause; they cannot possibly expect criticism, and it is accordingly agreed upon by all, but the sect of the *Dampers*, either to keep out of such circles, or to pay their quota when the reckoning is cast up. Few, but men of quick and lively parts, are forward to recite in such societies, and these are the very men,

who

who are most pained by neglect; for I think it is a remark, with as few exceptions to it as most general remarks have, that brilliant talents are attended with extreme sensibility, and the effects of sensibility bear such resemblance to the effects of vanity, that the undiscerning multitude are too apt to confound them. These are the men, who, in their progress through life, are most frequently misunderstood, and generally less pitied than they ought to be.

Now a *Damper* will tell you that he is consulting such a man's good, and lowering his vanity, when he is sporting with his feelings, and will take merit to himself for the discipline he gives him; but humanity will reflect, that the same spirits, which are prone to exult upon success, are proportionably agonized by the failure of it, and will therefore prompt us to a gentler treatment of such persons.

The sums which are expended in this nation upon those refined enjoyments, which are produced by the expertness of the hands and the ingenuity of the head, are certainly very great; and men are therefore apt to exclaim, "See what encouragement this country gives to arts and sciences!" If money were the standard

standard measure of encouragement, there could be no dispute in the case; but so long as men have a feeling for their pride, as well as for their pocket, money alone will not encourage and promote the genius of a nation; it is the grace of doing a favour, which constitutes its merit; it is from the manners of the great that the man of rising talents is to draw that inspiring consideration of himself, that stimulating pride of nature, which are to push his efforts towards perfection.

A limner will take a canvass and chalk out a man's face he has never seen before, and hang on his robes, or his garter, if he has one, or will put a horse in his hand, if he likes it better, or make a battle in the back ground, if he was ever within hearing of one, and when the job is finished will be paid the price of his labour, like any other mechanic; the money he may spend or put to use, and, if customers come in, he may raise his price upon them, and the world may call those profits an encouragement; but the painter is still a tradesman, and his fitter, not a patron, but a customer: The mercer, whose damask clothes the walls of the nobleman's saloon, and the artist, whose pictures hang round it, are in the  
same

same predicament as to encouragement, whilst neither of them are admitted into the house they contribute to adorn.

As I have made this remark with a reference to the *Dampers* in high life, I am aware that there are many eminent encouragers of the arts and sciences amongst the rich and liberal; nay so general is their protection, that it comprehends a numerous importation of exotic tooth-drawers, dancers, and milliners, who find that England is the nursery of genius: even the magnifying philosopher of Piccadilly (unless he multiplies as well as magnifies) has shewn his *wonders* so frequently and to such prodigious numbers, that it is to be doubted, if they shall continue to be *wonders* much longer.

There were men in ancient Greece no doubt, who talked, though Zeno chose to hold his tongue, when certain ambassadors had invited him to supper, that they might report his sayings to their sovereign; *What shall we say of you to our master?* the foreigners demanded; *Say that I had the wisdom to hold my tongue,* replied the Stoic. Though I am clearly of opinion that this great master of silence was an intolerable *Damper*, and made a very

poor return to these same hospitable ambassadors for their good entertainment of him, yet I am not quite so ready with my answer to a certain female correspondent, who in consequence of some discourse upon *Dampers* the other day, in a company where she was present, favoured me with the following short, but curious, epistle.

“ Sir,  
 “ I HAVE the misfortune to be married to  
 “ an elderly gentleman, who has taken strange  
 “ things in his head of late, and is for ever  
 “ snubbing me before folks, especially when  
 “ the Captain is in company. ’Twas but  
 “ t’other night he broke up a party of hot-  
 “ cockles in the back parlour, and would not  
 “ let the Captain take a civil salute, though  
 “ I assured him it was only a forfeit at ques-  
 “ tions and commands.

“ I don’t know what he means by saying  
 “ he will put a spoke in my wheel, but I sus-  
 “ pect it is some jealousy matter.

“ Pray, Sir, is not my husband what you  
 “ call a *Damper*? Yours,

“ LUCY LOVEIT.”

## N° III.

**T**HE desire of praise is natural, but when that appetite becomes canine, it is no longer in nature: a taste of it is pleasant to most men; temperance itself will take a little, but the stomach sickens with a surfeit of it, and the palate nauseates the debauch.

Let the passion for flattery be ever so inordinate, the supply can keep pace with the demand, and in the world's great market, in which wit and folly drive their bargains with each other, there are traders of all sorts; some keep a stall of offals, some a storehouse of delicacies; a squeamish palate must be forced by alluring provocatives, a foul feeder will swallow any trash that he can get hold of.

In a recent publication of the history of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, written by Sepulveda of Cordova (a contemporary and favorite of that famous monarch,) the Academy of History at Madrid in their dedication to his present Catholic Majesty, address him in the following words—*Nam quem tu, Carole Rex, ut nomine refers, ita etiam bellicâ laude jam pridem æmularis.* When these courtly academi-

cians have thus mounted their peaceable sovereign on the war-horse of the victorious Charles, they seriously proceed to tell him, that *being fully equal to his predecessor in his martial character, he is out of all distance superior to him in every other kingly quality; more wise, more politic, more magnanimous, and (as the present work can testify) a greater friend to learning than all that ever went before him, and, if they may risque a prediction, there will probably be none to come in competition with him hereafter.*

If his Catholic Majesty shall ever come to an understanding of this paragraph, and strike a fair comparison between himself and his illustrious namefake, I should not be surprized if the next work his academicians shall be employed in proves the fortifications of Ceuta.

When I compare the state of flattery in a free country with that, which obtains in arbitrary states, it is a consolation to find that this mean principle is not natural to mankind; for it certainly abates in proportion as independency advances. This will be very evident to any one, who compares the flattery of Elizabeth's and James's days with the present. Ben Johnson for instance was a surly poet, yet how fulsome  
are



are his masques ! In his *News from the New World* he says of James—

“ Read him as you would do the book

“ Of all perfections, and but look

“ What his proportions be :

“ No measure that is thence contriv'd,

“ Or any motion thence deriv'd,

“ But is pure harmony.”

This poet, though he was rather a clumsy flatterer of his prince, was ingenious enough in the mode he took for flattering himself, by introducing a kind of chorus, wherein he takes occasion to tell his hearers, that *careless of all vulgar censure, as not depending on common approbation, he is confident his plays shall super-please judicious spectators, and to them he leaves it to work with the rest by example, or otherwise.* It is remarkable that this passage should be found in his *Magnetic Lady*, and that he should speak with such confidence of one of his worst productions, as if he was determined to force a bad comedy upon the hearers by the authority of his own recommendation. This is an evident imitation of Aristophanes, who in his comedy of *The Clouds* holds the same language to his audience, fairly telling them *he shall estimate their judgment accord-*

*ing to the degree of applause they shall bestow upon his performance then before them: in conclusion he inveighs against certain of his contemporaries, Eupolis, Phrynichus, and Hermippus, with whose comedies if any of his audience is well pleased, that person he hopes will depart from his dissatisfied; but if they condemn his rivals, and applaud him, he shall think better of their judgment for the future. Act 1. Sc. 6.*

The caution authors now proceed with shews the refinement of the times; still they can contrive in a modest way to say civil things of themselves, and it would be hard indeed to disappoint them of so slight a gratification—for what praise is so little to be envied, as that which a man bestows on himself? Several of our diurnal Essayists have contrived under the veil of fiction to hook in something commendatory of themselves, which they mean should pass for truth; such is the intelligent taciturnity of the Spectator, and the solemn integrity of the Guardian.

The latter in one of his papers notices the ambition of some authors to prefix engravings of their portraits to their title pages; his ridicule has not quite laughed this fashion out of countenance, for I perceive it is still in existence,

ence, and I frequently meet the face of an old acquaintance looking through the windows of a bookseller's shop. One very ingenious gentleman, whose *beauty* is amongst the least of his recommendations, has very prudently stamped his *age* upon his print. In the same shop window with this gentleman I observed with great pleasure an elegant author standing by him, as erect as a dart, firm and collected in the awful moment of beginning a *minuet*. I own I regret that the honest butler, who has regaled the age with a *treatise on ale and strong beer*, has not hung out his own head in the front of his book, as a sign of the *good entertainment* within.

But of all the instances of face-flattery I have lately met with, that of a worthy citizen surprized me most, whose counting-house I entered the other day, and found an enormous portrait of my friend in a flaming drapery of blue and gold, mounted upon the back of a war-horse, which the limner has made to rear so furiously, that I was quite astonished to see my friend, who is no great jockey, keep his seat so steadily: he confessed to me that he had consented to be drawn on horseback to please his wife and daughters, who chose the attitude;

for his own part it made him quite giddy to look at himself, and he frequently desired the painter not to let the horse prance so, but to no purpose.

Too great avidity of praise will sometimes betray an author into a studied attempt at fine writing, where the thought will not carry the stile; writers of this sort are like those tasteless dabblers in architecture, who turn the gable-ends of barns and cottages into castles and temples, and spend a world of plaistering and pains to decorate a pig-stye. They bring to my mind a ridiculous scene, at which I was present the other day; I found a lady of my acquaintance busily employed in the domestic education of her only son; the preceptor was in the room, and was standing in an attitude very much resembling the erect gentleman I had seen that morning in the bookfeller's window: The boy kept his eyes fixt, and seemed to govern his motions by certain signals of the feet and arms, which he repeated from the preceptor. In the course of my conversation with his mother, I chanced to drop my glove upon the floor, upon which he approached to pick it up, but in a step so measured and methodical, that I had done the office for myself,

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before

before he had performed his advances. As I was about to resume the conversation, the mother interrupted me, by desiring I would favour her so far as to drop my glove again, that Bobby might have the honour of presenting it to me in proper form: All this while the boy stood as upright as an arrow, perfectly motionless; but no sooner had I thrown down my gauntlet, than he began to put one foot slowly in advance before the other; upon which the preceptor of politeness cried out, *One!—First position!*—The boy then made another movement of his feet, upon which the master repeated—*Two!—Second position!*—This was followed by another, and the echo again cried out—*Three! very well—Third position! Bend your body slowly!*—At the word of command the automaton bent its body very deliberately, its arms hanging down in parallel perpendiculars to the floor, like the fore-legs of a quadruped. The glove being now taken up by the right hand, was placed with great decorum upon the back of the left hand; the trunk of the animal was slowly restored to its erect position, and the glove presented with all due solemnity. As I was in hopes the ceremony was now over, upon hearing  
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the teacher cry *bravo!* I thought it time to make my compliment of *Thank you, pretty Master!* but I was again in a mistake, for the mother begged me not to hurry her dear Bobby, but allow him time to make his bow, and still hold the glove in my hand: This was an operation of no slight consequence, for in the time it took him up, a nimble artist might have made the glove: At last however it was over, and the boy was putting himself in order of retreat, when the master observing that I had omitted the necessary bend of my wrist upon receiving the glove, for want of which the whole had been imperfect, proposed a repetition of the manœuvre, in which Bobby should be the dropper, and himself Bobby picker up of the glove. This proposal struck me with such horror, that taking a hasty leave of the lady, in which, first, second and third position were probably huddled all together, I departed, repeating to myself in the words of Foigard, *All this may be very fine, but upon my soul it is very ridiculous.*

N<sup>o</sup> IV.

LADY THIMBLE is one of those female pedants, who with quick animal spirits, a pert imagination, great self-conceit, and a homely person, sets herself up for a woman of talents; She has as much of the learned languages, as a boarding-school girl carries home of French upon her first holidays, when Miss assures you she can call for what she wants, and, though she wont utter a word in the parlour from pretended modesty, insults the ignorance of the chambermaid with an eternal jargon of bad grammar, worse pronounced. This learned lady is the only child of a wealthy trader of the city of London, who, having never advanced in his own education beyond the erudition of the counting-house, took care his daughter should be instructed in every thing he did not understand himself, and as the girl grew exceedingly vain of the applause of the pedagogue, who read to her, the merchant grew as vain of the scholarship of his child, and would listen to the sound of Latin or Greek with as much superstitious respect,

respect, as a Gentoo does to the Shanscrite language of the Brahmins.

Mifs in the mean time became an insufferable flattern in her cloaths and person, her handkerchiefs and aprons were full of iron-moulds from the drippings of the inkhorn, and her stockings full of holes from her neglect of the needle: These were in fact badges of affectation rather than of oversight, and you could not pay your court to her better than by rallying her about them. She wore a head of false hair, not because her own was thin, but because a wig was thrown on in an instant; this was sometimes done with a negligence, that seemed studied, and when the learned Ventosus vouchsafed to visit her, she was sure to wear her wig awry, as Alexander's courtiers did their heads, in honour of her guest: There was indeed an unseemly humour settled in her nose, but this she got by studying *Locke upon the human understanding* after dinner; before she could develop the whole doctrine of *innate ideas*, the humour deepened many shades, which however on the whole may be allowed to be getting off pretty well for a student in metaphysics. No face could bear the addition of a red nose better than



than Lady Thimble's: but a more alarming accident had befallen her in her astronomical studies, for as she was following a comet in its perihelion through the solutions of Sir Isaac Newton, her cap caught fire, and she was forced to break off in the midst of a proposition, by which means she dropt a stitch in the demonstration, and never was able to take it up again; her skin being cruelly scorched by this system of the comets, she wears a crimson scar upon her cheek, not indeed as an ornament to her beauty, but as a trophy of her science.

Her works are pretty voluminous, especially in manuscript; but censorious people affect to whisper, that she performed one work in concert with the pedant her master, and that, though this composition was brought secretly into the world, it is the only one of her producing, that bids fair for posterity: This story and the remark upon it, I had from a lady, who is one of her intimate friends, but she assured me she gave no credit to it herself, and considered all such scandalous insinuations as the effects of malice and envy.

At the age of seven and twenty, by the persuasion of her father, she was joined in  
the

the bands of wedlock to Sir Theodore Thimble: This gentleman had been lately dubbed a knight for his services to the crown in bringing up a county address; his father, Mr. David Thimble, had been an eminent taylor in the precincts of St. Clements, in which business he had by his industry and other methods raised a very respectable fortune in money, book-debts and remnants: In his latter years Mr. Thimble purchased a considerable estate in Essex with a fine old mansion upon it, the last remaining property of an ancient family. This venerable seat during the life of Mr. Thimble remained uncontaminated by the presence of its possessor, but upon his death it fell into the occupation of young Theodore, who disdaining the cross-legg'd art, by which his father had worked himself into opulence, set out upon a new establishment, and figured off as the first gentleman of his family: He served as sheriff of the county, and acquired great reputation in that high office by the elegant and well cut liveries, which he exhibited at the assizes; a lucky address from the county gave him a title, and the recommendation of a good settlement procured

cured him his present lady, whom we have been describing.

As I have been in long habits of friendship with the worthy citizen her father, I could not resist the many pressing invitations he gave me to pay a visit to his daughter and Sir Theodore at their country seat, especially as he prefaced it by assuring me I should see the happiest couple in England; and that, altho' I had frequently opposed his system of education, I should now be convinced that Arabella made as good a housewife and understood the conduct of her family as well, as if she had studied nothing else, and this he was sure I would confess, if he could prevail with me to accompany him to her house.

On the day following this conversation we set out together, and in a few hours found ourselves at the promised spot: As I remembered this fine old mansion in the days of its primitive simplicity, when I was ushered to its gate through a solemn avenue of branching elms, that arched over head in lofty foliage, and formed an approach in perfect unison with the ancient fashion of the place, I must own I was much revolted to find that Sir Theodore had begun his improvements with a specimen

of his father's art, by cutting an old coat into a new fashion: My favorite avenue no longer existed; the venerable tenants of the soil were rooted up, and a parcel of dotted clumps, composed of trumpery shrubs, substituted in their places; I was the more disgusted, when I perceived that by the nonsensical zigzaggery of the road, through which we meandered, I was to keep company with these new-fashioned upstarts through as many parallels, as would serve for the regular approaches to a citadel. At one of these turnings however I caught the glimpse of a well-dressed gentleman standing in a very becoming attitude, who I concluded must be the master of the mansion waiting our approach; and as I perceived he had his hat under his arm, expecting us with great politeness and civility, I instantly took mine from my head, and called to our driver to stop the carriage, for that I perceived Sir Theodore was come out to meet us. My companion was at this time exceedingly busy in directing my attention to the beauties of his son-in-law's improvements, so that I had stopped the chaise before he observed what I was looking at; but how was I surprized to find, in place of Sir Theodore, a leaden  
statue

statue on a pair of scates painted in a blue and gold coat, with a red waistcoat, whose person upon closer examination I recollected to have been acquainted with some years ago amongst the elegant group, which a certain celebrated artist exhibits to the amusement of stage-coaches and country waggons upon their entrance into town at Hyde-park Corner! I was happy to find that this ridiculous mistake, instead of embarrassing my friend, occasioned infinite merriment, and was considered as so good a joke by all the family upon our arrival, that I am persuaded it was in the mind of the improver when he placed him there; for the jest was followed up by several other party-coloured personages cast to the life, gentlemen and ladies, who were airing themselves upon pedestals to the no small delight of my companion; and though most of these witticisms in lead were of the comic cast, one group, of a mountebank in the act of drawing an old woman's tooth, was calculated to move the contrary passion; and this I observed was the last in the company, standing in view from the windows of the house, as the moral of the fable. We now entered a Chinese fence thro'

VOL. I.

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a gate

a gate of the same fashion, to the side of which was affixed a board, on which I observed at some distance a writing in fair characters; this I suspected to be some classical text, which my Lady had set up to impress her visiters with a due respect for her learning, but upon a near approach I found it contained a warning to all interlopers, that men-traps and spring-guns were concealed in those walks.

In this dangerous defile we were encountered by a servant in livery, who was dispatched in great haste to stop our driver, and desire us to alight, as the gravel was newly laid down, and a late shower had made it very soft; my friend readily obeyed the arrest, but I confess the denunciation of traps and guns was so formidable to my mind, that I took no step but with great circumspection and forecast, for fear I was treading on a mine, or touching a spring with my foot, and was heartily glad, when I found myself on the steps, though even these I examined with some suspicion before I trusted myself upon them.

As we entered the house, my friend the merchant whispered me, that *we were now in my Lady's regions; all without doors was Sir*

*Theodore's taste, all within was her's:—*But as here a new scene was opened, I shall reserve my account to another paper.

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## N° V.

OUR visit to Sir Theodore and Lady Thimble being unexpected, we were shewn into the common parlour, where this happy couple were sitting over a good fire with a middle-aged man of athletic size, who was reposing in an elbow chair in great state with his mull in his hand, and with an air so self-important, as plainly indicated him to be the dictator of this domestic circle.

When the first salutations were over, Lady Thimble gave her orders to the servant, in the stile of Lucullus, to prepare *The Apollo*, declaring herself ashamed to receive a gentleman of talents in any other apartment; I beseeched her to let us remain where we were, dreading a removal from a comfortable fire-side to a cold stately apartment, for the season was severe; I was so earnest in my request, that Sir Theodore ventured in the most humble manner to

second my suit ; the consequence of which was a smart reprimand, accompanied with one of those expressive looks, which ladies of high prerogative in their own houses occasionally bestow to husbands under proper subjection, and I saw with pity the poor gentleman dispatched for his officiousness upon a freezing errand through a great hall, to see that things were set in order, and make report, when they were ready. I could not help giving my friend the merchant a significant look upon this occasion ; but he prudently kept silence, waiting with great respect the dreadful order of march.

My Lady now introduced me to the athletic philosopher in the elbow-chair, who condescended to relax one half of his features into a smile, and with a gracious waving of his hand, or rather fist, dismissed me back again to my seat without uttering a syllable. She then informed me, that she had a treat to give me, which she flattered herself would be a feast entirely to my palate ; I assured her Ladyship I was always happiest to take the family-dinner of my friends, adding that in truth the sharp air had sufficiently whetted my appetite to recommend much humbler fare, than I was likely to find at her table. She smiled at this,  
and



and told me it was the food of the mind that she was about to provide for me; she undertook for nothing else; culinary concerns were not her province; if I was hungry, she hoped there would be something to eat, but for her part she left the care of her kitchen to those who lived in it. Whilst she was saying this methought the philosopher gave her a look, that seemed to say he was of my way of thinking; upon which she rung the bell, and ordered dinner to be held back for an hour, saying to the philosopher she thought we might have a *Canto* in that time.

She now paused for some time, fixing her eyes upon him in expectation of an answer; but none being given, nor any signal of assent, she rose, and, observing that *it was surprizing to think what Sir Theodore could be about all this while, for she was sure The Apollo must be ready*, without more delay bade us follow her; *Come, Sir*, says she to me, as I passed the great hall with an aking heart and chattering teeth, *you shall now have a treat in your own taste*; and, meeting one of the domestics by the way, bade him tell Calliope to come into *The Apollo*.

When I set my foot into the room, I was

immediately saluted by something like one of those ungenial breezes, which travellers inform us have the faculty of putting an end to life and all its cares at a stroke: A fire indeed had been lighted, which poor Sir Theodore was soliciting into a blaze, working the bellows with might and main to little purpose; for the billets were so wet, that Apollo himself with all his beams would have been foiled to set them in a flame: The honest gentleman had taken the precaution of opening all the windows, in spite of which no atom of smoke passed up the chimney, but came curling into the room in columns as thick, as if a hecatomb had been offering to the shrine of Delphi; indeed this was not much to be wondered at, for I soon discovered that a board had been fixed across the flue of the chimney, which Sir Theodore in his attention to the bellows had neglected to observe: I was again the unhappy cause of that poor gentleman's unmerited rebuke, and in terms much severer than before; it was to no purpose he attempted to bring Susan the house-maid in for some share of the blame; his plea was disallowed; and though I must own it was not the most manly defence in the world, yet, considering the  
unhappy

unhappy culprit as the son of a taylor, I thought it not entirely inadmissible.

When the smoke cleared up I discovered a cast of the Belvidere Apollo on a pedestal in a niche at the upper end of the room; but, if we were to judge by the climate, this chamber must have derived its name from Apollo, by the rule of *lucus a non lucendo*: As soon as we were seated, and Lady Thimble had in some degree composed her spirits, she began to tell me, that the treat she had to give me was the rehearsal of part of an epic poem, written by a young lady of seventeen, who was a miracle of genius, and whose talents for composition were so extraordinary, that she had written a treatise on female education, whilst she was at the boarding-school, which all the world allowed to be a wonderful work for one of such an early age. There was no escape, for Calliope herself now entered the room, and dinner was put back a full hour for the luxury of hearing a canto of a boarding-school girl's epic poem read by herself in the presence of Apollo. The Scottish philosopher had prudently kept his post by the parlour fire, and I alone was singled out as the victim; Sir Theodore and his father-in-law being consi-

dered only as expletives to fill up the audience. Calliope was enthroned in a chair at the pedestal of Apollo, whilst Lady Thimble and I took our seats opposite to the reader.

I was now to undergo an explanation of the subject matter of this poem; this was undertaken and performed by Lady Thimble, whilst the young poetess was adjusting her manuscript: The subject was allegorical; the title was *The Triumph of Reason*, who was the hero of the piece; the inferior characters were the human passions personified; each passion occupied a canto, and the lady had already dispatched a long list; if I rightly remember we were to hear the fourteenth canto; in thirteen actions the hero Reason had been victorious, but it was exceedingly doubtful how he would come off in this, for the antagonist he had to deal with was no less a personage than almighty *Love* himself: The metre was heroic, and many of the thoughts displayed a juvenile fancy and wild originality; the action was not altogether uninteresting, nor ill-managed, and victory for a while was held in suspense by a wound the hero received from an arrow somewhere in the region of the heart; for this wound he could obtain no cure, till an ancient  
physician,

physician, after many experiments for his relief, cut out the part affected with his *scythe*: Upon the whole the poem was such, that had it not been allegorical, and had not I been cold and hungry, I could have found much to commend and some things to admire, even tho' the poetess had been twice as old and not half so handsome, for Calliope was extremely pretty, and I could plainly discover that nature meant her to be most amiable and modest, if flattery and false education would have suffered her good designs to have taken place; I therefore looked upon her with pity, as I do on all spoilt children; and when her reading was concluded, did not bestow all that praise, which, if I had consulted my own gratification more than her good, I certainly should have bestowed; the only occasion, on which I think it a point of conscience to practise the philosophy of *the Dampers*.

At length dinner was announced, and being a part of Lady Thimble's domestic œconomy, which she had put out of her own hands, as she informed us, and in which I suspect the athletic philosopher had something to say, it was plentifully served. Sir Theodore and my friend the merchant plied him pretty briskly with

with the bottle ; but as a stately first-rate ship does not condescend to open her ports to the petty cruisers that presume to hail her, in like manner this gigantic genius kept the oracle within him muzzled, nor condescended once to draw the tompion of his lips, till it happened in the course of many topics, that Lady Thimble, speaking of the talents of Calliope, observed that *miracles* were not ceased : *How should that thing be said to cease*, replied the oracle, *which never had existence* ? The spring was now touched, that put this vast machine in motion, and, taking infidelity in miracles for his text, he carried us, in the course of a long uninterrupted harangue, through a series of learned deductions, to what appeared his grand desideratum, *viz. an absolute refutation of the miracles of Christ by proofs logical and historical*. Whilst this discourse was going on, I was curious to observe the different effects it had on the company : Lady Thimble received it with evident marks of triumph, so that I could plainly see all was gospel with her, and the only gospel she had faith in : Sir Theodore wisely fell asleep ; the merchant was in his counting-house, —

“ His

“ His mind was tossing on the ocean :

“ There, where his argosies with portly sail,

“ Like Seigniors and rich Burghers on the flood,

“ Or as it were the pageants of the sea,

“ Did overpeer the petty traffickers——”

But all this while the young unsettled thoughts of Calliope were visibly wavering, sometimes borne away by the *ipse dixit* of the philosopher and the echo of Lady Thimble's plaudits; sometimes catching hold of Hope, and hanging to the anchor of her salvation, Faith; at other times without resistance carried down the tide of declamation, which rolled rapidly along in provincial dialect, like a torrent from his native Highland craggs, rough and noisy; I saw her struggles with infinite concern; the savage saw them also, but with triumph, and, turning his discourse upon the breach he had made in her belief, pressed the advantage he had gained with devilish address; in short a new antagonist had started up, more formidable to *Reason* than all the fourteen, from whose attack she had brought her hero off with victory; and that champion, which had resisted the arrows of all-powerful *Love*, was likely now to fall a victim to the pestilential breath of *Infidelity*. In this dilemma I was  
doubtful

doubtful how to act; I did not decline the combat because I dreaded the strength of this Goliath of the Philistines, for I knew the weapons might be confided in, which the great captain of salvation had put into my hands; but I disdained to plead before a prejudiced tribunal, in which the mistress of the mansion sat as judge; and as sleep had secured one of the company out of harm's way, and another was upon an excursion from which I did not wish to bring him home, there remained only Calliope, and I determined within myself to take occasion of discoursing with her apart, before I left the house next morning.

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N° VI.

**I** HAD resolved to have some conversation with Calliope after the athletic philosopher's harangue against the evidences of the Christian religion: I was at the pains of putting my thoughts together in writing before I went to bed, for I judged it best to give them to Calliope in such a form, as she might hereafter at any time refer to and examine.

I had



I had the satisfaction of an hour's conversation with that young lady next morning, before the family had assembled for breakfast : I could observe that something dwelt upon her mind, and demanding of her if I was not right in my conjecture, she answered me at once to the point without hesitation—"I confess to you," says she, "that the discourse which Dr. Mac-Infidel yesterday held, has made me thoroughly unhappy ; things, which are above reason, I can readily suppose are mysteries, which I ought to admit as matter of faith in religion ; but things contrary to reason, and facts which history confutes how am I to believe ? What am I to do in this case ? Have you any thing to oppose to his argument ? If you have, I should be happy to hear it ; if you have not, I pray you let us talk no more upon the subject."—I then gave the paper into her hand, which I had prepared, and explaining to her the reasons I had for not taking up the dispute before our company yesterday, desired her to give my paper a serious reading ; if there was any thing in it, that laid out of the course of her studies, I would gladly do my best to expound it, and would shew her the authorities to which it referred :

referred: She received my paper with the best grace in the world, and promised me that she would consider it with all the attention she was mistress of.

In our further discourse it chanced, that I let drop some expressions in commendation of her understanding and talents, upon which I observed she gave me a very expressive look, and when I would have spoken of her poem, she shook her head, and, hastily interrupting me, desired I would spare her on that subject; she did not wish to be any more flattered in a folly she had too much cause to repent of; she had burnt the odious poem I was speaking of, and, bursting suddenly into a flood of tears, protested she would never be guilty of writing another line of poetry, while she lived.

No words of mine can paint the look and action, which accompanied these expressions; much less can I describe the stroke of pity and surprize, which her emotion gave me. It was evident she alluded to something that had occurred since the reading of the poem; I recollected she was absent all the latter part of the evening, and I felt an irresistible propensity to enquire into the cause of her affliction, tho' the shortness of our acquaintance gave me no  
right

right to be inquisitive; she saw my difficulty, for her intuition is very great; after a short recollection, which I did not attempt to interrupt—"I know not how it is," says she, "but something tells me I am speaking to a friend."—Here she paused, as doubting whether she ought to proceed or not, and fixed her eyes upon the floor in evident embarrassment; it will readily be supposed I seized the opportunity to induce her to confide in me, if there was any service I could render towards alleviating the distress she was evidently suffering—"I have no right to trouble you," says she, "but that fatal argument I heard last night has so weakened the resource, to which my mind in all afflictions would else have naturally applied, that I really know not how to support myself, nor where to look for comfort, but by throwing myself upon your friendship for advice, as the most unhappy of all beings. You must know I have the honour to be the daughter of that gallant sea officer Captain ———." Here she named an officer, who will be ever dear to his country, ever deplored by it, and whose friendship is at once the joy and the affliction of my life. I started from my seat;

the

the stroke I felt, when she pronounced a name so rooted in my heart, was like the shock of electricity; I clasped her hands in mine, and pressing them exclaimed—‘ You have a father’—here I stopt—the recollection checked me from proceeding—for it was false.—‘ No, no, ‘ my child,’ I said, ‘ you have no father! nor ‘ had he a friend, who can replace your loss; ‘ however, pray proceed.’—“ Implicitly,” replied Calliope, (for by that name I still must beg to call her, though that and poetry are both renounced for ever.) “ As you are the “ friend of my father, you must know that he “ lost my mother, when I was an infant; two “ years are now passed since he perished; a “ miserable period it has been to me; I am “ now under the protection of a distant rela- “ tion, who is an intimate of the lady of this “ house, and one whose ruinous flattery jointly “ with Lady Thimble’s, has conspired to turn “ my wretched head, and blast the only hope “ of happiness I had in life: These learned “ ladies, as they would be thought, put me “ upon studies I was never fitted to, gave me “ this silly name Calliope, and never ceased “ inflaming my vanity, till they persuaded me “ I had a talent for poetry: In this they were “ assisted

" assisted by Mac-Infidel, who lives in great  
 " intimacy with Lady Thimble ; the adulation  
 " of a learned man, (for that he surely is,) in-  
 " toxicated me with self-opinion, and the gra-  
 " vity of his character compleated the folly  
 " and destruction of mine." " What do I  
 " hear," said I, interrupting her, " the destruc-  
 " tion of your character?"—" Have patience,"  
 she replied ; " when I disclose the sorrows of  
 " my heart, you will own that my destruction  
 " is compleat."—Melancholy as these words  
 were, the deduction notwithstanding that I  
 drew from them was a relief, compared to what  
 at first I apprehended.—" Alas! Sir," resumed  
 Calliope, " I have lost the affections of the most  
 " amiable, the most beloved of men : He was  
 " my father's darling, and from a boy was edu-  
 " cated by him in the profession of the sea ; he  
 " shared every service with my father except  
 " the last fatal one, in which your friend un-  
 " happily was lost ; Providence, that ordained  
 " the death of the one, has in the same period  
 " enriched the other ; he is lately returned from  
 " the West Indies, and by his duty has been  
 " confined to the port he arrived in, so that  
 " we have not met since his return to Eng-  
 " land : Here is the first letter he wrote to me  
 VOL. I. E " from

“ from Plymouth; read it, I beseech you, and  
 “ then compare it with the fatal one I receiv-  
 “ ed last night.” Calliope put a letter into my  
 hands, and I read as follows.—

“ MY DEAREST NANCY!

“ I have this instant brought my frigate to  
 “ an anchor, and seize the first moment, that  
 “ my duty permits, to tell the loveliest of her  
 “ sex, that I have luckily come across a prize,  
 “ that makes a man of me for life; A man  
 “ did I say? Yes, and the happiest of men, if  
 “ my dear girl is still true, and will consent to  
 “ share the fortune of her faithful Henry.

“ I cannot leave Plymouth this fortnight,  
 “ therefore pray write to me under cover to  
 “ my friend the Admiral. Yours ever,

“ HENRY CONSTANT.”

When I had returned this letter to Cal-  
 liope, she resumed her narrative in the follow-  
 ing words: “ The joy this letter gave me set  
 “ my spirits in such a flow, that in the habit I  
 “ was of writing verses, I could not bring my  
 “ thoughts to run in humble prose, but giving  
 “ the reins to my fancy filled at least six fides  
 “ with rhapsodies in verse; and not content  
 “ with this, and foolishly conceiving that my  
 “ poem would appear at least as charming to  
 “ Henry,