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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;

AND

T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.

1823.

his Majesty's government, to reflect, that, whatever may be the consequences of the struggle in which we are embarked, we have not lost the confidence of the Spanish people; we know that every true Spanish heart beats high for this country; we know that, whatever may happen, they will not accuse us. Submission may be the lot which they are fated to endure in the end; but they do not impute to us the cause of their misfortunes. They are sensible, that neither the thirst after commerce, nor territory, nor security, is to be imputed to us in the assistance we have afforded to them on this most important occasion. Whatever may be the result, we have done our duty; we have not despaired; we have persevered, and we will do so to the last, while there is anything left to contend for with a prospect of success."—*Debate of April 21, 1809.*

To this powerful and luminous speech—of which I have given but a fragment, but of which the whole deserves to be studied, and is not less an honour to its speaker, than an exposition of the policy of the war—no reply could be made; and Opposition, broken down at once by defeats in the legislature, and unpopularity with the nation, abandoned its resistance for a time. New casualties at length arrived to its succour, and it rose again, to impede the interests, and degrade the honour, of the empire.

Why do I insist upon the conduct of the Whigs in the peninsular war?

Because it was the very crisis of Europe; because it was more than a war—it was a conflict of the principles of freedom with tyranny—a great trial of the question of national independence against universal domination; because such was the palpable and intrinsic interest of the contest to Europe, to England, and to freedom, that those who could not honour the resistance of Spain, or see its vital connexion with the hope of nations, must be either fools or knaves.

But if our contempt for Whiggism could be deepened, what could throw it into more careless ridicule than its present clamour for Spanish insurrection; a miserable, half-cast descendant of French Jacobinism—repelled by the people, revolting to national manners, uncalled-for by the necessities of the country, and, at the sight of punishment, flying in despair to the remotest corner of Spain? What can be more ridiculous than that charlatan Wilson, deported from village to village of Portugal, in the midst of popular disgust, and, like a beggar, lashed back to his parish? What more silly, than the attempt to bolster up the emaciated fraud of Whig boasting at home, by fetes and fooleries in taverns and theatres? The failure of the Spanish ball was ludicrously complete—the influence of quadrilles and syllabubs, in sustaining a national war, has been found impotent—and the Whigs are without resource for revolutions to come.

LETTERS OF TIMOTHY TICKLER, ESQ. TO EMINENT LITERARY CHARACTERS.

No. VII.

To the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine.*

DEAR NORTH,

THANK you for the Quarterly. I have just glanced through it with rather a hasty eye, and send you, as you wish, my opinions concerning it. You rather astonish me when you tell me that people are amazed at some of my former remarks. You are asked, you say, what you mean by abusing the Quarterly every now and then, and every now and then puffing the Edinburgh. As to the latter, that is mere matter of taste. The Edinburgh is decidedly going down; it is hardly seen in decent company now-a-days, and I imagine it owes whatever circulation it retains, to the desire which all buy-

ers of periodicals feel of continuing their sets. Therefore, if a good article, a *rara avis*, nay, a *rarisissima*, appears in the Edinburgh, it is open to you to praise it, without any fear of hurting your own side of the question. You may say that Jeffrey's review of Simond, for example, was light, sketchy, and pleasant, trifling agreeably, and just fit for the calibre of the reviewer. You may allow that Sydney Smith can still trim off an article, which, if you be in a great hurry, you might admit into your Magazine. You may confess that Brougham is a good sort of scold, whose intemperance to his literary superiors amuses you, on the same principle that you are amu-

sed by the slang of a blackguard going against a gentleman. This, I repeat, does no harm. The qualities of these gentlemen are admitted by all parties; and the smartness of Jeffrey, the buffoonery of the parson, the Billingsgate of Brougham, serve to float the lumber of the stottery of Macculloch, and filth of Hazlitt. We now look on it as a sort of fangless viper, which we allow to crawl about, permitting ourselves to smile now and then, if any of its slimy contortions please the fancy of the moment, knowing that it can do no hurt. It is indeed quite helpless at present. Look at the articles in the last on Slaters and Virginius, and other crockery-ware. Why, sir, the work which talks of such trash, except, by a sentence or so, to dispose of them for ever, is destroyed.

Therefore it is that you may praise a good article of the Edinburgh, as I said before. When it went forth triumphing and to triumph; when its slander and scurrility dealt death about it, it would have been treason to have pointed out anything good which it contained; it would have been a dereliction of duty not to have taken the monster by the horns, and shewn him forth in full brutality, proving that, strong as he was in vice, there were still giants in the land who could overcome his evil power. But now, when he has neither hoof nor horn, but only a pair of great long ears to prick up in defiance, it is surely an act of Christian charity, which does not at all interfere with our allegiance to Toryism, to hold forth to admiration the good points of the creature. Puff accordingly, if it so pleases you, any good article which you may see immersed in the Serbonian bog of *Constable's Review*, without fear. The concern is about as low as their old ally Dicky Phillips's affair, which I am told is still published somewhere about Fleet-ditch.

Then, as to finding fault with the Quarterly, it strikes me to be pure impertinence in any of the Quarterly people to endeavour to bind you up. The principles of that journal I admire, I love—I mean its political principles. But am I bound to acknowledge it paramount in literature?—Not I! Have not I as good a right to give an opinion on a book, as such people as Millman or Whitaker? In truth I have, and shall as liberally exercise my privilege of finding fault

with them, as they do with other writers, if I think them wrong. The great ability of many, of most of its articles, I not only admit, but am proud of. I think it does honour to our party to have such powerful writing engaged in its cause; but, at the same time, I cannot shut my eyes to its occasional puffery and humbug, by which it sometimes betrays that cause. I cannot see why the mere circumstance of its being printed by Mr Murray, should render it necessary that every one of Mr Murray's books, no matter how infamous or indecent, should be puffed off, directly or indirectly; and, above all, I cannot see why we are to hold our tongues, or wink at such conduct. Still farther, when I see a Review, professing to be the organ of Toryism, turning round on the Lord Chancellor—who, if we view him in all his bearings, honour, integrity, knowledge of law, impartiality, and talent, must be considered to be the greatest man who ever sat in Chancery, the very nucleus of our principles—abusing him and reviling the law of the land, because the judge and the law will not allow Mr Murray to make money by the sale of foul works—works altogether opposed to the political and religious views which the Review supports, I must speak out, if nobody else will, and protest that the Quarterly does not utter *my* sentiments, in this instance at least. To Murray's using the engine in his hands for puffing off the fair books which he publishes, I do not object. I think, indeed, that it is bad taste to do it so much as he does; but I do most strenuously object to the Quarterly's giving up, in any case, its party for the sake of its publisher.

Without further preface, then, I beg leave to remark, that there is too much France in this number. Of thirteen articles, six are on French works, which is more than needful in an English review, particularly as there have been so many books worth reviewing, published since the last appearance of the Quarterly. It strikes me that both Edinburgh and Quarterly pay too limited attention to our own literature; that they are anything but a fair picture of the actual state of the writing world among us. They are just a bundle of Essays on books apparently selected at random, or, at most, with a view to serve their booksellers. The old *Monthly Review* is a much fairer record of our current literature in this

respect; I read its critiques, stupid and proising as they generally are, with an interest not at all derived from themselves; but from my certainty that they tell me how the intellect of England is at the present moment employed.*

But as my business in writing to you is not to discuss the *beau ideal* of a review, but to consider an individual Number of one actually existing, I shall begin with the beginning. The first article is Lacretelle's History of the Constitutional Assembly; a clever paper, in a proper spirit, by Mr Croker, I opine. It is, indeed, excellent throughout, and I quarrel only with its concluding paragraph. After pronouncing a just eulogium on Burke, he quotes a character of that great man from an old Number of the Edinburgh Review that long since had been consigned to the pastry-cook. Burke, *teste* Jeffrey, was a man of no judgment, no principles, no firmness, no honesty—he was no philosopher, no man of business, no orator! There is a critic six feet and a half high, for you! In the opinion of the great Jeffrey—the gentleman who actually can speak to their lordships in court, until he comes to a pain in his leg from standing, the only period of Jeffrey's harangues—Burke was no speaker. We have here nicely balanced orator Jeffrey *versus* no-orator Burke, and the Irishman is found wanting. So saith the Prince of Critics and the King of Men, as Hazlitt, the gallant of Southampton-street, Holborn, styles his friend.—Burke's shade may, however, derive some consolation from the fact, that the same great and ingenious person discovered also that Swift was no wit, Wordsworth no poet, Pindar unable to write Greek, Addison not worth reading, Socrates a scoundrel, Burns nothing but a blackguard. In a word, that they were not to be named in a day with Jeffrey the great, the advocate who domineers in the Jury Court, and actually writes thirty pages full of words at a time for the Edinburgh Review. But, to be serious, why did C. quote such trash? Would he turn up the pages of the heroes of the Dunciad for a character of Pope? or if

he did casually come in contact with any such trumpery, would he have given himself the trouble of even expressing disgust? Of course, he would not—he would merely laugh at the poor creature; and yet there never was such a fathomless distance between Dennis and Pope, as between Jeffrey and Burke.

The ninth and tenth articles, on Madam Campan's Marie Antoinette,—the Dutchess of Angouleme's Narrative of the Journey to Varennes,—her Private Memoirs of what passed in the Temple,—and Louis XVIII.'s Narrative of his Journey, are by the same accomplished hand, and in the same spirit, as the first article. I think C., however, rather hard on poor Louis, and that your own review was much fairer; but he does ample justice to the sublime, simple, and touching Memoirs of the Daughter of France. I defy any man of human feelings to read the 473d page of the Quarterly, the heart-rending page which gives an account of the sufferings of the poor child who had the misfortune to be Louis XVII.—the poor, dear, innocent, unhappy, little creature, in his privations, his terrors, his neglect, his loneliness, and his almost sublime silence—without emotion. It proves how fact surpasses fiction. No writer would have dared to imagine such a character as the docile, courteous, obedient child, *who never speaks again*, after having been forced by monsters in human shape to sign a deposition against his mother. Well does the Quarterly remark, that even the Queen's own appeal to the maternal hearts of her hearers, was not so pathetic, so irresistible a touch as this.

The Reviewer remarks on these things, like a man whose heart is worthy of his genius. Why does Croker do nothing of his own? Surely, surely he might be the Swift of our time if he pleased.

The second article is on Burton's Rome, with sufficient learning and pleasantry to reward its perusal. The reviewer talks a little twaddle about church ceremonica, fretted vaults, stately columns, &c. which so good a Presbyterian as I am cannot swallow, but certainly shall not fight about.

* Good Timothy, abuse whom you please, but the Monthly is a very good book—for, 1stly, it contains first-rate articles every now and then; and, 2dly, it is less than any periodical, except mine, under base Bibliopolic influence.—C. N.

Article third is on Arago's Voyage Round the World, and a capital cutting up of an empty French coxcomb it is. We may expect, I suppose, a *reclamation* from Arago—at least I hope so. He is a most superlative jackass.

The fourth article, on the Poor Laws, is a very superficial and moderate affair; but is perhaps quite as well on that account; for there is not a human being who will now read a grave treatise on so unpromising a subject. The evil, as it prevails in England, is confessedly enormous; but the privilege of murmuring now alone remains, all classes appearing to abandon exertion as hopeless, under the weight of this irremediable calamity. The fundamental principle of the English Poor Laws, viz. that the Legislature can by its fiat create unlimited means of subsistence, and an unlimited demand for labour, is now universally disowned; but it is easier to disavow the principle, than to recal its practical effects; and the whole subsequent legislation of the sister kingdom, has been a wretched struggle in detail, to counteract the master-principle of misgovernment, which, in the first instance, struck down the moral feeling of independence. Some of the wisest and ablest of Englishmen have retired from this intractable subject in despair; but the Reviewer, who is neither very wise nor very able, manages it with a freedom and facility which are quite decisive of his incapacity. The drift of his argument—although there is much discreet reserve in the expression—is the absolute defence of the existing Poor Laws of England as to their *principle*, coupled with some hints neither very new nor important as to improvements in the mode of their execution. In a strain of reasoning at once original and profound, we are taught, that to assist the poor, "is not only a precept of the Christian religion, a maxim of moral virtue, but an instinctive feeling of human nature;" and this being the main argument for compulsory, instead of voluntary aid, we are led to infer, that, in the opinion of this judicious writer, the due enforcement of Chris-

tian and moral maxims, is just the proper subject for acts of Parliament. When we add the precious discovery, that compulsory assessments will be rather more equal in their operation than voluntary contributions, the sum of this conclusive argument in behalf of the English Poor Laws is exhausted; and it is upon a foundation thus deep and solid, that this wisecrack of the Quarterly Review has placed the defence of a system, which the wisest men of England have long pronounced indefensible, and the nation at large has felt to be all but intolerable.—This weightier controversy is preceded by a brief skirmish with our countryman Dr Chalmers, who some years ago took up this business of the poor with characteristic enthusiasm—which, it is a pity to observe, however, so prematurely evaporated—and although the Doctor's singular hurry and heedlessness appear to have given the Reviewer some petty advantages in the detail of the question, it is by no means so clear as he supposes, that the "answers to these (the Reviewer's) questions must overthrow Dr Chalmers's system." Mark the fairness of the weapons employed for this imaginary overthrow. Dr Chalmers alleges, as a proof of the defects of the existing system for relief of the poor in Glasgow, that, under it, the assessment was quadrupled from 1803 to 1818; and the Reviewer rebuts this objection of an assessment *quadrupled* during *one* period, by appealing to an increase of less than a *third* of the population during a *different* period. Again, the Doctor refers to the fact, that the voluntary contributions of his parishioners were found for three years *more* than adequate to the relief of all the new cases of pauperism that occurred, leaving, in fact, after such relief, a *considerable surplus*; and the Reviewer disputes the inference deducible from this fact, by stating, that during the same period the poor-rates were reduced even in England, and by hazarding the ridiculously ignorant assumption, that the parish of St John's, Glasgow, is, compared with other parishes of the city, remarkably free of pauperism.*

* St John's parish being in fact inhabited, with few exceptions, by people of the very lowest rank, and the natural proportion of paupers there about 5 to 1 to the most of the other parishes of that town.

And it is thus that this heavy champion of English pauperism demolishes the hardy presbyterian declaimer.—The Doctor is perhaps not just the man whom, except for practical purposes—for fervid zeal and assiduous ministration in the hovels of poverty and vice—we should select as the champion of a great reform in the management of the poor; and the more is the pity that his singular retreat from the world should limit for the future his contributions to this good cause to the periodical accumulation of lumbering pamphlets, of which we have already had more than enough; but he is not just a person, after all, to be “overthrown” by any ordinary contributor to the Quarterly Review, nor can what he has done be so easily obliterated as seems to be imagined by an obsolete apologist of the English poor-laws.

Article fifth. Theodore Ducas—a common-place review of a common-place book.

The sixth article is such as the Quarterly only can furnish. It is a review of Captain Franklin's stupendous journey. Mr Barrow brings every qualification desirable for the consideration of such a work: profound geographical knowledge, clear and accurate views of all the subjects connected with voyages of discovery, and a lucid style and arrangement. Compare his articles with the drossy, mock-scientific, dogmatic, and impertinent mummings of the Blue and Yellow on the same subject, full of ignorance, self-conceit, self-puffery, and insolent abuse of other people. Compare, in particular, their article on the North-West Passage with this masterly one.

Had I not the fear of the criticism of the Jury-Court before my eyes—that awful band of reviewers, whose fiat decides all literary questions, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee and Masoretic, Thermometrical and Frigorific, I should say, that a more stupid and presumptuous collection of *betises* was never thrown together by the merest smatterer in literature. Read, for instance, Barrow's and Parry's Remarks (p. 406-408) on the Navigation of the Arctic Seas, and then turn to read, if you can, the Blue and Yellow's pyet—(mind I do not say *parrot*, but) pyet attempt at waggery, their nauseating stuff about the Polar basin, Don Quixote and Mambrino's helmet.

In nothing, indeed, as in such articles, is the vast superiority of the Quarterly over the Edinburgh so clearly discernible.

As many idle conjectures concerning the fate of Captain Parry are afloat, and many tormenting speculations vented on the tardiness of his return, too much publicity cannot be given to the fact, that Parry himself “calculated upon three summers, and only wished, that, if not heard of in the beginning of 1824, a vessel with provisions might be sent into Behring's Straits in the autumn of that year.”—P. 409. Mr Barrow concludes by remarking—

“With regard to risk, we apprehend none beyond that to which all navigation in the icy seas is liable, and which the long-frequented whale-fishery, conducted in vessels not half so strong, nor half so well manned, has proved to be little more than common sea risk. Indeed, with ships as strong as wood and iron can make them; stored with provisions and fuel for nearly four years; with a commander excelled by none in the various duties of his profession; endued with intellectual faculties of the highest order, and full of zeal and energy tempered with due prudence and discretion; with experienced officers, and crews of picked seamen;—we cannot persuade ourselves that any reasonable ground of alarm for their safety need be entertained.”

I hope, and trust not.

In Mr B.'s remarks on the ornaments of this book of travels, he pays them a well-deserved compliment, but goes sadly out of his way to abuse what he calls “the greasy daubs of lithography.” Now, this is unjust to a most useful art, which they are daily bringing to more and more perfection. If Mr Barrow would just cast his eyes over Francis Nicholson's plates, he would, I think, be inclined to retract his censure. Be the defects of lithography what they may, it at all events gives you the picture from the very hand of the painter; and I trust the unworthy jealousy among line engravers, which has already turned it three times out of the country, will not again prevail to banish it from us a fourth time. To Mr Finden's merits I readily subscribe; indeed, I should be blind if I did not; but a more complete *apropos des bottles* never occurred than in the way Barrow here brings him forward. He mentions that the etchings are finished in line-engraving

by Mr Finden, a young and promising artist; and then, *apropos* of Mr Finden, an asterisk directs to a note, in which we are informed, that "his engravings of Captain Batty's Welch scenery are beautiful specimens of this branch of the art." How naturally a puff on Welch scenery comes in, in a disquisition on a journey to the Polar Sea! But the whole is explained when we learn that Batty, a very worthy fellow, is the reviewer's son-in-law, and that his book does not sell so well as it ought! There are tricks in a' trades, Mr North. To crown the whole, Murray is about bringing out another edition of Franklin, to be ornamented not by etchings—not by line-engravings—not by Mr Finden—but by those very "greasy daubs of lithography" which are scorned by his reviewer, and used as a peg to bang a note-puffatory upon.

Moore's (not Tom, but Abraham) Moore's Pindar is the subject of the next paper. As I have neither original nor translation by me here in this rustic sejour, I cannot give an opinion on the merits of the critique. It appears too verbal, too fond of cavilling at words, and carping at trifles; but it is a most readable article. Moore had certainly (I judge by the specimens here given) a fine ear for versification, and I have no doubt but that the book is an accession to our literature. What could have possessed the reviewer to conclude his review of the work of such a man by such a piece of classical cant as he does. There is no man more truly devoted to classical literature than I am—nobody more willing to pay knee tributes to the glorious old writers of Greece—nobody more ready to defend against the mean and grovelling shopkeeping spirit of innovation the grand institutions for the education of the flower of England's youth—but as I hate cant in religion—cant in politics—cant in criticism—cant in taste—so do I detest cant in these subjects too. Homer and Pindar, great and sublime as they are, do not of themselves "soothe, purify, or exalt" the human heart. The mightiest scholars—alas! for the obliquities

of our nature—have been stained and sullied by crimes the most atrocious, by sensualities the most grovelling. Why did the reviewer choose such a time for such an observation? Moore, whose book he was reviewing, was an accomplished scholar, a man "initiated early, and imbued deeply, in the manliness and taste of Grecian literature." Yet he was a whig, and an outcast; a man obliged to fly for having robbed his patron Earl Grosvenor to an immense amount—a mere model of population and ingratitude. No, sir, there is another book, which alone truly soothes, purifies, and exalts—a book that bids us "Fear God, and honour the King," but that, to Mr Moore's party, is a sealed volume. Without a knowledge of its contents, the most intimate acquaintance with the glory and grandeur of the all but divine poets of Greece, will avail nothing to the purification of soul.

The eighth article, on the Navigation Laws—I feel I am not equal to the subject. It will require a separate and well-thought-on paper, not such light sketches as I am here throwing off. I participate in the fears of the reviewer, that we are letting theory go too far. I tremble at meddling with the institutions of our ancestors, even though I have Mr Ricardo's assertion that he is a wiser man than any of them. Above all, I dread tampering with our right arm of strength, the navy. Woe to us when we lose the watery wall! Under the old Navigation Laws were fostered Bussels, and Boscawens, and Rodneys, and St Vincents, and Duncans, and the mighty glories of Nelson—I will not say that it was altogether in consequence of these laws—but if it were, then those who have altered them have undertaken a fearful responsibility. But I own I am not competent to the consideration. I leave it to abler hands, contenting myself with expressing my humble, but earnest hopes, that the fine-drawn speculations of theorists, will not be allowed to trifle with what Sir Walter Scott emphatically and most truly calls, "the sheet anchor of the empire, the British Navy."

* Persons who are taken to see the very ingenious lithographic department of the Admiralty, are generally required to write a few words to be thrown off, in order to exhibit the process. When Sir Walter visited it, he wrote the above. The stone is still carefully preserved.

The ninth and tenth articles I have already noticed, and, for the present, I pass the eleventh, in order to consider it in connexion with the last. The twelfth is by Southey, an amusing and instructive account of the Theophilanthropists of France—indeed all the Doctor's histories of sects are amusing and instructive—which at last diverges easily enough into an ardent picture of the progress of infidelity among ourselves—and concludes with an admirable precis of the proofs of the Christian religion. This is in truth an excellent paper, but I do not participate altogether in the views taken by Southey of the dangers to which religion is exposed. I never fear the contest of the good and the evil principle. Give us a fair stage, and no favour, and we shall still hold the mastery. Southey says, that more than eleven millions of newspapers are annually circulated among us, and at least two-thirds of the number aim at the destruction of sound principles. I doubt that it is fact. But, even admitting it, the glorious army of the gentlemen of the press does not strike me as a vastly formidable body by any means. All the educated classes of society merely despise them—they know that with few, very, very few exceptions, they are a mean, illiterate, stupid gang of blockheads, who can just turn off articles, false in fact, lumpy in argument, vulgar in manner, and ungrammatical in style. Take them as a body, I assert that it would be impossible, on any principle of selection, to bring together so utterly contemptible a pack of hounds as the London "gentlemen of the press," from the editors who jabber broken English for their political readers, down to the footman who writes fashionable intelligence for the beau monde. The dissection, the utter dissection of a newspaper, would afford you a capital article, but it should be done by some one residing in London. Believe me, and Dr Southey, too, may believe me, that even the pot-house vulgarian is not much gulled by them. If infidelity prevails, and it does prevail nowhere but in London, we must seek other causes than the agency of the "gentlemen of the press." The hounds may yelp in to join the cry, to be sure, but their melody is of no great avail. Wx—I mean the men who wield the pen at the opposite of the question—can put them down. I speak it without

fear of contradiction. Do not we all remember the time when the Whigs had everything their own way; when a man hardly dared avow himself a Tory, for fear of being pronounced an illiberal blockhead; when the Edinburgh Review was the acknowledged lord of literature and politics; when Tom Moore was the wit in verse, and Sydney Smith the wit in prose; when, in a word, all was their own? And how is it now? Why, Whig and jack-ass are convertible terms; it is a by-word of reproach; they are *our* butts, our common-places of fun, our Listons, our Grimaldés. Blue and Yellow is waste paper—Tom Moore is obliged to submit his poetry to the care of a lawyer, before he dares print it—Sydney Smith is compelled to transport himself to Botany Bay, in quest of bad jokes—and, in short, they are laughed at by us, blackguarded by Cobbett and his crew, and pelted by the mob. They are now a nerveless, knotless, pluckless, powerless, as well as a Godless faction. We, North, we of this Magazine, began the good work; we seized their cannon, and turned it on themselves; our example was followed by others, and now they find they can only defend themselves from the whizzing shafts of our ridicule, by skulking under the protection of laws, which they had, during their own triumphant career, denounced as absurd and tyrannical.

So will it be with the anti-religionists. Southey attaches too much importance to their writings, being himself a litterateur. They, too, could be written down; and the heart of England, sound at the core, is against them. I have often been tempted to wish that the system of prosecution was dropped. I am aware that it is a very ticklish question; but, feeling confident as I do, that God will never give us up to be conquered by the devil, if we stand firm to one another, knowing the vast superiority of intellect on our side, remembering the triumphs of Christianity in every age, I should not fear the diffusion of thousands of copies of the works of Tom Paine and villains of his stamp, while we have hearts and heads to oppose them. I expect much from the system of education pursued towards the rising generation. I expect much from the increased energy and zeal of the clergy of the Church of England,

without which all prosecutions are unavailing. In Southey's own words, (I quote from memory ;))

"But if within her walls, indifference dwell,
Woe to her then! She needs no outer wound."

If, however, in place of indifference, zeal should abound, I care not a farthing for the efforts of infidelity, and would willingly vote that libel prosecutions be left to such friends of freedom, as Henry Grey Bennet, Denman, Brougham, the late Queen, Daniel O'Connell of Ireland, Lord Archy Shilling, Peter Finnerty, late of the pillory, and John Lealie. The worthy Laureate, by the way, falls into the old Lake trick twice in the course of this concern. He quotes his own Joan of Arc, (O ye Gods!) and he puffs Elia!—Eheu! Eheu!

I consider the eleventh and thirteenth articles together, as being on something similar subjects, the former on Greece, the latter on Spain; but how dissimilar in style, argument, and common sense! The paper on Spanish affairs is by a sensible, well-informed, clear-headed, statesmanlike writer, who knows the interests of his country, and is not led away by the nonsensical claptraps that amuse fools. The other is a mere piece of schoolboy frothy declamation, such a thing as would be counted very clever in a boy at

Westminster; and had I heard it from such a youth, I should have been tempted to say, "That is really a fine promising lad—has read his authors with some taste—How old may he be? Seventeen?—Ay, a fine lad indeed; fine honourable boyish notions, and no doubt, when he gets a few years over his head, and can see things, not through mere bookish media, he will be able to produce something worth reading, if he can acquire a less ambitious style, and lose the habit of quoting Greek—and that, of course, he will do." But I have far different feelings for the composition of a full-grown man, who has felt the razor over his throat. The quarrel between the Turks and the Greeks is a quarrel between two hostile factions of people of the same country.

[We must beg Tickler's pardon for diminishing his excellent article, by omitting his strictures on the Greek affairs—because we have not room. They shall appear in our next. If Tim wishes, he may alter, or add, or omit, *ad libitum*, in the meantime.]

The other affair of which you spoke shall be attended to. Mrs T. presents her compliments—the youngster, I am sorry to say, still continues weakly. I am, dear sir, yours ever,

TIMOTHY TICKLER.

Southside, Saturday.

P.S.—Southey is still vivid in wrath against his Lordship of Byron, *ex. gr.* "Contagion was extended beyond the sphere of the court, by a race of poets—

"Whose loose lascivious lays perpetuated
Their own corruption. Soul-polluted slaves,
Who sate them down deliberately lewd
So to awake, and pamper lust in minds
Unborn."

Which sweet strain, we learn by a note, is in "Joan of Arc." As also that "These lines sufficiently shew, that their author held the same moral opinions at the age of nineteen, as when he branded the author of Don Juan"—a most important and highly-interesting fact. But I am no pretender to great powers of divination, when I say, that that note never would have appeared in the Quarterly, had not his Lordship quarrelled with Murray.

Again, "One *Liberal*, (we are thankful for the word—it is well that we should have one which will at once express whatever is detestable in principle, and flagitious in conduct.)" Prosecute Southey, John Hunt, prosecute him, man, without a moment's delay. Leigh the first, also, had better take advice on the following passage: "Some of the most depraved minds in the present generation, have manifested this tendency, proclaiming, at the same time, their hatred for Christianity, and their predilection for what they are pleased to call the religion of the loves and luxuries—that is, the religion of Jupiter, Mars, Bacchus, Venus, the Garden God," &c. &c. Apollo and Mercurius, and the rest, as Bryan O'Proctor has it. "Some of the most DEPRAVED minds!" Fie! Fie!

"Oh, Bryan William Proctor Cornwall Barry,
Open your sketchico-dramatic mouth,"

and fight in defence of the sky-gods. Again, "others of a higher class mingle, like Voltaire, filth with blasphemy, impiety with lewdness, and pursue their object with such devoted perseverance, as if the devil had chosen them for his apostles." A hit palpable against the Satanic school, a nickname which, however, will hardly last as long as our own Cockney or Leg-of-Mutton Schools of Poetry.

T. T.

P.S.—I have a corner still left of this voluminous epistle—and I shall use it to enter an appeal in behalf of Jerry Bentham. Hang it, he is our preserve. He is lugged in in p. 502, text and note—in p. 551—and other places. This is poaching on you. Warn Murray's scribes off, and vindicate your right in cutting up that first-rate piece of game, him whom a friend of ours calls, in that droll song which he sung a fortnight ago for us, (and which you should print,)

"Sage Jeremy the boucher
Of Lincoln's Inn—of Lincoln's Inn."

Good night—it is almost two o'clock.

T. T.

[I write to-morrow.]

I was just going to seal up, when your new packet came to hand.—Well, I have read the three new Cantos.

ALAS! POOR BYRON!

Not ten times a-day, dear Christopher, but ten times a-page, as I wandered over the intense and incredible stupidities of this duodecimo, was the departed spirit of the genius of Childe Harold saluted with this exclamation. Alas! that one so gifted—one whose soul gave such appearance of being deeply imbued with the genuine spirit of poetry—one, to whom we all looked as an ornament of our literature, and who indeed has contributed in no small degree towards spreading a strain of higher mood over our poetry—should descend to the composition of heartless, heavy, dull, anti-British garbage, to be printed by the Cockneys, and puffed in the Examiner.—Alas! alas! that he should stoop to the miserable degradation of being extolled by Hunt!—that he, who we hoped would be the Samson of our poetical day, should suffer himself to be so enervated by the unworthy Delilahs which have enslaved his imagination, as to be reduced to the foul office of displaying blind buffoneries before the Philistines of Cockaigne.

But so it is. Here we have three cantos of some hundred verses, from which it would be impossible to ex-

tract twenty, distinguished by any readable quality. Can I never speak, and, with the blessing of God, never will speak—especially to you; and accordingly, though I was thoroughly disgusted with the scope and tendency of the former cantos of the Don—though there were passages in them which, in common with all other men of upright minds and true feelings, I looked on with indignation—yet I, for one, never permitted my moral or political antipathies so to master my critical judgment, as to make me whiningly decry the talent which they often wickedly, sometimes properly, exhibited. But here we are in a lower deep—we are wallowing in a sty of mere filth. Page after page presents us with a monotonous unmusical drawl, decrying chastity, sneering at matrimony, cursing wives, abusing monarchy, deprecating lawful government, lisping dull double-entendres, hymning Jacobinism, in a style and manner so little unrelieved by any indication of poetic power, that I feel a moral conviction that his lordship must have taken the Examiner, the Liberal, the Rimini, the Round Table, as his model, and endeavoured to write himself down to the level of the capacities and the swinish tastes of those with whom he has the misfortune, originally, I believe, from charitable motives, to associate. This is the most charitable hypothesis which I can frame. Indeed

there are some verses which have all the appearance of having been interpolated by the King of the Cockneys. At least I hope so—I hope that there is but one set capable of writing anything so leering and impotent, as the loinless drivelling (if I may venture a

translation of the strong expression of the Stoic satirist) which floats on the slaver of too many of these pages. I allude, for instance, to the attempt at wit, where the poet (the poet!) is facetious at the state of females during the sack of a town;* the greatest part

* It is a pity to reprint such things, but a single specimen here may do good, by the disgust for the whole which it must create.

“ In one thing ne'ertheless 'tis fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration :
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase—
Perhaps the season's chill, and their lone station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste ;—they ravish'd very little.

“ Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line ;—but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm ; no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration ;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

“ Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the dark,
Which showed a want of lanterns, or of taste—
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes,—besides such things from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste ;—
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grenadiers.

“ But on the whole their continence was great ;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of ' single blessedness,' and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these Roman crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

“ Some voices of the burxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)
' Wherefore the ravishing did not begin !'
But, while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin ;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
In darkness—I can only hope they did.

“ Suwarrow now was conqueror—a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
Blazed, and the cannon's roar was scarce allay'd,
With bloody hands he wrote his first dispatch ;
And here exactly follows what he said—
' Glory to God and to the Empress !' (Powers
Eternal ! ! such names mingled !) ' Ismail's ours.'

of the seraglio scene; and other places to which I must decline making any farther reference.

Alas! poor Lord Byron! His originality has been often questioned, and he has of late been compelled to admit, that the scissors, or a mental operation almost as mechanical as scissors-work, have stood him in good stead. In this new book of his, he honestly confesses his obligation to a French description of the siege of Ismail. So far so good. But he has not the courage, or, if you will, the impudence, to avow his obligation to another French work, which has supplied his warm colouring. I may as well name the book at once—the Chevalier de Faublas. To such of your readers as know the book, there is no need of making any observation whatever on its contents—to those who do not, I may just mention that the meritorious Mr Benbow has suffered an accident before the courts of Westminster for being so liberal as to republish it. Now, from this filthy work, which I am really almost ashamed for having mentioned, are all the striking situations of Don Juan taken—for instance, the very incident in the seraglio, &c. &c. &c. It is, however, fair to say, that Byron adopts here and there the filthy incidents, and, almost throughout, the filthy tone, of Faublas, without, in any one passage, (I mean of these three new cantos,) rivalling the sparkle of Louvet's wit—far less the elegance of Louvet's language.

Talking of language, it is indeed *lucè clarius* that Lord B.'s residence in Italy has been much too long protracted. He has positively lost his ear, not only for the harmony of English verse, but for the very jingle of English rhymes. He makes *will* rhyme to *will* in stanza 33 of Canto VI. "Patience" is the rhyme to "fresh ones" in another place. "John Murray"

rhymes to "necessary" in a third; and "had in her" to "Wladimir" in a fourth. As for the flow of his verse, read the following patches of dull prose:

"He died at fifty for a queen of forty; I wish their years had been fifteen and twenty, for then wealth, kingdoms, worlds, are but a sport; I remember when, though I had no great plenty of worlds to lose, yet still, to pay my court, I gave what I had—a heart;—as the world went I gave what was worth a world; for worlds could never restore me those pure feelings, gone for ever."

"I wonder (although Mars no doubt's a god I praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin* may make up for a *bullet* in his body? I hope this little question is no sin, because, though I am but a simple noddy, I think one Shakespeare puts the same thought in the mouth of some one in his plays so doating, which many people pass for wits by quoting."

Stop here for a moment, Christopher, just to admire the style in which "one Shakespeare," and his "doating plays," are mentioned by this worshipper of Pope; and then go on to the following:

"Perceiving then no more the commandant of his own corps, nor even the corps, which had quite disappeared—the Gods know how! (I can't account for everything which may look bad in history; but we at least may grant it was not marvellous that a mere lad, in search of glory, should look on before, nor care a pinch of snuff about his corps.)"

Read these *morceaux*, (they are three *veritable* stanzas of Don Juan,) and doubt, if you can, that Byron has staid away rather too long, and that, if he means to write more English, it is high time he were back in England, to hear the language spoken.—It is very good of him to give alms to any poor Cockney he finds at sea *abroad*, without a tester in his fob—but hence-

"Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
Since 'Menè, Menè, Tekel,' and 'Upharsin,'
Which hands or pens have ever traced of swords.
Heaven help me! I'm but little of a parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the Lord's,
Severe, sublime; the Prophet wrote no farces on
The fate of Nations;—but this Russ so witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city."

forth he must actually guard against allowing them to utter any of their gibberish in his hearing. If he goes on in such culpable, however amiable, weaknesses, why, who shall swear that he won't come in time to rhyming "*Mora*," and "*Fawn*," like Barry Cornwall—"Dear" and "*Cythera*," like John Keats—or "*For*"

and "*Straw*," like the immortal LEIGH REX himself? Just imagine him already sunk to beginning a stanza, with such a line as "*But Juan was quite 'A BROTH OF A BOV!!!'*"

Of the wit of these Cantos, design to accept this one sample. The passage occurs in the description of Suwarrow's host.

"Then these were foreigners of much renown,
Of various nations, and all volunteers;
Not fighting for their country or its crown,
But wishing to be one day brigadiers;
Also to have the sacking of a town;
A pleasant thing to young men at their years.
'Mongst them were several Englishmen of pith,
Sixteen called Thomson, and nineteen named Smith.

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson;—all the rest
Had been called '*Jemmy*,' after the great bard;
I don't know whether they had arms or crest,
But such a godfather's as good a card.
Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the best
Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict or ward,
Was *he*, since so renowned 'in country quarters
At Halifax; ' but now he served the Tartars.

The rest were Jacks and Gills, and Wills and Bills;
But when I've added that the elder Jack Smith
Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest blacksmith,
I've said all I know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking '*Schmacksmith*,'
A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin."

"A habit rather blameable, which is
That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this
The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and Smith;
One of the valorous 'Smiths' whom we shall miss
Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to 'pith';
But 'tis a name so spread o'er 'Sir' and 'Madam,'
That one would think the FIRST who bore it '*ADAM*.'"

And then to crown the whole, take the stanza that immediately follows this about "*Tchitchitzkoff and Smith*."

"The Russian batteries were incomplete,
Because they were constructed in a hurry;
Thus the same cause which makes a verse want feet,
And throws a cloud o'er Longman and John Murray,
When the sale of new books is not so fleet
As they who print them think is necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls 'murder,' and at others 'glory.'"

These are the mumblings of a man, whose impressions of Joseph Miller have been weakened by long absence! Never was such poor, poor stuff—and

I am almost ashamed to think of myself tacking the mention of such contemptible trash to a notice, however hasty and imperfect, of such a work

as the Quarterly Review. Southey, Gifford, &c. have their faults—above all, they have their affectations—but, Heaven preserve us! what a plunge it is from their *worst* to the *best* that even Lord Byron seems capable of giving us since his conjunction with these deluded drivellers of Cockaigne! *There* we have at least strong English prejudices delivered in the strong clear language of England! *Here*, what *have* we got? Stupid French books translated, not into stupid English, but into stupid Cockneyese—wit, that won't make the Duke of Sussex himself chuckle—verse, that Charles Young himself could not read, so as to produce anything like the effect of musical cadence—jests, that even the Laureate will not feel—in short, to say all that can be said—a book which, though written by Lord Byron, is published by, without elevating the brotherhood of, the Hunts!

I do not mean to say that there are not some half-dozen or two of stanzas not quite unworthy of the better days of Lord Byron. There are. But I have already occupied far too many of your columns with a production which, with fewer exceptions than anything that has been published this year, (save only perhaps the *Liber Amoris*,) by any man of the least pretension and talent of any kind, appears deserving of sovereign and universal neglect—"CHRISTIAN, OR THE ISLAND," contained two pages, and just two of Byronian Poetry—all the rest was mere translation, and generally feeble translation. This contains no passage equal to the two I allude to in Christian—none whatever. It contains nothing that the moment it is read makes everybody exclaim, "Well, say what you please of the book—but here is a stanza which no living man but Lord Byron could have written." There is nothing of this *class* here—there *was* in the worst of the preceding cantos; and, in one word, Don Juan appears, like Lord Byron himself, to be getting into his dotage before his time.

I don't remember anything so com-

plete as the recent fall of Lord Byron's literary name. I don't mean to insinuate that people of taste think less highly now, than they did five, six, seven, or eight years ago, of the genius of Byron, in his true works of genius. But what I mean to say is this, that his name can no more sell a book now, than Jeremy Bentham's. Christian, for instance, did not sell a bit better than any new poem of Mr Milman's, or Mrs Hemans's, would do—and this continuation of Don Juan is obliged to be sold for a shilling, and is very moderately taken off even at that rate, although, of course, it has all the advantage of being believed to be a licentious thing. Never, to be sure, was a more egregious tumble. If it were only to check the joy which must prevail in a certain quarter, (which I need not name,) if this goes on—Lord Byron ought really to pull up, and make at least one more exertion worthy of himself, and of the original expectations of a reading public, that has unwillingly deserted, and that would most gladly return to him, even after all that has happened.

I do *not* believe Lord Byron to be a bad man—I mean a deliberately, resolvedly wicked man. I know him to be a man of great original power and genius, and, from report, I know him to be a kind friend where his friendship is wanted. I cannot consent to despair of Lord Byron—but as to his late publications, he may depend upon it, they are received by the people of Britain "with as much coldness and indifference," (to use an expression in one of Cobbett's late Registers,) "as if they were as many ballads from Grub Street, or plays from Lord John Russel."—He must adopt an entire change of system, or give the thing up altogether. So thinks sincerely, and in the spirit of kindness and of regret, much more than in any other spirit,

Yours ever,
Dear Christopher,
T. T.

A SCOTS MUMMY.

To Sir Christopher North.

DEAR SIR CHRISTY,

YOU will remember, that, when you and I parted last at Ambrose's, the following dialogue passed between us. Perhaps you may have forgot; but it was just at the head of the narrow entry, immediately under the door of that celebrated tavern, that it took place; and, at the time when it began, we were standing with our backs toward each other, in what I would have called, had I been writing poetry, a moveless attitude.

"Mr Hogg, what is the reason that you write to me so seldom?"

"Faith, man, it's because I hae naething to write about."

"Nothing to write about? For shame! how can you say so? Have you not the boundless phenomena of nature constantly before your eyes?"

"O, to be sure, I hae; but then—"

In the meantime I was thinking to myself, what the devil can this phenomena of nature be, when you interrupted me with, "None of your *but then's*, shepherd. A man who has such an eye as you have, for discerning the goings on of the mighty elements, can never want the choice of a thousand subjects whereon to exercise his pen. You have the night, with her unnumbered stars, that seem to rowl through spaces incomprehensible; the day dawn, and the sunshine; the dazzling splendours of noon, and the sombre hues that pervade the mountains, under the congregated masses of impending vapours."

"Gude sauf us, Christy's mair nor half seas ower!" thinks I; "but I maunna pretend no to understand him, for fear he get intil a rage.—Ay, ye're no far wrang, man," I says; "there are some gayen good things to be seen atween the heaven an' yirth sometimes. Weel, gude night, or rather gude morning, honest Sir Christy, I'll try to pick you up something o' yon sort."

"By all means, Hogg. I insist on it. Something of the phenomena of nature, I beseech you. You should look less at lambs and rams, and he-goats, Hogg, and more at the grand phenomena of nature. You should drink less out of the toddy-jug, shepherd, and more at the perennial spring.

However, we'll say no more about that, as matters stand, to-night; only hand me something of the phenomena of nature."

I came home here, and looked about me soon and late with a watchful eye, and certainly saw many bright and beautiful appearances on the face of the sky, and in the ever-varying hues of the mountains; still I had witnessed all these before; so had every old shepherd in these glens; and I could not persuade myself that any of these was the particular thing, a description of which you wanted; because they were, in fact, no phenomena, if I understand that French word properly, nor ever were viewed as such by any of our country people. But at length the curiosity of two young shepherds, neighbours of my own, furnished me with a subject that hit my fancy to a hair; and the moment that I first heard the relation, I said to myself, "This is the very thing for old Christy." But thereby hangs a tale, which is simply and literally as follows:—

On the top of a wild height, called Cowanscroft, where the lands of three proprietors meet all at one point, there has been, for long and many years, the grave of a suicide, marked out by a stone standing at the head, and another at the feet. Often have I stood musing over it myself, when a shepherd on one of the farms of which it formed the extreme boundary, and thinking what could induce a young man, who had scarcely reached the prime of life, to brave his Maker, and rush into his presence by an act of his own erring hand, and one so unnatural and preposterous; but it never once occurred to me as an object of curiosity, to dig up the mouldering bones of the culprit, which I considered as the most revolting of all objects. The thing was, however, done last month, and a discovery made of one of the greatest natural phenomenons that I ever heard of in this country.

The little traditionary history that remains of this unfortunate youth, is altogether a singular one. He was not a native of the place, nor would he ever tell from what place he came, but he was remarkable for a deep, thought-

ful, and sullen disposition. There was nothing against his character that anybody knew of, and he had been a considerable time in the place. The last service he was in was with a Mr Anderson of Eltrieve, who died about 100 years ago, and who had hired him during the summer to herd a stock of young cattle in Eltrieve Hope. It happened one day in the month of September, that James Anderson, his master's son, a boy then about ten years of age, went with this young man to the Hope one day, to divert himself. The herd had his dinner along with him; and, about one o'clock, when the boy proposed going home, the former pressed him very hard to stay and take a share of his dinner; but the boy refused, for fear his parents might be alarmed about him, and said he *would* go home; on which the herd said to him, "Then if ye winna stay wi' me, James, ye may depend on't I'll cut my throat afore ye come back again."

I have heard it likewise reported, but only by one person, that there had been some things stolen out of his master's house a good while before, and that the boy had discovered a silver knife and fork, that was a part of the stolen property, in the herd's possession that day, and that it was this discovery that drove him to despair. The boy did not return to the Hope that afternoon; and, before evening, a man coming in at the pass called *the Hart Loop*, with a drove of lambs, on the way for Edinburgh, perceived something like a man standing in a strange frightful position at the side of one of Eldinhope hay-ricks. The driver's attention was riveted on this strange, uncouth figure; and as the drove-road passed at no great distance from the spot, he first called, but receiving no answer, he went up to the spot, and behold it was the above-mentioned young man, who had hung himself in the hay rope that was tying down the rick. This was accounted a great wonder, and every one said, if the devil had not assisted him, it was impossible the thing could have been done, for in general these ropes are so brittle, being made of green hay, that they will scarcely bear to be bound over the rick. And the more to horrify the good people of the neighbourhood, the driver said, that when he first came in view, he could *almost give his oath* that he saw two people engaged busily

about the hay-rick, going round it and round it, and he thought they were dressing it. If this asseveration approximated at all to truth, it makes this evident at least, that the unfortunate young man had hanged himself after the man with the lambs came in view. He was, however, quite dead when he cut him down. He had fastened two of the old hay ropes at the bottom of the rick on one side, (indeed they are all fastened so when first laid on,) so that he had nothing to do but to loosen two of the ends on the other side; and these he tied in a knot round his neck, and then, slackening his knees, and letting himself lean down gradually till the hay rope bore all his weight, he contrived to put an end to his existence in that way. Now the fact is, that if you try all the ropes that are thrown over all the outfield hay ricks in Scotland, there is not one among a thousand of them will hang a colley dog—so that the manner of this wretch's death was rather a singular circumstance.

Early next morning Mr Anderson's servants went reluctantly away, and, taking an old blanket with them for a winding-sheet, they rolled up the body of the deceased, first in his own plaid, letting the hay-rope still remain about his neck, and then rolling the old blanket over all, they bore the loathed remains away the distance of three miles or so on spoked, to the top of Cowan's Croft, at the very point where the Duke of Buccleuch's land, the laird of Drumelzier's, and Lord Napier's meet; and there they buried him, with all that he had on him and about him, silver knife and fork and all together. Thus far went tradition, and no one ever disputed one jot of the disgusting oral tale.

A nephew of that Mr Anderson's, who was with the hapless youth that day he died, says, that, as far as he can gather from the relations of friends that he remembers, and of that same uncle in particular, it is *one hundred and five years* next month, (that is, September 1823,) since that event happened; and I think it likely that this gentleman's information is correct. But sundry other people, much older than he whom I have consulted, pretend that it is six or seven years more. They say they have heard that Mr James Anderson was then a boy ten years of age; that he lived to an old

age, upwards of four score, and it is two-and-forty years since he died. Whichever way it may be, it was about that period some way, of that there is no doubt. Well, you will be saying, that, excepting the small ornamental part of the devil and the hay-rope, there is nothing at all of what you wanted in this ugly traditional tale. Stop a wee bit, my dear Sir Christy. Dinna just cut afore the point. Ye ken auld fools an' young bairns shouldna see things that are half done. Stop just a wee bit, ye auld crusty, crippled, crabbit, editor body, an' I'll let ye see that the grand *phenomena of Nature's* a' to come to yet.

It so happened, sir, that two young men, William Sheil and W. Sword, were out on an adjoining height, this summer, casting peats, and it came into their heads to open that grave in the wilderness, and see if there were any of the bones of the suicide of former ages and centuries remaining. They did so, but opened only about one half of the grave, beginning at the head and about the middle at the same time. It was not long till they came upon the old blanket,—I think they said, not much more than a foot from the surface. They tore that open, and there was the hay-rope lying stretched down alongst his breast so fresh, that they saw at first sight it was made of *risp*, a sort of long sword-grass that grows about marshes and the sides of lakes. One of the young men seized the rope, and pulled by it, but the old enchantment of the devil remained. It would not break, and so he pulled and pulled at it till behold the body came up into a sitting posture, with a broad blue bonnet on its head, and its plaid around it, as fresh as that day it was laid in. I never heard of a preservation so wonderful, if it be true as was related to me, for still I have not had the curiosity to go and view the body myself. The features were all so plain, that an acquaintance might easily have known him. One of the lads gripped the face of the corpse with his finger and thumb, and the cheeks felt quite soft and fleshy, but the dimples remained, and did not spring out again. He had fine yellow hair about nine inches long, but not a hair of it could they pull out, till they cut part of it off with a knife. They also cut

off some portions of his clothes, which were all quite fresh, and distributed them among their acquaintances, sending a portion to me among the rest, to keep as natural curiosities. Several gentlemen have in a manner forced me to give them fragments of these enchanted garments; I have, however, retained a small portion for you, which I send along with this, being a piece of his plaid, and another of his waist-coat breast, which you will see are still as fresh as that day they were laid in the grave. His broad blue bonnet was sent to Edinburgh several weeks ago, to the great regret of some gentlemen connected with the land, who wished to have it for a keepsake. For my part, fond as I am of blue bonnets, and broad ones in particular, I declare I durst not have worn that one. There was nothing of the silver knife and fork discovered, that I heard of, nor was it very likely it should; but it would appear he had been very near run of cash, which, I dare say, had been the cause of his utter despair, for, on searching his pockets, nothing was found but three old Scots halfpennies. These young men meeting with another shepherd afterwards, his curiosity was so much excited, that they went and dugged up the curious remains a second time, which was a pity, as it is likely that by these exposures to the air, and from the impossibility of burying it up again so closely as it was before, the flesh will now fall to dust.

These are all the particulars that I remember relating to this curious discovery; and I am sure you will confess that a very valuable receipt may be drawn from it for the preservation of dead bodies. If you should think of trying the experiment on yourself, you have nothing more to do than hang yourself in a hay rope, which, by the by, is to be made of *risp*, and leave orders that you are to be buried in a wild height, and I will venture to predict, that though you repose there for ages an inmate of your mossy cell, of the cloud, and the storm, you shall set up your head at the last day as fresh as a moor-cock. I remain, my worthy friend, yours very truly,

JAMES HOGG.

Altrieve Lake, Aug. 1, 1823.