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SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND PUBLICATIONS
OF THE LATE

JOSEPH RITSON, ESQ.

BY JOSEPH HASLEWOOD.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR ROBERT TRIPHOOK,
23, OLD BOND-STREET.

1824.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET.

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AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT,
AND THE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MANY
LITERARY FAVOURS,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS
INSCRIBED
TO
RICHARD HEBER, Esq.

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SOME ACCOUNT
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As the works of an Author become popular, an inquiry is naturally excited respecting his habits and manners; and hence an interest arises from a consideration of the character before us, to trace the origin of that mode of study, or excitement of research, which enabled him to produce the many amusing and enlightened volumes, that either appeared with his name, or are attributed to his pen. But while in the life of a traveller biography is collaterally supplied with novelty and adventure, while in that of a statesman it is rendered interesting

by immediate connexion with political information and national history, the domestic habitude of the recluse scholar will usually be found sterile of incident, wanting in diversity, and seldom, if ever, varying sufficiently to reward the venial inquisitiveness of personal curiosity. The common routine of a literary man, occupying for many years Chambers in an Inn of Court, whose egress and regress formed little more than visits to public libraries or book-auctions, without any such auxiliary assistance as is now commonly and often injudiciously resorted to, of social conversations, or private correspondence, can only be expected to lead to a mere minute record of his various publications. The biographical notices of the late Joseph Ritson are of a common character, trite and few. He was descended from an antient respectable family residing at Hackthorpe, in the county of Westmoreland, was born the 2d October, 1752, at Stockton-upon-Tees, Durham, and bred to the profession

of the Law, under Ralph Bradley, Esq., a distinguished Conveyancer at Stockton. He commenced practice also as a Conveyancer; and after removing to the Metropolis entered himself of Gray's Inn, the 6th of May, 1784, and was called to the bar by that Society, the 20th May, 1789. His abilities as attached to his own branch of the profession were of the highest promise, and obtained a well-founded share of incipient reputation for acuteness of judgment and soundness of opinion: though he appears to have slighted an increase of professional business, to pursue the more congenial indulgence of literary research and critical disquisition. Perhaps, in addition to his own neglect upon the subject, some obstacles to his success in business may, in a great degree, be ascribed to his general habit of seclusion from society, and to certain singular and eccentric opinions* which he pertinaciously entertained,

* Of the wavering notions of Ritson upon the subject of the Christian religion, although he at one period

and without much reserve incautiously promulgated.

The monotony of chamber residence he commonly diversified by an excursion during the summer months, to visit his family friends in the North; and appears thence to have gleaned copious materials which he connected with several of his literary pursuits. In 1791 he went to Paris, accompanied by Mr. Shield, the celebrated musical composer; but without, it is believed, any particular object, beyond casual amusement.

I. Before he left Stockton, which was so early as his twentieth year, he commenced a long career with the press, and published, in a youthful fervour, some amatory *Versees addressed to the Ladies of Stockton*, 1772*.

entertained and expressed himself thereon too freely, let it suffice that a letter of his own was written to a surviving correspondent, declaring his poignant regret, even to tearfulness, that it had been his misfortune to live an unbeliever.

* First printed in the Newcastle Miscellany, 1772,

II. From his own avowal to an intimate acquaintance, *The Odes of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams**, the second edition, were edited by him. His labour could not extend beyond collating the proof-sheets.

III. His next production was a piece of humour, now extremely rare, printed as *By permission of the Mayor. Vivat Rex. The St*ck-t*n Jubilee, or Shakespeare in all his glory. A choice Pageant for Christmas Holidays, 1781. Veluti in Speculum.†*

IV. In the remote enquiry which commenced towards the close of the last century, into what has been called the Augustan period

and afterwards at Newcastle, 12mo, n. d. This notice is from the later printed copy, a gift of Mr. Ritson; and it appears certain that the orthography of *Versees* was not adopted by him so early as the year when the lines were first printed. [*See the Appendix.*] He once intimated a claim to another poetical effusion that appeared in the same Miscellany.

* Printed by Coslett, 1780, 12mo.

† Newcastle, printed for the Managers, 12mo.

of English literature, that of the Elizabethan age, he strenuously joined ; with a mind ardent for discovery, unwearied by labour, however long and tedious the investigation, and with an un-failing memory. He felt confidence in himself, and entered the field fearless of contemporary names, however worn in the toil, and of confirmed fame and notoriety ; while, as a critical censor, he erected his banner of doughty defiance, and fearlessly and implicitly expected submissiveness from every fellow-student. His warfare was entered upon with *Observations on the three first volumes of the History of English Poetry**, addressed in a familiar letter to the author, the Rev. Mr. Warton, arising, as he described, from “restless enquiries.” The result of those “enquiries” produced a detection of some, not inconsequential, errors of the historian, when they are considered as flaws defacing a National History ; but the corrections

* Printed for Stockdale and Faulder, 1782, 4to.

were given to the public in the language of a despot, rather than with the urbanity of a liberal critic; and certainly evidenced an unprovoked and most indefensible irascibility of temper*. Of the uncandidness of this attack he became afterwards convinced; and the reasoning of his frank friend Mr. Park drew from him an acknowledgment of his own impropriety, and induced him, at a later period, to buy up and destroy all the copies of the work that could be obtained.

V. There also appeared in the same peevish vein, in the following year, *Remarks critical and illustrative on the Text and Notes*

* The Observations on Warton's H. E. P. excited much controversy in the Gentleman's Magazine, in which the principal parties were the Rev. Thomas Russell, of New Coll. Oxon (author of Sonnets, &c.); the Rev. J. Bowle, the Editor of a Spanish Don Quixote, for which publication he experienced a similar attack from Baretti, under the title of "Tolondron;" John Baynes, Esq. of Trin. Coll. Camb. (a member of Gray's Inn); and Ritson himself.

of the last edition of *Shakspeare**. These remarks were attacked in a short pithy letter in the *St. James's Chronicle* of June 1783, as explaining nothing "of any consequence to *Shakspeare's* real merit and character," by a writer under the signature of "*Alciphron*," (*forsan* George Steevens,) and were defended, as proving the last edition of *Shakspeare's* works "an execrable bad one," by "*Justice*," (*Ritson* himself.)

VI. "*The Descent of the Crown of England*," 1783. On a broadside. These tables of *Descent* were adapted to the old Jacobite principles, then rapidly on the wane, and which *Ritson* declared he "never dared to *publish*." They are extremely curious, compact, and useful, and were constructed with his accustomed industry and conclusive mode of research; and, by those who possess the same are greatly valued.

VII. Towards the end of the same year

* Printed for Johnson, 1783, 8vo.

appeared *A select Collection of English Songs, in three volumes**, with an incidental preface, and an excellent “Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song†.” This work was aptly announced as “designed for a standing repository of the efforts of English genius in melody and song,” and remains unrivalled as a selection. His friend Mr. Shield arranged the music of several of the songs; for Ritson himself was wholly unacquainted with that harmonizing science, and his taste for melody never soared higher than in acknow-

* Printed for Johnson, 1783, 8vo. Second edition, with additional Songs and Notes, by Thomas Park, F. S. A. 1813.

† In this Essay Mr. Ritson was materially assisted by his friend John Baynes, Esq. of Gray's Inn, and particularly in the elegant translations from Athenæus, and the lines from the French of Mary Queen of Scots. All the embellishments were designed by Stothard, except the frontispiece, which is by Fuseli.—At the close of the Essay in the second edition, Mr. Park has added an enumeration of several succeeding collections of ballad lore, with passing remarks on the selected intermixture of the Rev. Mr. Plumtre, published in 1806-8.

ledging the pleasure he received at hearing any one sing the well-known ballad of “Sally in our alley.”*

VIII. A strong predilection for preserving the northern provincial ballads is repeatedly noticeable. He published sixteen of them col-

* The following letter, addressed to his friend Mr. Shield, confirms the above remark.

Dear Shield,

On applying to you, some years ago, to time a few old tunes, which had been prick'd down for me by Edward Williams, the welsh bard, you say'd you could not make anything of them ; but, if i would bring him up to you, you could take them down from himself ; this was, at that time, either inconvenient or neglected ; and he has, ever since, been in Wales ; but, haveing come to town for a few days, he is very ready to gratify me, by dictateing the tunes to you, if your convenience, and readyness to oblige, can be united. Wil you, therefor, my worthy friend, have the gooduess to appoint a time for us to wait upon you, for the above purpose? favouring me with a speedy answer by the same conveyance.

Your affectionate friend,

J. RITSON.

Grays-inn,

15th May, 1802.

lectively, as *The Bishopric Garland, or Durham Minstrel; being a choice collection of excellent songs, relating to the above county**.

IX. About the same period was printed *Gammer Gurton's Garland; or the Nursery Parnassus: a choice collection of pretty songs and verses, for the amusement of all little good children who can neither read nor run†*.

X. He also printed another trifling work, of not much higher reputation, as *The Spartan Manual, or Tablet of Morality; being a genuine collection of the apophthegms, maxims, and precepts, of the philosophers, heroes, and other great and celebrated characters of antiquity, under*

* Stockton, printed for R. Christopher, 1784. Again, omitting six songs, at Newcastle, by Hall, 1792, 12mo. The ballad of "Rookhope Ryde," and "Lamentation on the Death of Sir Robert de Nevile," printed for C. Roworth, Hudson's Court, Strand, n. d. were afterwards added. The whole reprinted, with all the other Garlands, for R. Triphook, 1809, 8vo.

† Printed at Stockton, by and for R. Christopher, 32mo. n. d. price two-pence. Again, with additions, 1809, 8vo.

proper heads: for the improvement of youth, and the promoting of wisdom and virtue.*

XI. Five years after publishing the Remarks on our immortal Bard appeared *The Quip Modest, a few words by way of Supplement to Remarks, &c.* † which is acknowledged, by the initials of name and place of residence being affixed at the end of the preface. This was occasioned by a republication of the former edition of Shakspeare, principally, if not wholly, under the superintendance of the late Mr. I. Reed ‡. If there was too much of invective and bicker-

* Printed for C. Dilly, 1785, 8vo. In the same year *The Caledonian Muse* was intended for publication.

† Printed for Johnson, 1788, 8vo.

‡ The design of *The Quip Modest* was in part to justify some of the notes before given in the *Critical Remarks*, which had been cited and commented upon in the new edition by a writer using the signature of the editor; and whom it did not serve the purpose of Ritson to believe was Steevens. From a note in a cancelled leaf of the Preface, he supposed his "anonymous friend," as he designates him, to be the author of *A familiar Address to the Curious in English Poetry: more particularly to the*

ing coarsely applied in these tracts, still his competency to the task of elucidating the text of Shakspeare is amply admitted, by the subsequent incorporation of all the material parts of his observations, however communicated to the public, in the notes of the later editions of that author. This was done by Mr. Steevens.

XII. In the same year was printed another selection of local rarity, called *The Yorkshire Garland: being a curious collection of old and*

Readers of Shakspeare. By Thersites Literarius, 1784, 8vo. This tract was written in the first tense, attempting to create a belief of its being the production of Ritson, and gave him great offence. That he had reason to suspect this rather inconsequential production originated with Steevens seems probable, as he remarks "however little relation it may have to Shakspeare, the author has had interest enough to procure it a place in the 'List of Detached Pieces of Criticism, &c.'" But, after printing a violent and abusive note on the author, it was cancelled to substitute one declaring "that the candour, liberality, and politeness, which distinguish Mr. STEEVENS, utterly exclude *him* from every imputation."

*new songs, concerning that famous county. Part I.** It was never continued †.

XIII. After his official appointment of High Bailiff of the Duchy of Lancaster, a situation obtained by purchase in 1785, he formed *A Digest of the Proceedings of the Court Leet of the Manor and Liberty of the Savoy, parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster, in the County of Middlesex; from the year 1682 to the present time* ‡.

* York, printed for Frobisher, 1788, 12mo.

† In 1788 was published *Homer's Hymn to Venus; translated from the Greek, with notes, by I. Rittson, 4to*; which has been mistakenly given to our author, as is seen by the following note from his own copy:—

“ This Isaac Rittson, a lame man, who walk'd with a crutch, was, for some time, schoolmaster at Penrith; but ambition haveing induce'd him to study physick, and adopting the principles and practice of doctor Thomas Brown, he addicted hisself so much to that worthy physicians universal specifick—a glass of brandy, that he fel sick, went mad, and dye'd in the neighbourhood of London. Poor Isaac! thou shouldst have remember'd the fate of Old Cole's dog, which was determine'd to take the wall of a waggon, and was crush'd to death for his presumption. J. R.”

‡ Printed 1789, without a publisher's name, 8vo.

XIV. *Ancient Songs, from the time of King Henry the Third to the Revolution**, was, perhaps, his most valuable, curious, and interesting publication. Elaborate research, antiquarian erudition, faithfulness of transcript†, and accuracy of editorship, are eminently displayed, while his ability and penetration as a critic stand amply confirmed: nor did he, it may be remarked, disdain to follow the plan of Dr. Percy in his *Reliques*. He prefixed some very recondite and compendious “*Observations on the ancient English Minstrels*,” and an apposite “*Dissertation on the Songs, Musick, and Instrumental Performance of the ancient English*.”

* Printed for Johnson, 1790, 8vo, but not published until July 1792. The six appropriate vignettes were designed and etched by the taste and skill of Stothard, the royal academician, and are therefore curiosities.

† One exception must be made to this general commendation, as any reader will perceive who shall take the trouble of comparing the *Balet* by Earl Rivers with the *Fairfax MS.*, liberally presented by Ritson to the British Museum.

XV. His next work was *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry: from authentic manuscripts and old printed copies**; and may be equally commended for judiciousness of excerpt, rarity of selection, and correctness of supervision; and repelling as obsolete language may occasionally appear, it is in this work foregone by interest of subjects.

XVI. Another legal tract set forth *The Office of Constable; being an entirely new Compendium of the law concerning that ancient minister for the conservation of the peace, carefully compiled from the best authorities: with a preface and an introduction, containing some account of the origin and antiquity of the office †*: which

* Printed for Egerton, 1791, 8vo.—An Ode to Ritson written in 1791, on his intended descriptive revision of the ancient ballad of Chevy Chase, may be found in the Gentleman's Magazine for June 1811. Ritson did publish the ballad, from an early copy, in the "Northumberland Garland," which was entitled "The Hunting of the Cheviat."

† Printed for Whieldon and Butterworth, 1791, 8vo.

combined as well the law and powers of the appointment, as the historical and lucubrate anecdotes attached thereto.

XVII. Another valuable compilation, to shew *The Jurisdiction of the Court Leet, exemplified, &c.** formed a portion of a much larger work, which he was discouraged from proceeding with, from “the scanty sale it was likely to experience.”

XVIII. *Cursory Criticisms on the edition of Shakspeare published by Edmond Malone* †, proved a virulent philippic against that respectable editor and man ‡.

XIX. His provincial attachment was again shown by *The North-Country Chorister; an un-*

* Printed for Whieldon and Butterworth, 1791, 8vo.; Again for Clarke, 1809. The three Law Tracts have a collective title as *Law Tracts, by Joseph Ritson, of Gray's Inn, Barrister. Et in Arcadia Ego. London: MDCCXCIV.*

† Printed for Hookham, 1792, 8vo.

‡ In the St. James's Chronicle, (the literary pin-basket of the day), of 27th March, 1792: is a letter in defence of Mr. Malone, subscribed “Criticaster.”

parelled variety of excellent songs: collected and published together, for general amusement, by a Bishoprick Ballad-singer.*

XX. And also exhibited by *The Northumberland Garland, or Newcastle Nightingale; a matchless collection of famous songs* †.

XXI. A long projected compilation, intended to contain nearly all the best productions of our poets, appeared, it is believed, in single volumes, as *The English Anthology* ‡; but did not extend beyond three volumes; and, although not wanting in merit, and elegantly printed, excited very little, if any attention §.

* Durham: printed by Pennington, 1792: again 1802, 12mo. This, Ritson said, had sold better than any other of his various publications, by several of which he was a great loser. It is lamentable to have authority to state his own acknowledgment of having lost 500*l.* by his editorial undertakings. The North-Country Chorister was reprinted with the Garlands, 1809.

† Newcastle: printed for Hall, 1793, 12mo.

‡ Printed for Egerton: vols. 1, 2, 1793; vol. 3, 1794, 8vo.

§ In this instance, Mr. Ritson evidently mistook his

XXII. In the preface to the “English Songs,” 1783, was announced an intention to present the public with “a much better and more perfect collection of songs, *entirely Scottish*, than any that had been hitherto attempted.” Such a compilation might be thought of considerable ease in the formation; and, therefore, it may be remarked, that it exceeded a term of ten years after the announcement, before the compiler ventured to let the result of his researches appear as *Scottish Song, in two volumes**. Prefixed is an “Historical Essay,” critically discussing the merits of several articles; and an elaborate enquiry as to the rightful claims of the respective authors, with brief and useful incidental notes throughout.

Ritson probably derived some advantage in compiling the ‘Scottish Song,’ from consulting

powers; and it was reserved for the very superior taste and judgment of that most amiable of men, the truly accomplished George Ellis, Esq., to do ample justice to the subject.

* Printed for Johnson, 1794, 8vo.

the public and other libraries, during his occasional rambles into Scotland. He certainly collected, from provincial printers, historical, romantic, and legendary songs and merriments of the time, many which appeared wasted or wasting, and others continually reprinted, as popular, for the ballad-vendors. From such sources he obtained a correct knowledge of the local demand for our vocal ditties ; and also occasionally rescued, from a neglected hoard, a once favourite ballad sometimes cast by, not for want of merit, but that it could no longer interest ears enchanted with the newer notes of the ballad-vending Autolycus. Certainly the research for, and numerous explanatory remarks on the materials of these volumes, with the rarity of many of the articles, may naturally make us conclude that, as a national collection, it will be long ere our demi-borderer will be rivalled by a "true-born Scot."*

* The Editor of *The Scots Magazine* printed a 'List of Desiderata in Scottish Song,' as from the pen of Ritson, in Jan. 1802.

XXIII. The next publication was *Poems on interesting events in the reign of King Edward III: written in the year MCCCLII. by Laurence Minot, with a preface, dissertations, notes, and glossary* *. The preface and dissertations are full of curious and important historical research, independent of notes enlarged from Froissart, and other contemporary authorities.

XXIV. This was immediately followed by that interesting and national work *Robin Hood; a collection of all the ancient poems, songs, and ballads now extant, relating to that celebrated English outlaw; to which are prefixed, historical anecdotes of his life* †. A compilation that should help to perpetuate the fame of the hero, whose combats and successful exploits delighted our juvenile years, and at the same time sift the

* Printed by Bensley, for Egerton, 1795, 8vo.; and in point of typography, the most elegant of all Ritson's publications.

† Printed for Egerton, 1795, 8vo. A letter from Ritson describing "Rob Roy like our Robin Hood," appeared in the *European Mag.* Jan. 1804.

fabulous incidents from what is received as true history, had long been wanted. The subject is “so ably and ingeniously treated, (says that very competent judge Mr. Douce,) and every fact that relates to him [Robin Hood] so minutely developed, that it will be long before any novelty shall be discovered of sufficient importance to deserve attention.*”

XXV. For about six years our author appears to have neglected the press entirely; which probably arose from preparations he was making for a publication, whereto Mr. George Ellis not only resigned his own better pretensions, but also procured Mr. George Nicol to undertake the expence of putting the same forth. This was the *Ancient English Metrical Romanceës*;† and in the advertisement he declares the work had been “brought to an end with much industry and more attention, in con-

* Illustrations of Shakespeare, by Francis Douce, Esq. 1807. Vol. ii. 449.

† Printed for G. and W. Nicol, 1802, 3 vols. 8vo.

tinu'd state of ill-health, and low spirits." He was seriously afflicted at the time by an extreme nervous debility, that considerably heightened a natural morbid irritability. These unhappy symptoms are manifested in several places of the very learned and appropriate dissertation prefixed to the work; and many others of a far more reprehensible nature would have appeared, but for the kind and judicious interference of a valuable friend, who prevailed on Ritson to cancel several leaves.

XXVI. At nearly the same time appeared the *Bibliographia Poetica: a Catalogue of English Poets of the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Centuries; with a short account of their works**. This volume was intended as a register of every poetical writer, whether of celebrity, or only known by a complimentary induction poem, sheet ballad, or other promiscuous poetical effusion, to the close of the 16th century.

* Printed for G. and W. Nicol, 1802, 8vo.

The plan was too comprehensive to attain perfection in a first edition, notwithstanding the very powerful assistance he obtained from some of his literary friends. Respecting this assistance, the following particulars have been communicated by Mr. Park, upon express solicitation*, and therefore are given in his own words:

[In a letter, dated Gray's Inn, 27th Sept. 1800, Ritson imparted thus to me, with his original MS. of the *Bibl. Poet.*: 'I avail myself of your obliging permission to transmit my very imperfect M.S. of English Poets: you cannot possibly treat it with too much severity. My chief objects, you will perceive, are *names*, *titles*, and *dates*.'—In another, dated 1st October, he wrote: 'I forgot to mention that you

* The request was the more urgently made as a new edition of the *Bibliographia Poetica* has been long in preparation; and knowing such communication would excite the aid of literary friends, which has been liberally promised to the Editor, whenever the public voice should appear sufficiently encouraging to cover the expence of putting the work again to press.

were, in fact, the innocent cause of the defective compilation before you ; and, consequently, that whatever trouble you may have with it, you have brought upon yourself. It was suggested by a list of *initials*, which you had communicated to Mr. Steevens, and which obliged me to hunt through so many different books that i was determined to have some sort of a Dictionary to refer to once for all. Such was the illegitimate conception of this literary bantling.’

I remember that Steevens told me, he should present my memorandum to Ritson, with a sort of defiance as to his power of appropriating the initials, which I had extracted from several of the poetical miscellanies printed in the reign of Elizabeth, and he put the paper into his snuff-box for such purpose.

On returning Ritson’s M.S. with my addenda, he wrote thus, with a glowing excess of thankfulness, in a letter dated Nov. 10, 1800 :

‘ A severe cold, aded to my habitual com-

plaints, deprives me of the pleasure of making my personal acknowledgements for the inestimable favour you have conferred on me, by augmenting, illustrating, correcting, and every way improving my little imperfect Catalogue, with a knowledge, accuracy, and minuteness, peculiar to yourself; and which have given it a value and importance to which it could otherwise have had no sort of pretensions.'

The M.S. with such additions as were then made, went into the amicable hands, and passed under the careful and corrective eye of Mr. Douce, who added (so far as is recollected at this distance of time) about as much to the original as I had done. Ritson expressed high and just satisfaction at this valuable improvement of his work, and sent the first draught of a prefatory advertisement to me, which contained a joint acknowledgment to Mr. Douce and myself for our united assistance. In a note, which still remains in my copy, dated Jan. 31st, 1801, he said: 'Will you have the goodness to run

your eye over my prefaces* (at which i am a miserable hand), and make freely your judicious alterations and corrections.’

This I did, and blotted out with my pen a severe sarcasm against Warton’s mendacious ‘History of English Poetry,’ which Ritson forbore to reinstate†. But very soon afterward, having behaved with so much uncourteousness to Mr. Douce, as to occasion some discordancy, that gentleman’s name was suppressed in the prefatory acknowledgment; and I then desired (if I recollect aright) that my own should be omitted, which was accordingly done; though he chose to retain a personal compliment more fitted for Mr. Douce than for myself.

* One of these prefaces was intended for the “Bibliotheca Scotica,” since obtained by Mr. George Chalmers.

† In a letter, dated Sept. 27, 1799, that elegant scholar and excellent man, Mr. George Ellis, said, “I feel very angry with Ritson for attacking our poetical Historian so grossly. As he repents, I am of course mollified; and even in the height of my anger, should have been always disposed to do justice to Ritson’s very commendable accuracy.” T. P.

In a MS. note before Ritson's own copy of 'Bibliographia Poetica,' he there proposed: 'If there shall be a second edition of this book, instead of Mr. or Mister, shall be used *Master*, as in former times; and now recently adopted in the black-letter Acts of Parliament, which is a grand restoration.' This mode of address he afterwards used in a note to *me*, and it was thought, very naturally, to have been designed for my *son*, then a boy of ten years old. T. P.]

The defects and imperfections of this work have been far too hypercritically animadverted on, and without due reflection as to the extreme difficulty of obtaining information on subjects that are chiefly dependent on casual discovery, and frequently altogether beyond the attainment of the most diligent enquirer: but it is far easier to perceive chasms in these and similar researches, than to fill them up as needed; and of this Ritson was a much better judge than any of his censurers. The compiler of this useful and elaborate work very

modestly and appropriately termed it “*A Catalogue of English Poets*,” while the critics seem to have, either erringly or willingly, mistaken bibliography for biography.

If the omissions appear to be many, they will be found principally such as could only be gradually supplied from the discoveries of later research; and the existing edition, while it forms the nucleus of a standard one, will ever sustain its character for correctness and utility*.

It remains to be remarked, that the pages of the last two works were more than usually disfigured by an unpleasant affectation of orthography, formed, as it is supposed, on a self-originating system†. Occasional deviations

* Absurd slurs on the *Bib. Poet.* have occasionally been made for not containing the name of some poet that flourished in the 17th century, a period not included.

† Ritson, to support his argument against Tyrwhitt, admitted his position would need “the help of an entire new system of spelling: which in fact (he adds) is the very object I mean to contend for; or rather for a *system of spelling*, as I am perfectly confident we have none at

from common rules of spelling* are to be found in most of his volumes, which, as he advanced in life, obtained stronger hold upon his fancy, and so increased and multiplied, as to threaten to render much of his text in appearance obsolete, if not unintelligible. The magnitude of the task, joined with his own unfortunate restlessness and irritable disposition, prevented (if it was ever worth pursuing) any settled plan, or methodical arrangement: nor, from his printed works, is any rule discoverable, or any outline so defined, as to indicate the extent of that plan when perfected †.

present, or at least I have never been able to find it.”—*Quip Modest*, p. 3.

* Some of these were ludicrously exposed in a facetious letter to Caleb Williams, put together by *Old Nick*, [Edward Dubois, Esq.] and inserted in the *Monthly Mirror* for Aug. 1803.

† Such remarks cannot be made without the appearance of some temerity, as Ritson left in MS. as well “Gleanings of English Grammar, chiefly with a view to illustrate and establish a just system of orthography, upon etymological principles;” as “an English Dic-

XXVII. In the same uncouth orthography was published that singular work, *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food, as a moral duty* *. This was an exposition of the principles, and probably with some expectation to obtain proselytes, of one of his favourite systems, and which he adopted at a period when the unsaturated appetite commonly embraces every invitation that taste and luxurious viands may supply. † Early as that period was, the resolution

tionary intended for publication." These bulky tomes were purchased at the sale of his library by Mr. Heber.

* Printed for Phillips, 1802, 8vo.

† It will not diminish the fair fame of Ritson by giving place to the following lampoon, from the *St. James's Chronicle* (of 3d June, 1783) while it serves to record the early publicity of his extraordinary determination of abstinence.

THE PYTHAGOREAN CRITICK.

By wise Pythagoras taught, young R—s—n's meals

With bloody Viands never are defil'd ;

For Quadruped, for Bird, for Fish he feels :

His board ne'er smoaks with roast meat, or with boil'd.

In this one instance pious, mild, and tame,

He's surely in another a great sinner :

For Man, cries R—s—n, Man 's alone my game !

On him I make a most delicious dinner.

once formed, it was persevered in with the same inflexible determination which guided all his actions, and gave that decisiveness to his character, which ever renders the possessor of more than common influence and value as a member of society. The origin and progress of this singular feature of his life, he thus describes: “The compileër himself, induce’d to serious reflection, by the perusal of Mandeville’s Fable of the bees, in the year 1772, being the 19th year of his age, [desisted from animal food, and] has ever since, to the revisal of this sheet, firmly adhere’d to a milk and vegetable diet, haveing at least, never tasteëd, dureing the whole course of those thirty years, a morsel of flesh, fish, or fowl, or any thing to his knowlege prepare’d in or with those substancëes or any extract thereof, unless on one occasion,

To Ven’son and to partridge I’ve no *Gout*;

To W—rt—n Tom such dainties I resign:

Give me plump St—v—ns, and large J—hns—n too,

And take your turkey and your savoury chine.

when tempted, by wet, cold and hunger, in the South of Scotland, he venture'd to eat a few potatos, dress'd under the roast; nothing, less repugnant to his feelings, being to be had; or except by ignorance or imposition; unless it may be, in eating eggs, which, however, deprives no animal of life, though it may prevent some from coming into the world to be murder'd and devour'd by others." p. 201.

This was his last known publication; and the chronology of the press here pauses* to record,

* *Posthumous Pieces.*

XXVIII. *Critical Observations on the various and essential parts of a Deed.* Printed for Clarke, 1804. 8vo.

XXIX. *The Office of Bailiff of a Liberty.* Edited by the Author's Nephew, J. Frank, Esq. Printed for Butterworth, 1811. 8vo.

XXX. *The Caledonian Muse.* This volume (published by Triphook, 1821) was intended for publication in 1785, but never completed. It has, like most of his productions, very spirited vignettes, and was first announced in a note to the Advertisement before the "English Anthology," 1793. Again referred to in the Notes on the 'Historical Essay,' in vol. I. of the "Scottish Songs," 1794, immediately after the writing

that to a morbid nervous affection of long standing, there succeeded a fatal attack upon

which, probably, the whole impression was (erroneously) supposed to be destroyed by fire. On the 5th of March, 1794, he wrote to Mr. Laing, of Edinburgh, stating: "The impression of my 'Caledonian Muse,' which had engaged the attention of so many years, and was just ready for publication, has been lately destroyed by a fire, which broke out in the printer's-house, so that I have not, nor can I procure, a single copy." Nichols's *Illustrations*, vol. iii. p. 778.

XXXI. *Select Scottish Poems*. About 96 pages of this work were printed, and might be intended to continue the above.

XXXII. Ritson left many works in a state maturing for the public eye. At the end of the Catalogue of his library, occur no less than 36 lots in quarto and folio, all classed as 'Manuscripts by Mr. Ritson.' Among the number that he once assuredly intended for publication, one remains to be noticed which is not named in the sale-catalogue, upon a subject of which few men were enabled to supply such correct information as himself; and trusting it was retained by his representative and nephew Mr. Frank, I venture to announce the same, with the hope it may yet appear posthumously. A specimen of the work alluded to was printed in 1782, 12mo. with this title—*Fabularum Romanensium bibliotheca: a general catalogue of old romances, French, Italian, Spanish and English, in two volumes*. He had collected very con-

the mental faculties, under the influence of which he expired, at the house of Sir Jonathan Miles, at Hoxton, 23d Sept. 1803, in the fifty-first year of his age.*

siderable materials for this general classed catalogue of antient romances, which was suggested by the very imperfect compilation on this subject by Lenglet Dufresnoy; he also himself possessed a good collection of early romances, the greater part of which were bequeathed to him by his friend Mr. Baynes.

XXXIII. *Bibliographia Scotica*. This compilation was prepared, and supposed as ready for the press, at the time No. XXVI. was published. The MS. sold among those appended to his library for forty-three guineas. The purchaser, on the part of the booksellers, was Mr. Rees; and it has since been transferred to that able editor Mr. G. Chalmers, who, it is expected, will introduce the same in the CALEDONIA, enriched with the result of his own accumulated knowledge and extensive research on the same subject.

* A well-drawn character of Ritson, attributed to Mr. Godwin, appeared in the Monthly Magazine, for Nov. 1803, and was afterwards inserted in the Monthly Mirror for May 1805, as a "Biographical Sketch of the late Joseph Ritson, Esq." An uncalled for, but melancholy statement of the effects of his malady, is appended by Mr. Cromek to Vol. I. of *Select Scottish Songs*, 1810. And a spirited Memoir of him is given in the *History of*

The bodily habits of this extraordinary man, singular as they were, appear almost to have influenced his literary pursuits. He considered the neglected efforts of genius in our early writers in the light of “a humble friend whose attachment in adverse circumstances demands the warm and grateful acknowledgments of prosperity,” and he entered with uncommon ardour into a patronage of claims so adventitiously supported.

To him distance^l of place, decyphering the pale and almost enigmatical characters of early

Durham by Mr. Surtees, Vol. III.—Before the title-page of the ‘Caledonian Muse’ is a miniature shade that has been considered as a strong likeness of our Author, taken from a profile cut in paper by the late very ingenious Mrs. Park. The portrait inserted in Nichols’s *Illustrations* is evidently a copy from the well-known production of Mr. Sayer, published by Mrs. Humphrey 22d March, 1803. That published by Baldwyn, with “Gillray invt.” is from the same source. The result of an enquiry made some years since, was the presumption that a portrait in oil colours existed in the possession of an acquaintance.

scribes, and wearying labour of minute collation, were the prominent and positive, if not recreative duties of an editor. Hence his references frequently are to collections widely dispersed through England and Scotland; while to detect in him any wanton infringement on the text, or a slovenly error in a quotation, beyond the blurs and mischances of the press, would be a difficult if not an abortive undertaking.

His constitutional irritability, and consciousness of his own superiority, made him very austere toward the periodical critics; and when he condescended to reply to their attacks, it was so unguardedly, and in such a coarse strain of invective, as could not be expected to produce any suspension of their sharp tone of censure.*

Yet, cold, austere, and reserved as were

* The common respect due to the new-formed grave ought to have suppressed the fragment of hackneyed criticism that appeared in the *British Critic* immediately after his decease. It was an unprovoked and, under the circumstances, brutal attack on the memory of Ritson.

his general manners, those most intimate with him never found his habits unsocial, or his opinions uncandid. The core of the heart was warm, liberal, and sound—the feelings generous, kind, congenial, and beneficent; and when appearing otherwise, it may be attributed to the corroding acrimony of temper, commonly engendered and worked upon by a continual habitude of seclusion, and the painful belief, arising therefrom, of chilling neglect and consequent unimportance, too often the consequence of not mixing actively in society. The man of abstracted habits, who declines the invitations of social friendship, must always expect to find himself accused of an intolerant asperity of disposition, and (however unintentional) a repulsive negligence of the common rules of civility. Even Ritson's wayward attack upon Warton and Percy* seems to have created a licence

* The *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* first appeared in 1765, long before the public taste was prepared to expect, in such cases, the *literæ scriptæ* to be given.

for any vagrant hand to strew a nettle on his grave, however incapable of culling the flowers and admiring the blossoms which he transplanted from their remote obscurity.

If we consider Ritson in the character either of an editor or a critic, his sterling principle and prevailing characteristic was undeniably TRUTH, which is too often rather equivocally treated in the world of letters. No hurrying mandate of a publisher, no pecuniary speculation or sudden impulse, ever ushered his volumes into the world, until he considered them fitted to appear: and their lengthened progress through the press, as well as various cancels, are suffi-

Had the publication been deferred to a later period, when fac-simile reprints and a tenacious following of text were judiciously encouraged, and critics became 'rigorous as Ritson himself,' (as the author of the *Fortunes of Nigel* remarks,) it cannot be doubted but the learned Bishop of Dròmore would have changed his plan, and certainly not have concluded that old manuscripts might be renovated by a spirited patch-work of Mosaic texture, calculated to puzzle any inquisitive antiquary disposed to unravel the ornamental network of the learned Editor.

cient proofs of his zeal in labouring after correctness. He was so determined a literalist, that any attempt to impugn his text has not yet been hazarded; while the progressive rise of price in his works, is sufficient evidence of the increasing estimation in which his labours are now held. That same redoubted *truth* made him formidable as a giant in the arena of criticism, dwarf though he was in person. And without defending, or excusing, the occasional petulance of his remarks, it is enough to know, that roughly as he treated his contemporaries, his positions were mostly well founded, and he never condemned for supposititious errors. It was not simply that the place was vulnerable; he proved that what he attacked was weak from incompetence, or unquestionable negligence.

This system may be considered as realized in the ‘Remarks critical and illustrative,’ and other of his critical pieces, where he unceremoniously confuted his contemporaries, who assumed the pretension of giving to the public,

by a kind of editorial union, a correct edition of Shakespeare, whose name formed an object of his acknowledged *idolatry* *.

With the date of '18th April, 1783,' Ritson announced—*The genuine text of Shakspeare. Preparing for the Press, an edition of the Plays of William Shakspeare, with Notes* †. The outline of the edition projected is given in a note below ‡. At that period, it may be recollected,

* Preface to the Remarks, p. vi.

† Appended to the Remarks.

‡ "This edition will be comprised [says the Prospectus] in eight duodecimo volumes; and will be carefully and accurately printed from the onely copies of real authority, the two first folios. But although these editions will be the standard of the intended work, such passages in the old quartos as may appear to have been omitted by accident, or with a view to shorten the representation, and every various reading, will be maturely considered, and, if worthy of insertion, be adopted, either in the text or margin, as their importance or merit may seem to require. No variation, however, will be made from the standard editions without apprising the reader of it, unless the difference should consist merely in a slight typographical error. Nor is any difference between the various editions in other respects intended to

the constellation of commentators possessed the ear of the booksellers, if not the general confidence of the public; this left little probability for the stern, unbending, independent spirit of Ritson, (while he threw down the gauntlet to the whole circle of critics, and braved their combined acumen,) to find much

be otherwise than occasionally regarded. The orthography will be reduced with the utmost care to a modern and uniform system, except where a change would be injurious to the author's sense and meaning. Various or doubtful readings will be settled from an attentive examination of the sentiments of every commentator. The notes, which will be very sparingly introduced, and never but where they seem absolutely necessary, or peculiarly proper, will be chiefly extracted, under the names of their respective authors, from the editions of Theobald, Warburton, Johnson, and Steevens; but not to the exclusion of better, though, perhaps, anonymous, intelligence, if it can be given. It is however no part of the editor's design to fill his margin with a view of the corruptions, or a refutation of the errors of preceding commentators.

“The author's life with the usual documents, (particularly a more exact copy of his will than has been yet published,) and the prefaces of the various editors, will be prefixed to the work: which will, likewise, be at-

courtesy, countenance, or encouragement, from such a phalanx; or be able to struggle singly and unsupported through such an undertaking: but if he felt chilled in ardour, and repressed in expectation, it is doubtful if he ever finally abandoned the project. Two sheets of the Comedy of Errors, with notes, were printed in 1787, 12mo.; and in February 1788, he tells the public, “I have neither laid aside all thoughts of bringing it forward, nor can I pledge myself to produce it in any given time.”* The last lot in the sale of his library consisted of ‘Shakespeare, by Johnson and Steevens, 8 vols. *containing a great number of*

tended with a new, copious, and accurate glossary. And, in an additional volume, it is proposed to give a complete verbal index, adapted to the intended edition.

“This edition will, with regard to the correctness of the text, be infinitely superior to any that has yet appeared. It will possess all the advantages of every former edition, and be as little liable, it is hoped, as possible to the defects of any.

“18th April, 1789.”

* Preface to the *Quip Modest*, p. vii.

manuscript notes, corrections, &c. &c.; together with 3 vols. of manuscript notes, by Mr. Ritson, prepared by him for the press, intending to publish it. This article, which probably formed a depository for his emendations and notes to a late period of his life, was purchased as long since as the 8th December, 1803, *on account of the trade*; and such appears the singular apathy or inconsistency of the bibliopolistical monopolizers, that to this day the copy and the notes remain untouched and unknown.*

* If the 'accurate glossary' announced in the Prospectus, by Ritson, is contained in the 'three volumes of manuscript notes,' it ought long since to have been published. To most of his publications were added useful and needful glossaries, compiled with considerable industry and consummate skill; and to any future general collection of our ancient words, (an important work greatly wanted,) those compilations would afford most valuable assistance. The other announcement of a 'complete verbal index,' it is to be regretted, has never been supplied to any edition: if we except the distinct and high-priced work of Mr. Twiss. In 1821, the late Mr. James Boswell added some useful tables of reference, but upon too limited a scale for general purposes; and

Useless were any enquiry into the *management* of these matters, or any attempt to undraw the curtain to discover where the want of, if not liberality, lucrative discernment is to be traced; or where the strong bias, or pcevish jealousy, if any, can now exist. All the feeble fancies that were irritated twenty years ago, by the acute remarks of Ritson, ought, if they are not, by this time to be tranquillized, and all dissonant opinions long since extinguished. Yet something of this kind must exist, or why has there never been an edition of Shakespeare given, with a tower of strength, the name of RITSON? What bold man, of equal critical ability, has inspected the copy prepared by him for the press, and ventured to consign it to oblivion? Such a work could not be objected to from being posthumous; for the host of booksellers, who seem here to claim the title of becoming

memory remains taxed to index the text of Shakespeare, with much thereunto belonging, or what endless references there must be in the one-and-twenty volumes!

arbiters for the public, as to the modern accredited or standard editions of Shakespeare, have not published any other for many years. The late Mr. Malone personally designated the edition of 1803, stated to be 'revised and augmented by Isaac Reed,' as a posthumous edition of Steevens; and no subsequent one, of any authority, can be otherwise described, even including the last, the posthumous edition of the same Edmond Malone.*

Had the work projected by Ritson ever been completed by himself; from the copious stores of his researches, his well-selected library, † the

* Mr. Malone remarked to the late Mr. James Boswell, that he, Malone, had taken immediate care of his father's Life of Dr. Johnson; and therefore trusted he, Boswell, would do the like with the corrected copy of Shakespeare.

† Mr. Ritson from time to time disposed of his duplicate volumes, and such works as appeared no longer of material importance to his own future literary pursuits, by auction. Of the mass of his library, it is to be feared that an acknowledged loss of above £1000 in an unfortunate speculation in the funds, occasioned rather a

integral powers of his mind, the minute accuracy of his text, and enthusiastic regard for the subject, it is not more than justice to his memory to believe the effort might have competed with any production from the accumulated labours of the previous commentators and editors. It must be admitted, that this is claiming no puny fame, when we recollect who those same commentators and editors were, that flourished during the lapse of a century—from the period

premature dispersion by several portions in his life-time. A part was sold at Mr. King's auction-room, in King-street, Covent-garden, in a miscellaneous sale some time in 1802. A further part at the same place, in the third day of the sale of Dr. Mitchell's books, 10th August, 1803. By Messrs. Leigh and Sotheby of York-street, another portion in an anonymous sale of six days, beginning 4th May, 1803, described as the property of a well-known collector, consisting of English History, old English Poetry, Plays, Romances, &c. At the same place, after his decease, were sold his law-books, with those of John Topham, Esq. Treasurer of the Society of Antiquaries, in November 1803; and the remainder, as his 'entire and curious library and manuscripts, on Dec. 5, and three following days.' The latter sale produced £681. 5s. 9d.

of snarling Pope, to the termination of placid Isaac Reed. Still shall not their high exceeding smother a long entertained opinion of what might have been the result, had chance, or the protecting voice of the public, called into action the integrity, talents, and perseverance, of HONEST JOSEPH RITSON.

APPENDIX.

MR. RITSON presented a copy of the *Versees*, reprinted from the Newcastle Miscellany, to the late Mr. Isaac Reed, accompanied with the following letter, from which he does not appear *then* to have had any intention of extending his system of orthography beyond a single specimen :

D^r Sir,

I was considering what to present you with in return for your *Witch**, and, knowing that you think the most trifling literary whims at least worthy of preservation, I beg your acceptance of the inclosed, as the onely specimen of *my* system of spelling that ever was, or, perhaps, ever will be printed.

Yours sincerely,

J. R.

G. I. 20th A. 82.

Mr. Reed. †

* Mr. Reed printed, to give to his friends, a hundred copies of a *tragi-coomodie* called the *Witch*; by Tho. Middleton.

† “ Given me by the author Joseph Ritson of Gray’s Inn, 20th Aug. 1782.”—MS. note by Mr. Reed.

V E R S E E S

ADDRESSED TO THE

LADIES OF STOCKTON.

FIRST PRINTED IN THE NEWCASTLE MISCELLANY,

MDCCLXXII.

— PROGREDITUR NYMPHARUM SPLENDIDUS ORDO,
ANTE ALIOS UNUS ARRIPUIT, TENUITQUE MORANTES,
ARDENTESQUE OCULOS.

The women came, as custom wills they pass'd,
On one (oh! that distinguish'd one!) i cast
The favourite glance: o yet my mind retains
This fond begining of my infant pains.

PRIOR.

VERSEES, &c.

ACCEPT, ye Fair, the tribute of my praise,
And deign a smile upon my humble lays ;
For your applause i strike the tuneless lyre,
And strive to raise within a poets fire :
In hobbleing verse your charms attempt to sing ;
Your charms adorn'd with ever blooming spring.

Ye female critics, read, *sans* spleen, my song,
Nor deem it or too languid, or too long ;
For Your applause i write, your Frowns i fear ;
Hence, fellows! hence!* Your judgment's nothing
here.

Let not harsh censure my poor rhimes asperse,
But with the Subject dignify the verse.

Where TEES in sweet meanders slowly glides,
And gently murmuring rolls his easy tides,
There stands a town, with peace and plenty crown'd,
For wit, for wealth, and loyal sons renown'd ;
Far fame'd for dames, wise, charitable, chaste,
And first in Beauty's annals ever place'd.

* *Procul, oh procul este, profani!*

In every age has STOCKTON been revere'd,
 Her sons have always been belove'd and fear'd.
 When, 'gainst the hardy legions of the North,
 Brave Percy led his youthful warriors forth,
 Her valiant deeds let History proclaim,
 And Cheviot hills record the fatal name.
 Her nymphs, erst wont to trip the verdant groves,
 Seem'd sisters to the Gracees and the Loves.

Leave these, my muse, and sing, in careless rhimes,
 The special beauties of her modern times ;
 Let them alone engage thy every care,
 Speak but the truth, and paint them as they are.

With thee, TITANIA,¹ does the muse advance,
 The leader thou in this uncouple'd dance ;
 Thy prudent maxims, and thy manners sage,
 To us seem wonderous, far above thine age ;
 Thy infant buds, like bees about thee swarm,
 Thyself their Empress, shielding them from harm :
 Of treacherous man warn'd in each dayly task,
 Though, spite of thee, he'll soon be all they ask.
 To thee the riseing generation bows,
 Accept Our homage, nor our Praise refuse.

¹ Miss Dixon. Titania is Queen of the Fairies in Shakspeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

From grandsire magistrates OLIVIA² springs ;
 How pleasantly she looks ! how sweet she sings !
 To her though Venus have not deign'd her aid,
 Nor do Her charms adorn the wity maid,
 Yet with their want who cannot but dispense,
 Where such goodnature joins with such good sense ?

When unbecomeing wildness rules the fair,
 Let her of Slanders evil tongue beware ;
 Lost fame, says Prior, ne'er can be regain'd ;
 A character that's once, is always, stain'd :
 Mark, youthful CELIA,³ though that evil tongue
 Have hardly yet had power to do thee wrong,
 From light behaviour drawn, hints vile and dark
 The pureest fame eternally may mark.

Fair DAPHNE !⁴ Tears bedew the musees eyes,
 And heaves of pity in her bosom rise ;
 In sorrow silent, she but breathes thy name,
 Nor good, nor ill, of thee commits to fame.

View haughty CHLOE !⁵ sneaking even in state,
 How few who love her ! and how few who hate !—

² Miss Bunting. One of her ancestors was mayor in 1564, another in 1702, &c.

³ Miss Do. Wilkinson.

⁴ Miss Peggy Lamb.

⁵ Miss Lamb.

Beneath the last, from most :—long may she live,
 Adorn'd with all the graces pride can give.
 Her affectation, spleen, ridic'ulous ease,
 Show what you can be, fair ones, when you please.

In malice laughing, of her laughter vain,
 See cookmaid PHILLIS,⁶ envious, spiteful, plain.

THE LEARNED SISTERS⁷ next demand my lays;
 Few outward charms they boast to speak their praise,
 But by their mental they shall lovers thrall,
 And, with goodnature, make them bless'd in all.

Let not THE WIDOW⁸ miss her share of fame,
 Nor uninserted here let pass her name :
 A Stockton toast, wit, critic, lo! she stands;
 Beaus, bucks, and fribbles, press to kiss her hands;
 To all at home ;—sh' 'as felt the marriage chain,
 Nor would be grieve'd to have it on again.

Nor thee, fair ANNA,⁹ shall the muse pass by,
 Nor 'mongst these charmers thee a place deny;

⁶ Miss Betsy Lamb.

⁷ The Miss Welbanks.

⁸ Mrs. Cowley, *from London*.

⁹ Miss Consett.

Remote from Stockton's hospitable doors,
 Thou, like ELVIRA, pass'd'st thy natal hours ;
 And, honour'd by her friendship, e'er shalt share,
 The utmost praise my suckleing muse can spare :
 Goodnature, sense, and modesty are join'd,
 Equally fair to make thy face and mind.

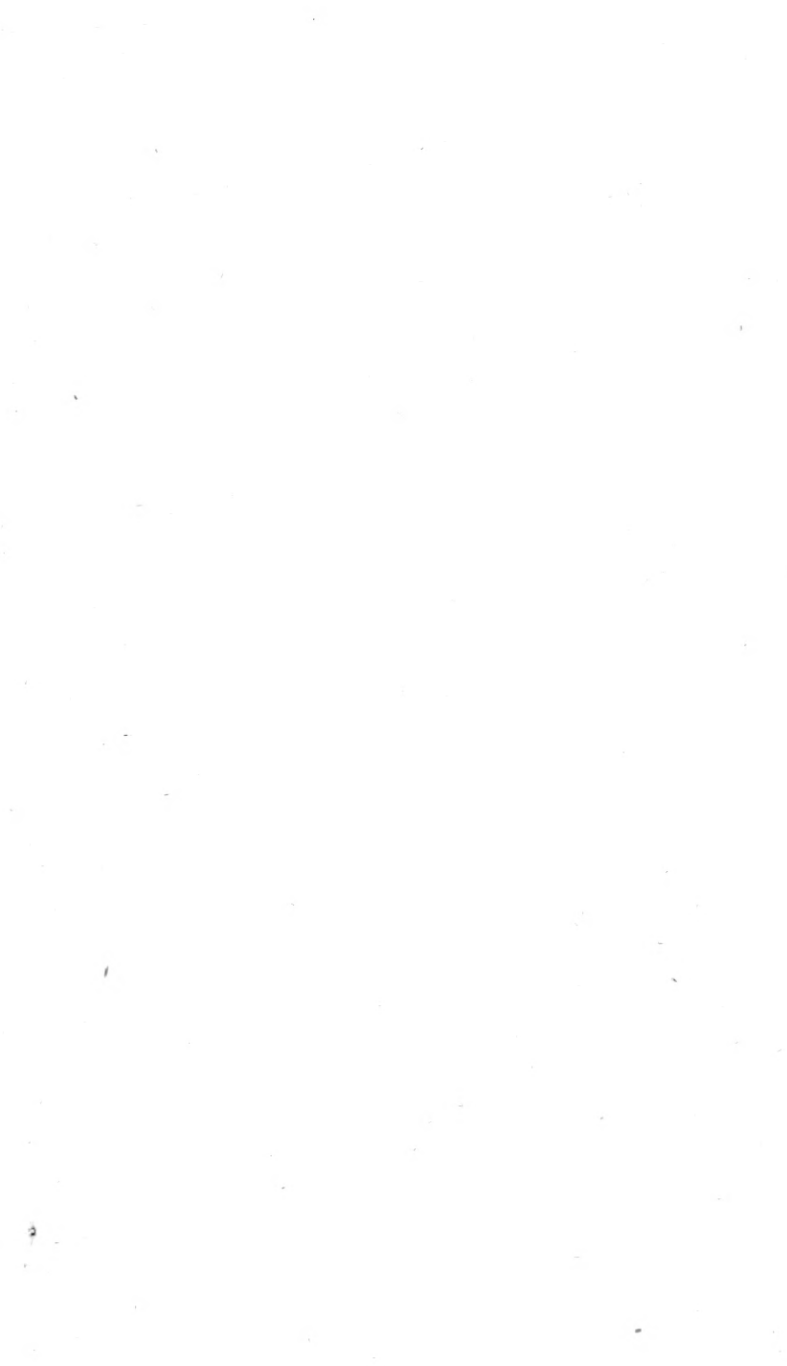
Though last in number, yet in beauty first,
 Among Strenshelians,¹⁰ happy people ! nurse'd ;
 Hail, my ELVIRA !¹¹ graceful, debonair ;
 Among the fairest Thou alone art fair ;
 In vain i bid the muse attempt thy praise ;
 In vain the muse to sing thy charms essays ;
 To sing Thy charms—alone the heavenly quires
 Should raise their Halleluias,—strike their lyres ;
 The theme but worthy them :—yet gracious deign
 To pardon my sincere, though lowly, strain ;
 All i dare ask :—Adieu, my Fair, though thou
 Nor grant a smile, nor an unclouded brow,—
 Thy bard, thy slave i'll be—and, with the thought,
 My bosom cheer, although my chance be nought.

¹⁰ The inhabitants of Whitby, anciently called Streon-sheal.

¹¹ Miss Ingham.

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PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET.



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