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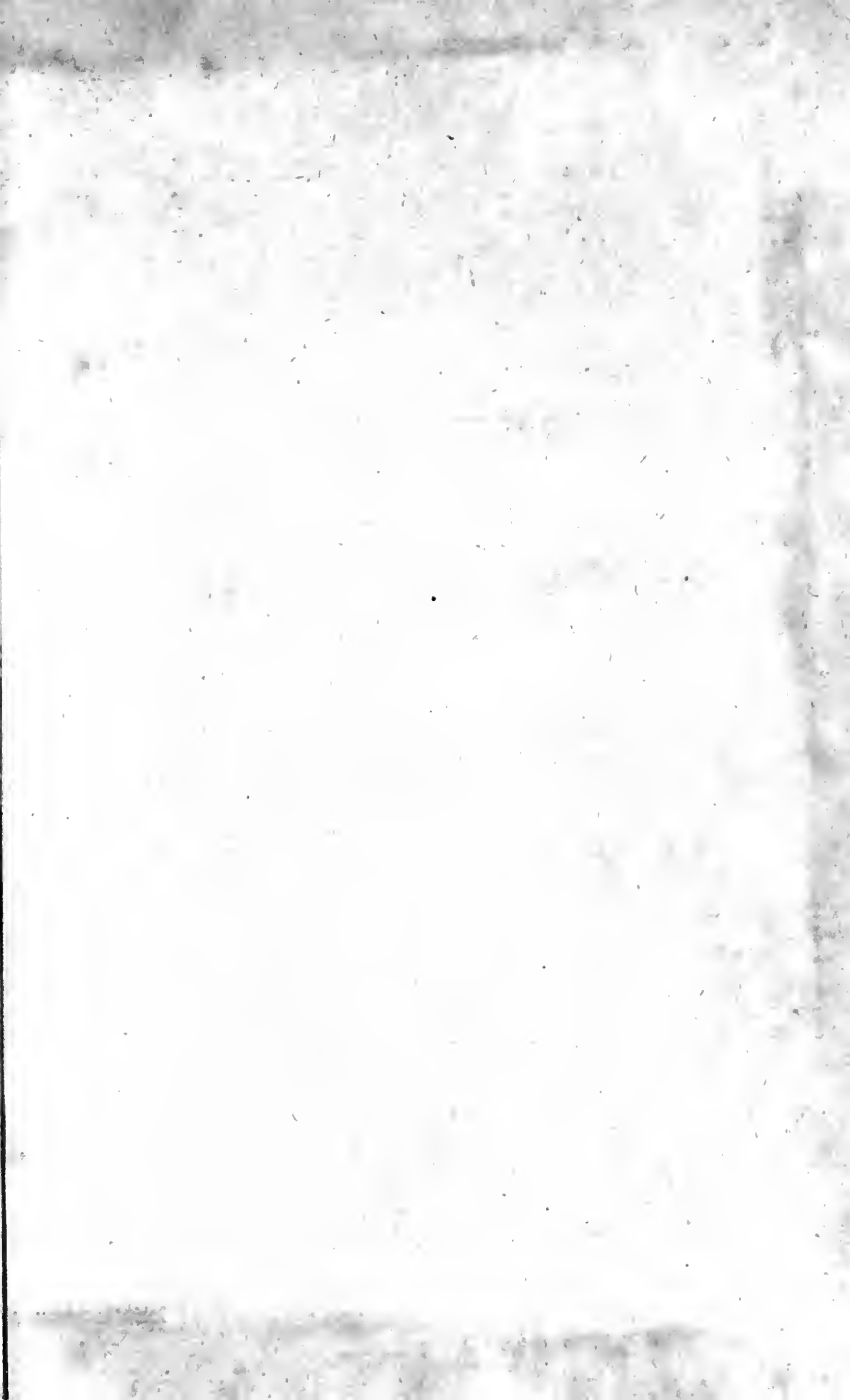
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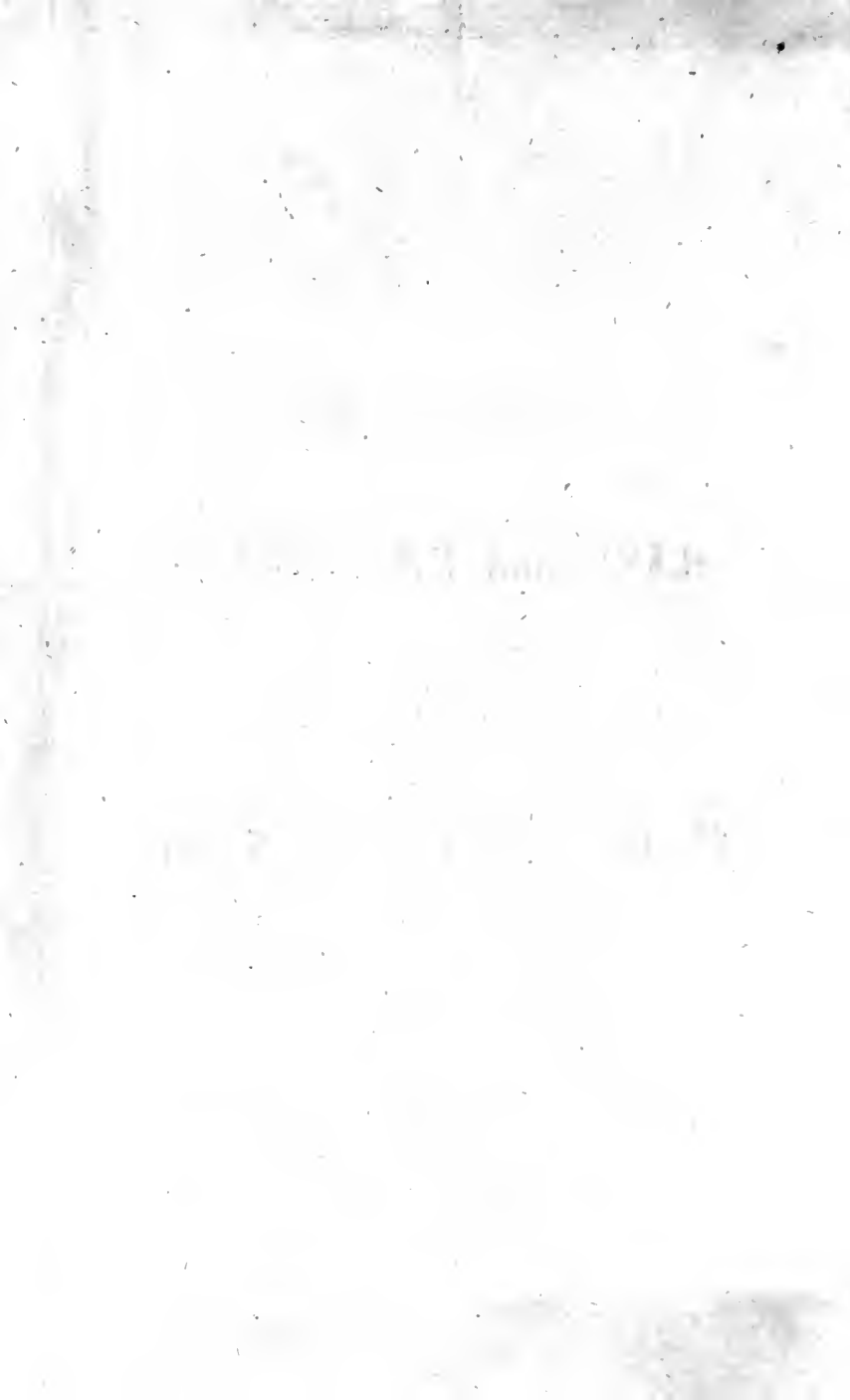
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by James Harris
author of Hermes



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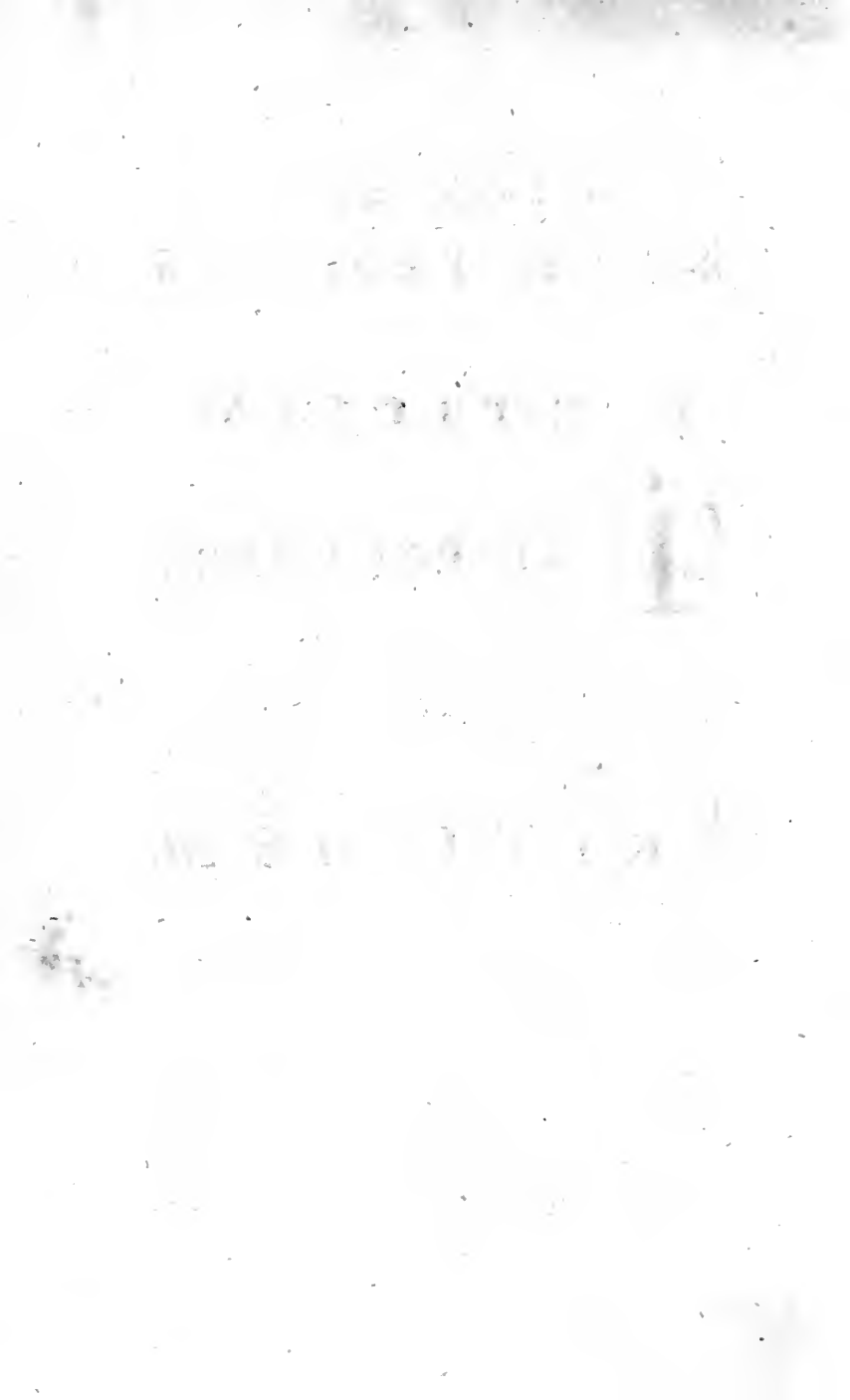




[Harris, James]

UPON THE
RISE and PROGRESS
OF
CRITICISM.

1752



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UPON THE
RISE and PROGRESS
OF
CRITICISM.

THOSE, who can imagine that the Rules of Writing were first established, and that then men wrote in conformity to them, as they make conserves and comfits by referring to receipt-books, know nothing of Criticism, either as to its origin or progress. The truth is, they were Authors, who made the first good Critics, and not Critics, who made the first good Authors, however writers of later date may have profited by the precepts of critical disquisitions.

If this appear strange, we may refer to other subjects. Can we doubt that there was Music, such indeed as it was, before the principles of harmony were established into a Science? — that diseases were

healed, and buildings erected, before Medicine and Architecture were systematized into Arts? — that men reasoned and harangued upon matters of practice and speculation, long before there were profest teachers either of Logic or of Rhetoric? To return therefore to our subject, the rise and progress of Criticism.

Antient GREECE in its happy days was the seat of Liberty, of Sciences, and of Arts. In this fair region, fertile of wit, the *Epic* Writers came first; then the *Lyric*; and lastly the *Tragic*, the *Comic*, the *Historians*, and the *Orators*, each in their turns delighting whole multitudes, and commanding the attention and admiration of all. Now, when wise and thinking men, the subtle investigators of principles and causes, observed the wonderful effect of these works upon the human mind, they were prompted to inquire *whence this should proceed*; for that it should happen *merely from Chance*, they could not well believe. Here therefore we have the RISE and ORIGIN of CRITICISM, which in its beginning was “ a
“ deep

“ deep and philosophical Search into the
 “ primary Laws and Elements of good
 “ Writing, as far as they could be col-
 “ lected from the most approved Perfor-
 “ mances.”

In this contemplation of Authors, the first Critics not only attended to the Powers, and different Species of WORDS; the Force of *numerous composition* whether in prose or verse; the Aptitude of *its various kinds to different subjects*; but they farther consider'd that, which is the basis of all, that is to say in other words, the MEANING or the SENSE. This led them at once into the most curious of subjects; the nature of *Man* in general; *the different characters of men*, as they differ in rank or age; our *Reason and Passions*; how the one was to be persuaded, and the others raised or calmed; the *Places or Repositories*, to which we may recur, when we want proper matter for any of these purposes; *Sentiments and Manners*; what constitutes a Work, *one*; what, a *Whole and Parts*; what the essence of just, and even true *Fiction*, as opposed to that, which is improbable, and out of nature.

Much of this kind may be found in different parts of PLATO. But ARISTOTLE his Disciple, who may be called the Systematizer of his Master's Doctrines, has in his two Treatises of *Poetry* and *Rhetoric*, with such wonderful conciseness, penetration, and order, exhausted the subject, of which we are speaking, that he may be justly called THE FATHER OF CRITICISM, as well from the age when he lived, as from his truly great and transcendent genius. The *Criticism*, which this divine man taught, has so intimate a correspondence and alliance with *Philosophy*, that it may be truly called, PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM.

To *Aristotle* succeeded his Disciple *Theophrastus*, who followed his master's example in the study of Criticism, as may be seen in the list of his writings, preserved by *Diogenes Laertius*. But all the critical works of *Theophrastus*, as well as of many others, are now lost. The principal authors of this kind now remaining in *Greek*, after *Aristotle*, are, *Demetrius* of *Phalera*, *Dionysius* of *Halicarnassus*,

8 Dionysius

Dionysius Longinus, together with *Hermogenes*, *Apthonius*, and a few others.

Of these the most masterly seems to be *Demetrius*, who was the earliest, and who appears to follow the Precepts, and even the Text of *Aristotle*, with far greater attention, than any of the rest. His Examples, it must be confessed, are sometimes obscure, but that we may rather impute to the destructive hand of time, which has prevented us the sight of the original authors.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the next in order, may be said to dwell almost wholly upon the force of *numerous Composition*, meddling little with the sublimer, and more essential sources of good writing, because perhaps his genius did not aspire so high. *Longinus*, who was in time far later than these, seems principally to have had in view the *Passions*, and the *Imagination*, in which he has acquitted himself with a just applause, and written with a dignity suitable to the subject. The rest of the *Greek Critics*, tho' they have said many good things, have yet so

minutely multiplied the rules of Art, and so far confined themselves to the oratory of the Tribunal, that they appear not of much use, as to good writing in general.

Among the ROMANS, the first Critic of any note was CICERO, who, though far below *Aristotle* in depth of philosophy, may be said, like him, to have exceeded all his countrymen. As his celebrated Treatise *concerning the Orator* is written in dialogue, where the speakers introduced are the greatest men of his nation, we have incidentally an elegant sample of those manners, and that politeness, which were peculiar to the leading characters during the *Roman Commonwealth*. There we may see the behaviour of free and accomplished men ~~before~~, before court-adulation had set that standard, which has been falsely taken for good-breeding ever since.

Next to *Cicero* came *Horace*, who often in *other* parts of his writings acts the *Critic* and *Scholar*, but whose *Art of Poetry* is a standard of its kind, and too well known to need any encomium. After

Horace

Horace arose *Quintilian*, *Cicero's* admirer, and follower, who appears by his works not only learned and ingenious; but (what is still more) an honest and worthy man. He likewise dwells too much upon the *forensic* Oratory, a fact not to be admired, when we consider the age in which he lived; an age, when tyrannic Government being the fashion of the times, that *nobler Species of Eloquence*, I mean the *popular*, and *deliberative*, was with all things truly liberal, degenerated and sunk. The latter *Latin* Rhetoricians there is no need to mention, as they no way illustrate the subject in hand. I would only repeat that the species of Criticism here mentioned, as far at least as handled by the more able Masters, is that which we denominate CRITICISM PHILOSOPHICAL. We are now to proceed to another species.

As to the *Criticism* already treated, we find it not confined to any one particular Author, but containing general Rules of Art, either for judging or writing, confirmed by the example not of one Author, but of many. But we know
from

from experience that in process of time both Languages, Customs, Manners, Laws, Governments, and Religions insensibly alter. The *Macedonian* Tyranny, after the fatal battle of *Chæronea*, wrought much of this change in *Greece*; and the *Roman* Tyranny, after the fatal battle of *Pharsalia*, carried it throughout the known world. Hence therefore of *things* obsolete the *names* became obsolete also; and authors, who in their own age were intelligible and easy, in future days grew difficult and obscure. Here then we may behold *the rise of a second race of Critics*, the tribe of *Scholiasts*, *Commentators*, and *Explainers*.

These necessarily attached themselves to particular authors: *Aristarchus*, *Didymus*, *Eustathius*, and many others bestowed their labours upon *Homer*; *Proclus*, and *Tzetzes* upon *Hesiod*; *Calliergus* upon *Theocritus*; *Donatus* upon *Terence*; *Servius* upon *Virgil*; *Acron* and *Porphyrus* upon *Horace*, and so with respect to others, as well Philosophers, as Orators. To these Scholiasts may be added the several Com-
posers

posers of Lexicons ; such as *Hesychius*, *Philoxenus*, *Suidas*, &c. also the Writers upon Grammar, such as *Apollonius*, *Priscian*, *Sosipater Charisius*, &c. Now all these pains-taking men, considered together, may be said to have completed another species of Criticism, a species which in distinction to the former, we may call

CRITICISM HISTORICAL.

And thus things continued in a kind of sickning way, till the extinction of the *Latin* empire, and the depravity of the *Greek*, when both Authors and their Scholiasts were alike forgot, and an Age succeeded of Legends and Crusades.

At length, after a long and barbarous period, when the Mists of Monks began to disperse, and the Lights of Humanity once again to dawn, the Arts also of CRITICISM insensibly revived. 'Tis true indeed the Authors of THE PHILOSOPHICAL SORT (I mean that which respects the causes and principles of good writing) were not many in number. However of this rank among the *Italians* was *Vida* ; among the *French* were *Rapin*, *Bouhours*,
Boileau,

Boileau, together with *Bossu*, the most methodic and accurate of them all. In our own Country our Nobility may be said to have distinguished themselves; *Lord Roscommon* in his Essay upon translated Verse; *the Duke of Buckingham* in his Essay on Poetry; *Lord Shaftesbury* in his Characteristics thro' every part, but particularly in that admirable tract, *The Advice to an Author*. To these may be added Mr. *Pope*, in his elegant Poem, *the Essay upon Criticism*; and Mr. *Addison* in many of his valuable and polite *Spectators*, those especially, that are bestowed upon the *Paradise Lost*.

But however small the number might be found of these, the writers of HISTORICAL OF EXPLANATORY CRITICISM were in a manner innumerable. To name only a few—of *Italy* among others were *Beroaldus*, *Ficinus*, *Victorius* and *Robertellus*; of the higher and lower *Germany* were *Erasmus*, *Sylburgius*, *Sturmius*, and *Torrentius*; of *France* were *Lambin*, *Du Vall*, *Harduin*, *Capperonierius*; of *England* were *Stanley* (editor of *Æschylus*) *Gataker*,

Davis, Clarke, Hutchinson ; together with multitudes more from every region and quarter,

*Thick as autumnal leaves, that strow
the brooks*

In Vallombrosa ———

Nor must we forget the many copious and valuable *Lexicons* ; the *Latin* and *Greek Thesauri* of *Charles* and *Henry Stevens* ; *Favorinus, Constantine*, and the *Commentary* of *Budæus*. To these also we may add the *Authors upon Grammar* ; in which subject the learned *Greeks*, when they quitted the East, led the way, *Moschopulus, Chrysoloras, Lascaris, Theodore Gaza* ; then in *Italy, Laurentius Valla* ; in *England, Thomas Linacer* ; in *France, Cæsar Scaliger* ; in *Spain, Sanctius* ; in the low Countries *Vossius* ; and lastly, those able *Writers Mess. de Port Roial*, who seem to have collected the rational part out of all the rest.

But we are now to inquire after *another* species of *Criticism*. All antient books
having

having been preserved by transcription, were liable thro' ignorance, negligence, or fraud, to be corrupted in three different ways, that is to say, by retrenchings, by additions, and by alterations.

To remedy those evils, a third sort of *Criticism* arose, and that was **CRITICISM CORRECTIVE**. The business of this at first was painfully to collate all the various copies of authority, and then, from amidst the variety of readings thus collected, to establish by good reasons either the true, or the most probable. In this sense we may call such Criticism not only **CORRECTIVE**, but **AUTHORITATIVE**.

As the number of these corruptions must needs have increased by length of time, hence it has happened that *corrective Criticism* has become much more necessary in these latter ages, than it was in others more antient. Not but that even in antient days, *various readings* have been noted. Of this kind there are a multitude in the Text of *Homer*, a fact not to be admired, when we consider his great antiquity. In the Comments of *Am-*

monius

monius and *Philoponus* upon *Aristotle*, there is mention made of several in the text of that Philosopher, which these his Commentators compare and examine. But since the revival of Literature, to correct has been a business of much more latitude, having continually employed for two centuries and a half both the Pains of the most laborious, and the Wits of the most acute. Many of the learned men before enumerated were not only famous as *historical* Critics, but as *corrective* also. To these may be added the two *Scaligers*, the two *Causabons*, *Salmasius*, the *Heinsii*, *Grævius*, the *Grenovii*, *Burman*, *Kuster*, *Wasse*, *Bentley*, *Pearce*, and *Markland*. Not that these never meddled with the *explanatory* Criticism, but their principal object appears to have been the *corrective*.

But here was the misfortune of this last race of Critics. There were numerous corruptions in many of the best authors, which neither antient editions, nor manuscripts could heal. What then was to be done?—Were Forms so fair to remain disfigured, and be seen for ever under
such

such apparent blemishes?—“ No, (says the Critic) “ CONJECTURE can cure all
 “ — *Conjecture*, whose performances are
 “ for the most part more certain, than
 “ any thing, that we can exhibit from the
 “ authority of old Manuscripts *.”

We will not ask, upon this wonderful, assertion, *how if so certain, can it be called Conjecture?* — 'Tis enough to observe (be it called as it will) that this spirit of *Conjecture* has proved a kind of *critical Quackery*, which like *Quackery* of other kinds, whatever it may have boasted, has done more mischief by far than good. Authors have been taken in hand, like anatomical subjects, only to display the skill and abilities of the Artist; so that the end of many an edition seems often to have been no more, than to exhibit the great sagacity and polymathy of an editor. The Joy of the task was the Honour of mending, while Corruptions were fought with a more than common attention, as each of them afforded a testimony to the Editor and his Art.

And

* See Dr. Bentley's Preface to Horace.

And here I beg leave, by way of digression, to relate a short story concerning a noted empiric. Being once in a ball-room crowded with company, he was asked by a gentleman, *what he thought of such a lady? was it not pity that she squinted?*—*Squint! Sir!* replied the doctor, *I wish every lady in the room squinted; there's not a man in the universe can cure squinting but myself.*

But to return to our subject—Well indeed would it be for the cause of letters, were this bold conjectural spirit confined to works of *second* rate, where let it change, expunge, or add as it please, it may be tolerably sure to leave matters as it found them; or if not much better, at least not much worse. But when the divine geniuses of higher rank, whom we not only applaud, but in a manner revere, when these come to be attempted by petulant correctors, and to be made the subject of their wanton caprice, how can we but exclaim with a kind of religious abhorrence,

— *procul! O! procul este profani!*

It would have become Dr. *Bentley*, though in literature and natural abilities among the first of his age, had he been more temperate in his Criticism upon *the Paradise lost*; had he not so repeatedly and injuriously offered violence to his author, from an affected superiority, to which he had no pretence. But when meaner critics presume to be thus insolent, 'tis enough to make the Genius of each author arise, and accost them, as *Marius* did the servile *Cimbrian* — *And dost thou, slave, dare to demolish SHAKESPEAR? — Dost thou, wretch, presume to murder MILTON? —* 'Twere only to be wished, to complete the allusion, that the correctors could have been scared, as effectually as the executioner; so that as *he* dropt his weapon, *these* might have dropt their pens, and the art of Criticism, *from their abuse*, not have been brought into contempt.

For my own part, if I might be permitted to advise an adventurous race (those I mean who scribble for pay upon every kind of subject) I would have them treat
even

even living authors, their equals, with respect. 'Twould certainly upon the whole be found to be their interest;

———— *haberent*

Plus dapis, & rixæ multo minus invidiæque.

But whenever they presume to meddle with the sacred dead, the sublimer wits of ages past, let them affect (however awkwardly) the appearance at least of modesty; and if they find (which is not unlikely) the spirit of pertness about to rise, let them admonish their little heart, as the Frog did his little mother,

———— *Non si te ruperis, inquam,
Par eris.* —————

'Tis indeed hard to conceive any thing make a more contemptible figure, than an impertinent commentator in company with a good author; when in some splendid volume, gilt and letter'd, we view them together, making their public appearance. 'Tis the Consul and the Slave, riding together

gether in the triumphal car ; a motley scene of serious and ludicrous ; a kind of Tragi-comedy which distracts our affections, and moves us at the same instant both to gravity and mirth.

And now to avoid a sophistical censure, (as if I were an enemy *to the thing*, from being an enemy to *its abuse*) I would have it remember'd, 'tis not either with *Criticism* or *Critics*, that I presume to find fault. The art, and its genuine professors I truly honour, and think, that were it not for the acute and learned labours of a *Kuster*, a *Wasse*, a *Burman*, and their fellows, we should bid fair to degenerate into an age of dunces. 'Tis in particular to the abilities of the three above-mentioned, (since I have happened to name them) that we owe correct and beautiful editions of *Ovid* and *Quintilian* ; of *Salust* and *Thucydides* ; of *Aristophanes*, and that treasure of antient literature, *Suidas* *.

'Tis

* To the critics above-mentioned, I must add two valuable friends of my own (not before omitted, because forgotten) *Dr. TAYLOR Chancellor of Lincoln,*

'Tis not such critics (I name them again, *Wasse, Kuster, Burman*, and their fellows) 'tis not such as these, that I presume to contemn. Nay I go farther—I think the man, that can deride such scholars as these, if he speak as he believes, must be but a poor scholar himself; but if he be conscious of his calumny, I think him some thing worse. This is not want of scholarship, or inexperience in sound literature;

— *Hic est nigra succus loliginis,*
hæc est
Ærugo mera,

In short, *learned* critics, whatever we may think of them, are a sort of masters of the ceremony in the court of letters, thro' whose assistance we are introduced into

C 3

some

Lincoln, and *Mr. UPTON* *Prebendary of Rochester*; whose critical merit, in their excellent editions of *Demosthenes* and *Epietetus*, has justly rendred them ornaments of their country, and will transmit their names with honour to posterity.

His saltem accumulem donis, & fungar inani
Munere —

some of the best of company. Should we ever therefore, by any idle prejudices against pedantry, verbal accuracies, and we know not what, come to slight their art, and reject them from our favour, 'tis well we do not slight also those authors, with whom Criticism converses, becoming content to read them in crude translations, or (what is still worse) in translations of translations, where hardly a lineament or feature of the original is to be seen. And I will be bold to assert, that whenever that day comes, not the most admired performances of the present age, however highly their authors and their friends may esteem them, will be able to save us from barbarity, and the dominion of dulness.

And so much at present for *learned* critics and editors, (of such only I speak) whom I should be sorry to see pass into contempt, either from the ignorance of low pretenders, the wiles of sophistry, the bold confidence of scurrility, or even the charms of wit and poetry, if ever gifts so divine should be so basely prostituted. So much also for the origin and progress of

CRITICISM,

CRITICISM, which we have divided into three species, the PHILOSOPHICAL, the HISTORICAL, and the CORRECTIVE; the philosophical *treating of the principles, and primary causes of good writing*; the historical *being conversant in facts, customs, phrases, &c.* and the corrective being divided into the AUTHORITATIVE and the CONJECTURAL; the authoritative *depending on the collation of manuscripts and the best editions*; the conjectural *on the sagacity and polymathy of editors.*

1853

THE
WORLD
KNOWLEDGE

GOOD COMPANY

DICTIONARY

Knowlege of the World,

OR

GOOD COMPANY.

A

DIALOGUE.

*Est genus hominum, qui esse primos se omnium
rerum volunt,*

Nec sunt —

Ter.

(27)

THE
SOCIETY OF
MUSICIANS

OF
THE
CITY OF
LONDON

DI
AL
OG
UE

1850

Knowlege of the World,

O R

G O O D C O M P A N Y.

A

D I A L O G U E.

The scene and persons, two friends walking
in the *Mall*.

A. **W**HAT strange man, I beseech you, is this? the man I mean, that has just quitted us; who has been talking so incessantly, the whole time of our walk, about his intimacys and friendships with men of quality and birth?

B. If you inquire after his own birth, he's of the meanest; nothing better than the son of a low tradesman.

A. Then his learning and taste (I suppose) have recommended him. There
was

was much interperfed about his travels in *Italy*.

B. His tafte I can assure you is fmall ; and his learning, none.

A. You furprize me ; fome merit he muft certainly have had : what has it been ?

B. That which is of all merits the moft valuable. No man living has a more exquisite *Knowlege of the World*.

A. An exquisite knowlege indeed ! 'Tis impoffible, if this be true, he fhould be fo illiterate, as you have reprefented.

B. Why not ?

A. Because, whether he maintain a fyftem of his own, or espoufe a fyftem already invented, 'tis impoffible to do either without a variety of fciences ; there muft be fome physics, fome metaphysics, and previous to thefe dialectic and geometry. Add to this, if he be really what you defcribe, he muft not have contented himfelf with modern philofophers only ; he muft have examined and well weighed the feveral fentiments of antiquity ; the watry principle of *Thales* ; the fiery one of *Heraclitus* ;

raclitus; the ideas of *Plato*; the matter, form and privation of the *Stagirite*.

B. My good friend, what are you talking about?

A. I say, that all this cannot be done *without learning*, and much learning too.

B. And what then?

A. What then? why if this man have such a *Knowlege of the World*, as you affirm, he must necessarily have all, or most of the learning just mentioned.

B. Not at all; I dare say he never heard a syllable of this in all his life. By an exquisite *Knowlege of the World* I mean, he has an exquisite *Knowlege of Men*.

A. O! O! I beg your pardon.—He is an adept then in *ethics*, a great moralist, 'tis that's the case.

B. I can't say much as to his morals; but he certainly knows *human nature* to the greatest exactness.

A. Then I am certain he must be a *moralist*, and a very good man.

B. But an indifferent one truly—a sycophant, a slanderer, a spendthrift, a debauchée —

A.

A. Hold, hold! meer calumny! this cannot but be impossible. The man, so knowing in human nature, cannot but have studied himself. The man, who has studied himself, cannot but have seen the deformity of these vicious characters; and if he has once beheld that, he could no more indure to bear the characters, than he could to bear the spots of a fever or a plague.

B. O! my friend, you still misapprehend me. By the *Knowlege of mankind* I mean not your *ethic* science; my meaning is, that he knows *who are good Company*, and how the most effectually to ingratiate himself with them.

A. Nay then I'm sure, I may affirm him more than ever to be *good*.

B. You surprize me: why?

A. Are you at a loss for a reason? can any thing possibly ingratiate a man with good men, except it be *goodness*?

B. I must answer your question by another; which is, what 'tis you take *good Company* to be?

A. I know the consequence, should I attempt to explain myself. I shall be either seriously condemned, or laugh'd at with contempt for an idle sophist, and refiner upon words.

B. And are you a philosopher and afraid of that?

A. I never aspired to so high a character — But let this pass — you have asked me my sentiments upon *good Company*. Does it not seem first proper to inquire what *Company* means in general? Is not this the more natural method to know the species inquired after?

B. I can't tell but it may.

A. When therefore we say a *Company* of any kind whatever, does it not always suggest the same general idea, of *many persons considered collectively*?

B. As how?

A. Thus: many artists considered collectively make a *company* in trade; many soldiers, a *company* in war; the same of comedians, of gypsies, or of any thing. Is not this true?

B. I believe it may.

A.

A. If so, when we say *good Company*, this likewise must mean *many persons considered collectively*.

B. I admit it.

A. And as the peculiar characteristic of such *Company* is to be *good*, it must necessarily mean farther *many persons that are good*. Must it not?

B. Possibly it may.

A. Now as goodness in *many* must be the same as goodness in *one*, if we can but discover what makes one man good, we discover of course what makes a number, or *Company*. Is not this evident?

B. According to your scheme it may.

A. What then is it constitutes each particular man to be good? It cannot be riches; for that would make a good man of every fordid usurer.

B. I freely give up the rich.

A. Nor can it be dignity and rank; for that would make good men of the *Neros* and *Domitians*. ——— Do you doubt of this?

B. I have not yet dissented—— let me hear how you proceed.

A.

A. Nor can it be birth and high descent; for then——

B. Hold, hold! I see at what you are driving. You would bring me to confess, because these things make not a good *Man*, that therefore they make not good *Company*. As for riches I freely grant them to be an ingredient not necessary. But I shall never be brought to believe, by the strength of a little logic, that *good Company* is not formed by people of fashion, and of birth.

A. That is as much as to say, you are firmly resolved to believe, that tho' they are ever so *bad Company*, they are still *good Company*.

B. Well, well, you may ridicule as you please. I shan't so tamely renounce my opinion.

A. To give you then a sample of my complaisance, I admit all people of fashion to be *good Company*, and none else whatever. Do you only, on your part, as I have been so generous, make me a small concession or two by way of return.

B. What is it you require?

A. In the first place grant me, that they possess not (at least all of them) the same exalted understandings, as *Socrates* or *Plato*.

B. With all my heart.

A. Nor yet the same consummate virtue.

B. Most willingly.

A. There are it seems then among these, as among others, the ignorant and vitious, as well as the wise and good.

B. There are.

A. And yet if a man associate with this vitious and ignorant part, he keeps *good Company* nevertheless.

B. He does.

A. Suppose then a person of profligate character, by the help of adulation and a scurrilous kind of drollery, to render himself acceptable to this baser part of *good Company*, and wholly to pass his time with these alone: such we know to be the case of many a parasite, many a buffoon.

B. It is, and what follows?

A. Do you not perceive the paradoxes, which follow?

B. What paradoxes?

A. One, that a man may be countenanc'd by *good Company* all his life, and

not possess the least particle of good to recommend him. Another, that a man may keep *good Company* all his life, and hardly converse with a single person of either virtue or understanding. Are not these paradoxes?—Again, by inversion we may create still more of them.—One, for instance, that a man may have much virtue and understanding, and converse perpetually with persons of the same character, and yet in the course of a long life never keep the least *good Company* — Another, that as there are persons of virtue and understanding, who are no *good Company*, and *good Company* who have neither virtue nor understanding, there will be some *bad Company* more good than some *good Company* : what think you of these things? Are not these all paradoxes, which follow from what you have asserted?

B. Very fine, truly! — And so you really imagine that by a few trifling questions, and a little sophistical cavilling upon words, you have gained over your friend a complete logical triumph.

A. How well not long ago did I foretell my own fate? Did not I say that I

should be arraigned for an idle sophist, a minute refiner upon verbal niceties ?

B. And do you not justly deserve the character ? Is the whole, you have been saying, at best any thing more, than a contradiction to the common language of all mankind ?

A. I never heard before that all mankind had a common language.

B. Why there again ?—As if by mankind, I meant every human creature, now existing in the world. —

A. Existing in the world ? — In what world ?

B. Nay this is worse than ever — I am sure, if I had not more philosophy to bear being thus questioned, than you on your part have shewn in questioning, I should long ago not have vouchsafed you an answer.

A. Have patience then, my friend, and let your philosophy still support you. Renounce her not, as is too often the case, at that critical moment, when she is most to be desired. The meanest may philosophize with the greatest apparent wisdom, while the course of human events is even and unruffled : just as with a fair gale, in the great pacific Ocean—

B.

B. Well, well, don't preach over me, but propose your question.

A. With all my heart. I was asking you, when you talked of *every human creature in the world*, what you meant by the word, *World*.

B. And what do you seriously think 'twas possible for me to mean, but *this Earth* of ours?

A. What, the terraqueous Globe?

B. Ay, the terraqueous Globe, if you like that better.

A. 'Tis enough, I am satisfied. I see light now diffuse itself thro' all our dark debate. If this be the meaning of the word, *World*, to *know the World* must mean, to know this terraqueous Globe. Must it not?

B. In some sense possibly it may.

A. 'Tis no hard matter then, admitting this explication, to discover whom you mean by those, that know it. They are the great geometricians, and geographers, and voyagers; the *Strabos*, the *Ptolemies*, the *Forbifhers*, and the *Drakes*. One also of the same catalogue 'tis to be presumed we may call your friend; I mean, that marvelous man, who left us not long

ago, and whose knowlege in this way you extolled so highly.

B. My friend, as you call him (I thank you for the compliment) knows nothing of these matters, I can assure you, in the least; nor did I, for my part, ever mean any thing like it. In short, to end all trifling at once, (for I have quite enough) by *Knowlege of Men and the World*, I mean nothing more, than according to common phrase, *the knowing every body in town*.

A. In what town.

B. In this town, in *London*.

A. Indeed! what, every body in *London*?

B. Fie! fie! more cavilling. — Every body, I mean, of birth and fashion.

A. About two or three thousand perhaps: will that be enough?

B. I don't imagine they can be so many.

A. A three or four hundredth part this of about eight hundred thousand, the supposed number, which inhabit this city.

B. It may be so possibly; I never made the computation.

A. To be acquainted therefore with this three or four hundredth part, is what you mean by *knowing of the World*.

B.

B. I allow it.

A. And in this small pittance of the whole human race, you grant the same mixture of virtue and of vice, as may be found at large among mankind in general.

B. I do.

A. So that by force of any essential and truly characteristic quality, they are no way to be distinguished from the ordinary herd.

B. By no virtue or vice I have told you already.

A. These then are in reality your sentiments, and meaning.

B. They are, you may be assured.

A. And you assure me farther, that in no part of your discourse, you at any time intended *by knowlege of the World*, a knowlege of that comprehensive and stupendous system, in which are included all systems subordinate; all beings whatever, both rational and irrational, both immeasurably great and immeasurably small.

B. No, that I can safely assure you.

A. Nor did you ever mean by the *World* any one of these subordinate systems; as for instance the solar.

B. I never did.

A. Nor any orb or planet of such system; as for instance this Globe of ours.

B. No.

A. Nor any quarter of this Globe, as *Asia* or *Europe*.

B. No.

A. Nor any region of such quarter, as *Italy* or *Britain*.

B. No.

A. Nor any whole city of such region, as *Rome* or *London*.

B. No.

A. On the contrary, *to know the World*, according to this hypothesis of yours, is
“ to know a little clan composed of both
“ sexes, in character upon a level with the
“ rest of mankind, and like them equally
“ diversified with good and bad; a clan,
“ the small part of a single city, of a single
“ region, of the smallest quarter, of a small
“ planet, of a single system, in that infinite
“ and unknown number of systems, which
“ together compose this mighty UNIVERSE
“ or WORLD.”—Such you must allow, is
the Knowledge, that you have praised; a
Knowledge, the merit of which you made
so important, as to supply the place of every
merit else; the merit of taste; the merit
of

of letters; and I fear, even the merit of morality itself.—But I've done, lest you should think I am growing too serious.

B. You have not the least occasion for apologizing to me. Only one thing, as a friend, 'ts proper I should tell you. Whatever you may fancy of your proofs and your demonstrations, I'm not to be so readily refuted, as you think. You imagined, I dare say, I should have surrender'd by this time; have acknowledged my errors; have recognized your wisdom; have acted with due decorum *the under hero of a modern dialogue*, that thing of wood, set up for nothing else, than for another to shew his skill, by tipping of him down. But this, you may be satisfied, will never happen on my part.

A. Indeed, indeed, you are totally mistaken. You may be well assured, that I never expected it. Discourses of all kinds, I see by daily experience, are but feeble remedies to correct opinions. I could only wish you would correct your *phrase*, and not affront your mother-tongue with such horrible abuse.

B. What abuse do you mean?

A.

A. The absolute confusion of all terms; the making of great stand for little; strait for crooked; laudable and fair, for contemptible and base. Is not this abuse?

B. Not of my committing that I know of. I know none of my phrases not justified by common use. That the phrases, *Knowlege of Mankind* and *Knowlege of the World* are so, is, I believe, past dispute.—And now, if you please, let me invert matters, and ask a question on my part. Pray what authority have you, superior to common use, to annex to these terms any ideas of your own?

A. Should I attempt to answer this, I should not give you my own sentiments, but the sentiments of men, who lived in days of old; of men, whose wisdom I admire and revere. The consequences therefore alarm me. 'Twould grieve me to expose such excellent men, should I prove a bad interpreter of what they had asserted.

B. I perceive your aim; you would willingly excuse yourself. But I can assure you, I shall not be so easily satisfied.—What? have not I equal right to hear and scrutinize your opinions, as you have mine?

A.

A. Well then, if you must be obeyed, I only beg one favour.—If what I say, appear true, be the praise theirs ; if false and absurd, impute the fault to me.

B. You have your own conditions. Proceed, as you please.

A. Thus therefore—“ TO KNOW MAN-
 “ KIND AND HUMAN NATURE, as wise
 “ men have said, is to know the several
 “ powers of human action and perception ;
 “ the perceptive powers, whether sensitive
 “ or intellective ; the manner, in which
 “ these two coincide, and reciprocally pass
 “ from one to the other ; the active pow-
 “ ers of appetite and aversion ; their con-
 “ curring with reason, as well as their quit-
 “ ting, and opposing it ; the various af-
 “ fections, whether selfish or social ; the
 “ source of wrong action from either the
 “ exorbitance of appetite, or from reason
 “ erroneously judging evil to be good ; the
 “ gradual deviation, by these two causes,
 “ from the true and natural end of man,
 “ that is to say, the transition from what is
 “ social and rational into vicious habits, and
 “ false opinions ; the many imperceptible
 “ and unattended degrees, by which such
 “ habits

“ habits and opinions are formed ; the slow
 “ and critical process of raising up better,
 “ by which alone those others are to be de-
 “ stroyed. This, as I have heard, is *to*
 “ *know human nature* ; a Knowledge, which
 “ assumes as many different denominations,
 “ as ’tis capable of being attached to differ-
 “ ent subjects : applied to a man’s self, ’tis
 “ called the virtue of *prudence* ; to a family,
 “ it assumes the name of *oeconomy* ; when
 “ seen in the propriety of our common in-
 “ tercourse with others, ’tis recognized by
 “ the name of *civility* and *address* ; when
 “ extended to the leading of states and em-
 “ pires, ’tis the *rhetoric* and *policy of the*
 “ *genuine statesman* ; in a word, ’tis a Know-
 “ lege which differs in this from all others,
 “ that by possessing it we become not only
 “ wiser but better. And so much for *the*
 “ *Knowledge of men, and human nature.*

“ Again, TO KNOW THE WORLD, what
 “ is it in the opinion of the same wise men ?
 “ — ’Tis what they have called by way of
 “ eminence, the science of sciences, and art
 “ of arts, as including the principles of
 “ every other Knowledge. ’Tis to have a
 “ Knowledge of *Form* or *feminal* propor-
 “ tion,

“ tion, with the universal *Subject*, its passive
 “ receptacle. ’Tis to view, in the union of
 “ these together, the birth of things by
 “ kinds, and species. ’Tis to see the effi-
 “ cacy of these kinds, and species ; how
 “ nature from their *connection* derives the
 “ *unity of her existence*, and from their *va-*
 “ *riety and arrangement*, becomes *adorned*
 “ thro’ every part. ’Tis to gain a glimpse
 “ of that *active Intelligence*, the repository
 “ of all *final causes*, and the first mover of
 “ all *efficient*. ’Tis to possess the source
 “ of the sublimest *theory*, as to know *man-*
 “ *kind* in the manner described, is to pos-
 “ sess the source of the most excellent
 “ *practice*. In short, ’tis the union of these
 “ two sciences, (call the one *wisdom*, the
 “ other moral *virtue*,) which completes
 “ the just exemplar of perfect humanity ;
 “ that consummate idea, which but to
 “ resemble and approach is the highest
 “ proficiency of the best of men.”

What then are we to conclude, when
 we find all this inverted ? when we hear
 these transcendant accomplishments so
 wretchedly degraded, as to be attribu-
 ted not to the worthiest, but to the basest

and very worst? when we are told that spendthrifts, sycophants, I know not whom, may possess an exact Knowledge both of *human nature* and *the World*? — Is not this to be guilty of the confusion I spoke of; to invert all terms; to make great stand for little; straight for crooked; laudable and fair, for contemptible and base?

O! my friend! let us not appeal to custom to justify such contradictions. Tho' custom in things indifferent may be sometimes perhaps admitted, yet never for its sake let us renounce truth, and common sense. Why should there not be an accuracy, as well in speaking, as elsewhere? Why should † our words, by our foolish hyperboles, so immensely outrun the possibility of a meaning? — In praise, and dispraise, in characterizing, and complaisance, all we say is little better, than a continued lie. — At a moment's warning, as occasion requires, we can be *extremely sorry*, or *excessively bad*, without feeling the least emotion either of grief, or joy.

If

† Jam pridem equidem nos vera rerum vocabula amissimus. *Cato in Bell. Catilin.* pag. 127. Edit. Var.

If we barely like a thing, 'tis *charming*, and *prodigious*; if we barely dislike, 'tis *horrible*, and *shocking*. — And upon what in the mean time are we discoursing? Perhaps on nothing more important, than songs, and silks, and fans, and fiddlers. Had it been asked an old *Roman*, what he reckoned *an honour*, he would have answered a civic, or a mural crown. Now truly to receive a common letter, is *an honour*; to answer it is *another honour*; and to assure a man, *how much we are his devoted humble servants*, when we never in our lives either serv'd him, or intend it, this too is *another honour*.

O times! O manners! how had these things founded in the days of *Attic* eloquence? what would old *Homer* have thought, in the days of antient simplicity? We may partly indeed conjecture, from a sentiment of his principal hero. —

*To me as hateful, as the gates of hell,
Is he, that one thing in his heart conceals,
And speaks another —————*

But to descend from these heroic ages to others less remote. Mark but the exactness,

actness, as to *terms of art*, among our own mechanics, and sailors, and sportsmen. What hunters would be bribed, think you, to talk of *coursing with their bounds*; of *rousing* a fox; or of *unkenelling* a deer?—Yet it behoves not these either to write, or to read, but nature seems to lead them spontaneously to be thus accurate. So would she lead us, did we not oppose her by affectation, and by aping of that style, as elegant and polite, which only befits the low-cringing, and adulation of slaves.

But I have talked enough, and indeed more than I ought. 'Twas the subject itself, which at first engaged me, and then insensibly led me beyond what I proposed:

B. You have said, in my opinion, what deserves to be considered. At another time we may revive the subject, and discourse at leisure these things over again.

The E N D.

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