THE MONTHLY MIRROR:

REFLECTING

MEN AND MANNERS;

WITH STRICTURES ON THEIR EPITOME,

The Stage.

Let them look in the Mirror, *which I hold up to them, a* Mirror *which does not flatter, and see themselves.*

Dr. Johnson on Coriolanus.



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ENDYMION THE EXILE.

LETTER XXIX.

If I am not heartily ashamed of my honest landlord, *John Bull*, then am I as soused a gurnet as the fat man in the play. Would you believe it, Ambrose, honest John cannot even travel now-a-days, without sporting sentiment! Morbid reflections on men and things, which he is pleased to call philosophical observations, have mounted his stage ever since he and *Kotzebue* first compared notes; but one might expect his stage-coaches would have escaped the malady. No such thing, sir, I assure you. When he has bargained with his bookseller for a tour, he first packs up his shirts and shaving apparatus, then lays in a plentiful stock of what in plain old English, is called canting and whining, and if in the prosecution of his tour he be not mistaken for an itinerant field-preacher, it is certainly not the fault of his talents or his style. Now sentiment, Ambrose, is no bad thing in its way. It is uncommonly appropriate in the mouth of a white-slippered swain, in *Gesner's* pastorals, and bestows a prettyish sort of an *exit* on a slim actress, after her papa has requested her, in rather too absolute a style, to marry the man she dislikes. Nay, I will go a step further. Comedies being works of fiction, I have no great objection to a *moralizing farmer*; I can even stomach an *honest attorney*. But when upon the sober stage of real life, a man travels, and publishes his travels, it is my humble opinion that he should paint men, women, children and houses as he finds them. Such, however, is not the fashion now predominant. Disclose your adventures in octavo, briefly, humorously, and to the point like *Doctor Moore*, and nobody reads you. Croak in quarto, bowingly and benevolently like ****, and lords themselves, who have gone over more ground than harlequin, shall attest your excellence.

You tell me that *Guyot*, the bookseller, wishes *me* to publish my travels. Alas! my friend, I am the last man in the

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world for his purpose. I dont think that I ever uttered a sentiment in my life. Yes, I beg your pardon. When *Mirabeau* died, I perfectly well remember my ejaculating "*Its what we must all come to*," and even in that I was anticipated by one of *Peacham's* myrmidons. Money, however, will do much. Let *Guyot* but remit me five hundred pounds, and I will cook him up *a quarto*, whose lettered prize shall amply repay the booby purchasers for the large blank margin that envelops it. Yes I will travel, and I will scribble. I will use my quill as my predecessor of *La Mancha* did his lance, and thus, with my weapon always at rest, and therefore never in repose, will I tilt at law, physic, and divinity, squeezing sentiment even out of china oranges, and extracting the sun-beams of philanthropy, from a Covent-Garden cucumber. I own that to accomplish this last, I have much to do, and more to undo. Confirmed habits are devils incarnate. You will, therefore, suppose me to have undergone a huge moral change. You will take it for granted that I have vaulted into some kettle, simmering with sentiment, in order to be boiled into benevolence, and that some German *Taliacotius* has fitted me with a new drivelling nose, which an adroit adulation thrusts into society, and guarantees from tweaking. And now for a specimen of my travels.

"The sun had not yet attained his meridian altitude, when I quitted my apartments in Piccadilly, to make my purposed tour into the city. In London a string of vehicles, denominated hackney-coaches, are to be met with in every principal street, which, if you ascend, the driver carries you to whatever place business or pleasure may call you: but he expects payment for this at a given ratio of so much per mile. The process to be used is as follows:—You stand still upon the foot pavement, and eying the vehicle you prefer, you ejaculate, '*coach*,' in as loud a voice as you are able. Some people repeat the substantive, and exclaim, '*coach, coach*,' but the practice is dangerous, for it may imply a call for two coaches, which if you make use of, you are liable to pay a double fare. I had the prudence to confine myself to one, and had no sooner uttered the word than the driver addressed

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the words *yait, yait*, to his horses, and drew up to the pavement. A lame man at a little distance was witness to our manœuvres, and instantly hobbled towards us with his hat in his hand, opened the door, and let down the step. I entered, and he closed the door, after inquiring where my honour would please to be driven to. I said to Covent-Garden market, and I and my honour being inseparable, we both rode together, leaving the lame lacquey behind us. In my journey I passed through a spacious quadrangle, called Leicester-Fields, which may perhaps take its name from a golden man in the centre, bestriding a horse of the same metal. It was in this square that the invisible girl long continued to interest and amuse the inhabitants of this huge metropolis. It is said that the *Duke of York* discovered the secret, though why that should be, I cannot imagine; for certainly his girls of late have been every thing but invisible. Before I arrived at Covent-Garden, the merciless driver had thrice lashed his steeds: a method used by this ingenious people to make their cattle quicken their speed. I am in hopes to see the cruel custom abolished. Horses have their rights as well as men. If Nero made his horse a consul, it is a proof, that by proper training, horses may emerge from their present abject state. I will not go so far as to assert that they have souls, though I firmly believe, with *Corporal Trim*, that negroes have. Sir Ambrose Anti-clip assures me that his steeds require no further hint than two stamps upon the footboard to set them in motion. In the midst of these reflections, I arrived at the place of destination, where I alighted, and satisfied the driver for his trouble, by paying him a shilling, which he forthwith put into a leather bag, having first bit the coin to satisfy himself that it was good. It is impossible to express my sensations at the noise and clamour, which now assailed my ears from every quarter. This appeared to proceed from two causes: the gabbling of the buyers and that of the sellers; for a market here is composed of persons of both descriptions. Here they sell fruit, vegetables, crockery ware, and flowers. I have been informed that the gardeners of the gentlemen within ten miles of London, steal their master's fruit, and send it hither for sale; insomuch,

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that it has been jocularly observed that the best garden is Covent-Garden. I cannot understand how men can reconcile it to their conscience to buy fruit, which they suspect to have been stolen. A peach must lose half its sweetness by having been handled by a thief. We are, I allow, told on grave authority, that 'stolen waters are sweet—' But waters are not peaches. I should have loitered much longer in this motley rendezvous, but I was anxious to get a sight of the two figures over St. Dunstan's church, before the clock had chimed three quarters, so I abruptly quitted a spot which the courtesy and hospitality of the inhabitants had contributed to endear."

* * * *

What think you of this, my friend? If this is all, why I must confess there is no great difficulty in the task, and there is no knowing where my ambition will stop. I'll travel half the world over, giving to the natives of each district moral qualities they never dreamt of—

"*Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma.*"

I'll post away to Egypt to prove that an Arab is a very honest fellow, stopping in my way at the Point at Portsmouth, to do justice to the injured character of the ladies who frequent that spot. I'll mount the Pyramids, and take my oath that the prospect resembles that from Richmond Hill. I'll dive into the interior of Africa, and boast of the fertility of the soil. I'll shake hands with a Jack Tar, and swear that he never chews tobacco. In short I'll jumble Jew and Gentile in the press, like guineas in a miser's purse, till all asperities are worn down. The American shall lose his tomahawk, the Scotchman his fiddle, and the Irishman his pike, and they shall all walk forth hand in hand upon my polished page, bowing and smiling, as though that adroit caperer, *Lord Chesterfield*, had just been initiating them in the mysteries of the *minuet de la cour*.

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