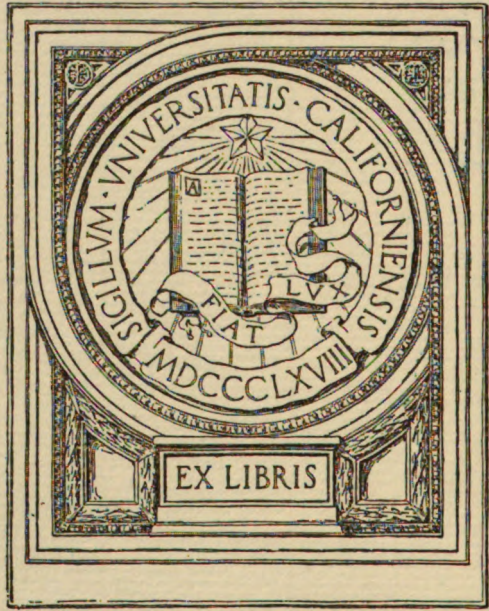


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John Driscoll
1923.

A to 7² in 4's, with a half sheet, containing half-title and list of books, folded round the whole without signature.

There are two issues of the first edition, one with four names on the imprint (this one) and one with Lewis's only.

The question of priority is now settled by the *Spectator* advertisements of May and June 1711 in favour of the issue with the four names. See Lewis's Catalogue.

This earlier issue usually occurs without the half-title and list of books. The Worcester College copy (uncut); however, contains them, and so does the present copy. Lewis says he has heard of 3 such copies (there being two of them); but is disinclined to look upon the absence of the half-sheet as an imperfection. Lefferts calls for it; and I do not see how the evidence of these two copies cited can be ignored.

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O N

CRITICISM.

*Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*

HORAT.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *W. Lewis* in *Russel-Street, Covent-Garden*; And Sold by
W. Taylor at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, *T. Osborn* in *Grays-Inn*
near the *Walks*, and *J. Graves* in *St. James's-Street*. M D C C X I.

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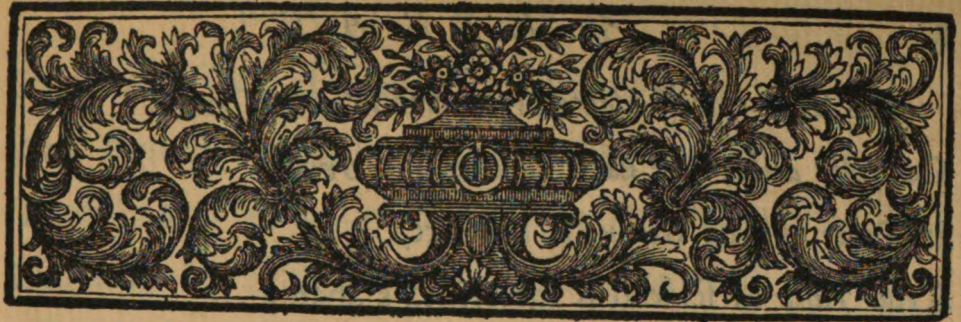
CRITICISM.

Horatius impati: si non, his ante mecum
si quis nocetis referis sibi

LONDON:

Printed for W. East in London, George Guttery, London, and sold by
W. Taylor at the shop in Pall-mall, T. Cadogan in Grosvenor
near the Water, and J. Gower in St. James's-street. MDCCLXXI.

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A N
E S S A Y
 O N
C R I T I C I S M.



IS hard to say, if greater Want of Skill
 Appear in *Writing* or in *Judging* ill;
 But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' Offence,
 To tire our *Patience*, than mis-lead our *Sense*:
 Some few in *that*, but Numbers err in *this*,
 Ten Censure wrong for one who *Writes* amiss;
 A *Fool* might once *himself* alone expose,
 Now *One* in *Verse* makes many more in *Prose*.

A 2

'Tis

692775

'Tis with our *Judgments* as our *Watches*, none
Go just *alike*, yet each believes his own.

In *Poets* as true *Genius* is but rare,

True *Taste* as seldom is the *Critick's* Share;

Both must alike from Heav'n derive their Light,

These *born* to Judge, as well as those to Write.

† Let such teach others who themselves excell,

And *censure freely* who have *written well*.

Authors are partial to their *Wit*, 'tis true,

But are not *Criticks* to their *Judgment* too?

Yet if we look more closely, we shall find

* Most have the *Seeds* of Judgment in their Mind;

Nature affords at least a *glimm'ring Light*;

The *Lines*, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right.

But as the slightest Sketch, if justly trac'd,

Is by ill *Colouring* but the more disgrac'd,

So by *false Learning* is good *Sense* defac'd;

Some are bewilder'd in the Maze of Schools,

And some made *Coxcombs* Nature meant but *Fools*.

‡ — *De Pictore, Sculptore, Fictore, nisi Artifex judicare non potest.* Pliny.

* *Omnes tacito quodam sensu, sine ulla arte, aut ratione, quæ sint in artibus ac rationibus recta ac prava dijudicant.* Cic. de Orat. lib. 3.

In search of *Wit* these lose their *common Sense*,
 And then turn Criticks in their own Defence.
 Those hate as *Rivals* all that write; and others
 But envy *Wits*, as *Eunuchs* envy *Lovers*.
 All *Fools* have still an Itching to deride,
 And fain wou'd be upon the *Laughing Side*:
 If *Mævius* Scribble in *Apolla's* spight,
 There are, who judge still worse than he can write.

Some have at first for *Wits*, then *Poets* past,
 Turn'd *Criticks* next, and prov'd plain *Fools* at last;
 Some neither can for *Wits* nor *Criticks* pass,
 As heavy Mules are neither *Horse* nor *Afs*.
 Those half-learn'd *Witlings*, num'rous in our Isle,
 As half-form'd *Insects* on the Banks of *Nile*;
 Unfinish'd Things, one knows not what to call,
 Their Generation's so *equivocal*:
 To tell 'em, wou'd a *hundred Tongues* require,
 Or *one vain Wit's*, that wou'd a hundred tire.

But *you* who seek to give and merit *Fame*,
 And justly bear a Critick's noble Name,

Be

Be sure *your self* and your own *Reach* to know,
 How far your *Genius, Taste, and Learning* go;
 Launch not beyond your *Depth*, but be discreet,
 And mark *that Point* where *Sense and Dulness meet*.
 Nature to all things fix'd the *Limits* fit,
 And wisely curb'd proud *Man's* pretending *Wit*:
 As on the *Land* while *here* the *Ocean* gains,
 In *other Parts* it leaves wide *sandy Plains*;
 Thus in the *Soul* while *Memory* prevails,
 The solid *Pow'r* of *Understanding* fails;
 Where *Beams* of warm *Imagination* play,
 The *Memory's* soft *Figures* melt away.
 One *Science* only will one *Genius* fit;
 So *vast* is *Art*, so *narrow* *Human Wit*:
 Not only bounded to *peculiar Arts*,
 But ev'n in *those*, confin'd to *single Parts*.
 Like *Kings* we lose the *Conquests* gain'd before,
 By vain *Ambition* still t'extend them more:
 Each might his *several Province* well command,
 Wou'd all but *stoop* to what they *understand*.

First

First follow NATURE, and your Judgment frame
 By her just Standard, which is still the same :
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
 One *clear, unchang'd*, and *Universal* Light,
 Life, Force, and Beauty, must to all impart,
 At once the *Source*, and *End*, and *Test* of *Art*.
 That *Art* is best which most resembles *Her* ;
 Which still *presides*, yet never does *Appear* ;
 In some fair Body thus the sprightly Soul
 With Spirits feeds, with Vigour fills the whole,
 Each Motion guides, and ev'ry Nerve sustains ;
It self unseen, but in th' *Effects*, remains.
 There are whom Heav'n has blest with store of Wit,
 Yet want as much again to manage it ;
 For *Wit* and *Judgment* ever are at strife,
 Tho' meant each other's Aid, like *Man* and *Wife*.
 'Tis more to *guide* than *spur* the Muse's Steed ;
 Restrain his Fury, than provoke his Speed ;
 The winged Courser, like a gen'rous Horse,
 Shows most true Mettle when you *check* his Course.

Those

Those RULES of old *discover'd*, not *devis'd*,
 Are *Nature* still, but *Nature Methodiz'd*;
Nature, like *Monarchy*, is but restrain'd
 By the same Laws which first *herself* ordain'd.

First learned *Greece* just Precepts did indite,
 When to repress, and when indulge our Flight:
 High on *Parnassus'* Top her Sons she show'd,
 And pointed out those arduous Paths they trod,
 Held from afar, aloft, th' Immortal Prize,
 And urg'd the rest by equal Steps to rise;
 From great *Examples useful Rules* were giv'n;
 She drew from *them* what they deriv'd from *Heav'n*,
 The gen'rous Critick *fann'd* the *Poet's Fire*,
 And taught the World, *with Reason* to *Admire*.
 Then Criticism the Muses Handmaid prov'd,
 To dress her Charms, and make her more below'd;
 But following Wits from that Intention stray'd;
 Who cou'd not win the Mistress, woo'd the Maid,
 Set up *themselves*, and drove a *separate Trade*:

Against

Against the Poets *their own Arms* they turn'd,
 Sure to hate most the Men from whom they learn'd.
 So modern *Pothecaries*, taught the Art
 By *Doctor's Bills* to play the *Doctor's Part*,
 Bold in the Practice of *mistaken Rules*,
 Prescribe, apply, and call their *Masters Fools*.
 Some on the Leaves of ancient Authors prey,
 Nor Time nor Moths e'er spoil'd so much as they:
 Some dryly plain, without Invention's Aid,
 Write dull *Receipts* how Poems may be made:
 These lost the Sense, their Learning to display,
 And those explain'd the Meaning quite away.

You then whose Judgment the right Course wou'd steer,
 Know well each ANCIENT's proper *Character*,
 His *Fable*, *Subject*, *Scope* in ev'ry Page,
Religion, *Country*, *Genius* of his *Age* :
 Without all these at once before your Eyes,
 You may *Confound*, but never *Criticize*.
 Be *Homer's Works* your *Study*, and *Delight*,
 Read them by Day, and meditate by Night,

B

Thence

Thence form your Judgment, thence your Notions bring,
 And trace the Muses *upward* to their *Spring* ;
 Still with *It self compar'd*, his *Text* peruse ;
 And let your *Comment* be the *Mantuan Muse*.

When first great *Maro* in his boundless Mind
 A Work, t'outlast Immortal *Rome* design'd,
 Perhaps he seem'd *above* the Critick's Law,
 And but from *Nature's Fountains* scorn'd to draw :
 But when t'examine ev'ry Part he came,
Nature and *Homer* were, he found, the *same* :
 Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checkt the bold Design,
 And did his Work to Rules as strict confine,
 As if the *Stagyrite* o'erlook'd each Line.
 Learn hence for Ancient *Rules* a just Esteem ;
 To copy *Nature* is to copy *Them*.

Some Beauties yet, no Precepts can declare,
 For there's a *Happinefs* as well as *Care*.
Musick resembles *Poetry*, in each
 Are *nameless Graces* which no Methods teach,
 And which a *Master-Hand* alone can reach.

† If

† If, where the *Rules* not far enough extend,
 (Since *Rules* were made but to promote their End)
 Some Lucky *LICENCE* answers to the full
 Th' Intent propos'd, *that Licence* is a *Rule*.
 Thus *Pegasus*, a nearer way to take,
 May boldly deviate from the common Track.
 Great Wits sometimes may *gloriously offend*,
 And rise to *Faults* true Criticks dare not mend ;
 From *vulgar Bounds* with *brave Disorder* part,
 And *snatch* a *Grace* beyond the Reach of Art,
 Which, without passing thro' the *Judgment*, gains
 The *Heart*, and all its End *at once* attains.
 In *Prospects*, thus, some *Objects* please our Eyes,
 Which *out of Nature's common Order* rise,
 The shapeless *Rock*, or hanging *Precipice*.
 But Care in Poetry must still be had,
 It asks *Discretion* ev'n in *running Mad* ;

B 2

And

† *Neque tam sancta sunt ista Præcepta, sed hoc quicquid est, Utilitas excogitavit ; Non negabo autem sic utile esse plerunque ; verum si eadem illa nobis aliud suadebit utilitas, hanc, relictis magistrorum autoritatibus, sequemur. Quintil. l. 2. cap. 13.*

And tho' the *Ancients* thus their *Rules* invade,
 (As *Kings* dispense with *Laws* Themselves have made)
Moderns, beware ! Or if you must offend
 Against the *Precept*, ne'er transgress its *End*,
 Let it be *seldom*, and *compell'd* by *Need*,
 And have, at least, *Their Precedent* to plead.
 The Critick else proceeds without Remorse,
 Seizes your *Fame*, and puts his *Laws* in force.

I know there are, to whose presumptuous Thoughts
 Those *Freer Beauties*, ev'n in *Them*, seem Faults :
 Some Figures *monstrous* and *mis-shap'd* appear,
 Consider'd *singly*, or beheld too *near*,
 Which, but *proportion'd* to their *Light*, or *Place*,
 Due Distance *reconciles* to Form and Grace.
 A prudent Chief not always must display
 His Powr's in *equal Ranks*, and *fair Array*,
 But with th' *Occasion* and the *Place* comply,
 Oft *hide* his Force, nay seem sometimes to *Fly*.
 Those are but *Stratagems* which *Errors* seem,
 Nor is it *Homer Nods*, but *We* that *Dream*.

Still

Still green with Bays each *ancient* Altar stands,
 Above the reach of *Sacrilegious* Hands,
 Secure from *Flames*, from *Envy's* fiercer Rage,
 Destructive *War*, and all-devouring *Age*.
 See, from *each Clime* the Learn'd their Incense bring;
 Hear, in *all Tongues* Triumphant *Paeans* ring!
 In Praise so just, let ev'ry Voice be join'd,
 And fill the *Gen'ral Chorus* of *Mankind*!
 Hail *Bards Triumphant*! born in *happier Days*;
Immortal Heirs of *Universal* Praise!
 Whose Honours with Increase of Ages grow,
 As Streams roll down, *enlarging* as they flow!
 Nations *unborn* your mighty Names shall sound,
 And Worlds applaud that must not yet be *found*!
 Oh may some Spark of *your Cœlestial* Fire
 The last, the meanest of your Sons inspire,
 (That with weak Wings, from far, pursues your Flights;
*Glow*s while he *reads*, but *trembles* as he *writes*)
 To teach vain Wits that Science *little known*,
T'admire Superior Sense, and *doubt* their own!

OF

OF all the Causes which conspire to blind
 Man's erring Judgment, and misguide the Mind,
 What the weak Head with strongest Byass rules,
 Is *Pride*, the *never-failing Vice of Fools*.
 Whatever Nature has in *Worth* deny'd,
 She gives in large Recruits of *needful Pride* ;
 For as in *Bodies*, thus in *Souls*, we find
 What wants in *Blood* and *Spirits*, swell'd with *Wind* ;
Pride, where *Wit* fails, steps in to our Defence,
 And fills up all the *mighty Void* of *Sense* !
 If once right Reason drives *that Cloud* away,
Truth breaks upon us with *resistless Day* ;
 Trust not your self ; but your Defects to know,
 Make use of ev'ry *Friend* — and ev'ry *Foe*.

A *little Learning* is a dang'rous Thing ;
 Drink deep, or taste not the *Pierian Spring* :
 There *shallow Draughts* intoxicate the Brain,
 And drinking *largely* sobers us again.

Fir'd

Fir'd with the Charms fair *Science* does impart,
 In *fearless Youth* we tempt the Heights of Art;
 While from the bounded *Level* of our Mind,
Short Views we take, nor see the *Lengths behind*,
 But *more advanc'd*, survey with strange Surprize
 New, distant Scenes of *endless Science* rise!
 So pleas'd at first, the towering *Alps* we try,
 Mount o'er the Vales, and seem to tread the Sky;
 Th' Eternal Snows appear already past,
 And the first *Clouds* and *Mountains* seem the last:
 But *those attain'd*, we tremble to survey
 The growing Labours of the lengthen'd Way,
 Th' *increasing Prospect tires* our wandring Eyes,
 Hills peep o'er Hills, and *Alps* on *Alps* arise!

† A perfect Judge will *read* each Work of Wit
 With the same Spirit that its Author *writ*,
 Survey the *Whole*, nor seek slight Faults to find;
 Where *Nature moves*, and *Rapture warms* the Mind;

Nor

† *Diligenter legendum est, ac pæne ad scribendi sollicitudinem: Nec per partes modo scrutanda sunt omnia, sed perfectus liber atique ex Integro resumendus. Quintilian.*

Not lose, for that malignant dull Delight,
 The *gen'rous Pleasure* to be charm'd with Wit.
 But in such Lays as neither *ebb*, nor *flow*,
Correctly cold, and *regularly low*,
 That shunning Faults, one quiet *Tenour* keep;
 We cannot *blame* indeed----but we may *sleep*.
 In Wit, as Nature, what affects our Hearts
 Is not th' *Exactness* of peculiar Parts;
 'Tis not a *Lip*, or *Eye*, we Beauty call,
 But the joint Force and full *Result* of *all*.
 Thus when we view some well-proportion'd Dome,
 (The *World's* just Wonder, and ev'n *thine* O Rome!)
 No single Parts unequally surprize;
 All comes *united* to th' admiring Eyes;
 No monstrous Height, or Breadth, or Length appear;
 The *Whole* at once is *Bold*, and *Regular*.

Whoever thinks a faultless Piece to see,
 Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
 In ev'ry Work regard the *Writer's End*,
 Since none can compass more than they *Intend*;

And

And if the *Means* be just, the *Conduct* true,
 Applause, in spite of trivial Faults, is due.
 As Men of Breeding, oft the Men of Wit,
 T' avoid *great Errors*, must the *less* commit,
 Neglect the Rules each *Verbal Critick* lays,
 For *not* to know some Trifles, is a Praise.
 Most Criticks fond of some subservient Art,
 Still make the *Whole* depend upon a *Part*,
 They talk of *Principles*, but Parts they prize,
 And All to one lov'd Folly Sacrifice.

Once on a time, *La Mancha's Knight*, they say,
 A certain *Bard* encountering on the Way,
 Discours'd in Terms as just, with Looks as Sage,
 As e'er cou'd *D——s*, of the Laws o' th' Stage;
 Concluding all were desp'rate Sots and Fools,
 That durst depart from *Aristotle's Rules*.
 Our Author, happy in a Judge so nice,
 Produc'd his Play, and beg'd the Knight's Advice,
 Made him observe the *Subject* and the *Plot*,
 The *Manners*, *Passions*, *Unities*, what not?

C

All

All which, exact to *Rule* were brought about,
Were but a *Combate in the Lists* left out.

What! Leave the Combate out? Exclaims the Knight;
Yes, or we must renounce the *Stagyrite*.

Not so by Heav'n (he answers in a Rage)

Knights, Squires, and Steeds, must enter on the Stage.

The Stage can ne'er so vast a Throng contain.

Then build a New, or act it in a Plain.

Thus Criticks, of less *Judgment* than *Caprice*,
Curious, not *Knowing*, not exact, but *nice*,

Form *short Ideas*; and offend in *Arts*

(As most in *Manners*) by a *Love to Parts*.

Some to *Conceit* alone their Taste confine,

And glitt'ring Thoughts struck out at ev'ry Line;

Pleas'd with a Work where nothing's just or fit;

One *glaring Chaos* and *wild Heap* of *Wit*:

Poets like Painters, thus, unskill'd to trace

The *naked Nature* and the *living Grace*,

With *Gold* and *Jewels* cover ev'ry Part,

And hide with *Ornaments* their *Want of Art*.

† True

† *True Wit* is *Nature* to Advantage drest,
 What oft was *Thought*, but ne'er before *Express*,
Something, whose Truth convinc'd at Sight we find,
 That gives us back the Image of our Mind:
 As Shades more sweetly recommend the Light,
 So modest Plainness sets off sprightly Wit:
 For *Works* may have more *Wit* than does 'em good,
 As *Bodies* perish through Excess of *Blood*.

Others for *Language* all their Care express,
 And value *Books*, as *Women Men*, for *Dress*:
 Their Praise is still—*The Stile is excellent*:
 The *Sense*, they humbly take upon Content.
Words are like *Leaves*; and where they most abound,
 Much *Fruit* of *Sense* beneath is rarely found.
False Eloquence, like the *Prismatic Glass*,
 Its gawdy Colours spreads on ev'ry place;
 The Face of *Nature* we no more Survey,
 All glares alike, without *Distinction* gay:

C 2

But

† *Naturam intueamur, hanc sequamur; Id facillimè accipiunt animi quod agnos-
 cunt.* Quintil. lib. 8. c. 3.

But true *Expression*, like th' unchanging *Sun*,
Clears, and *improves* whate'er it shines upon,
 It *gilds* all Objects, but it *alters* none.

Expression is the *Dress* of *Thought*, and still
 Appears more *decent* as more *suitable*;

A vile *Conceit* in pompous *Style* exprest,
 Is like a *Clown* in regal *Purple* drest;

For different *Styles* with different *Subjects* sort,
 As several *Garbs* with *Country*, *Town*, and *Court*.

* Some by *Old Words* to *Fame* have made *Pretence*;
Ancients in *Phrase*, meer *Moderns* in their *Sense*!

Such *labour'd Nothings*, in so *strange* a *Style*,
Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the *Learned Smile*.

Unlucky, as *Fungoso* in the † *Play*,

These *Sparks* with aukward *Vanity* display
 What the *Fine Gentlemen* wore *Yesterday*!

And but so mimick ancient *Wits* at best,

As *Apes* our *Grandfires* in their *Doublets* drest.

* *Abolita & abrogata retinere, insolentia: cuiusdam est, & frivola in parvis jactantia.* Quint. lib. 1. c. 6.

Opus est ut Verba a vetustate repetita neque crebra sint, neque manifesta, quia nil est odiosius affectatione, nec utique ab ultimis repetita temporibus. Oratio, cuius summa virtus est perspicuitas, quam sit vitiosa si egeat interprete? Ergo ut uovorum optima erunt maxime vetera, ita veterum maxime nova. Idem.

† Ben. Johnson's *Every Man in his Humour*.

In *Words*, as *Fashions*, the same Rule will hold ;
 Alike *Fantastick*, if *too New*, or *Old* ;
 Be not the *first* by whom the *New* are try'd,
 Nor yet the *last* to lay the *Old* aside.

* But most by *Numbers* judge a Poet's Song,
 And *smooth* or *rough*, with such, is *right* or *wrong* ,
 In the bright *Muse* tho' thousand *Charms* conspire,
 Her *Voice* is all these tuneful Fools admire,
 Who haunt *Parnassus* but to please their Ear,
 Not mend their *Minds* ; as some to *Church* repair,
 Not for the *Doctrine*, but the *Musick* there.

These *Equal Syllables* alone require,
 † Tho' oft the Ear the *open Vowels* tire,
 While *Expletives* their feeble Aid do join,
 And ten low *Words* oft creep in one dull *Line*,
 While they ring round the same *un-vary'd Chimes*,
 With sure *Returns* of still *expected Rhymes*.

Where-

* *Quis populi sermo est? quis enim? nisi carmine molli Nunc demum numero fluere, ut per læve severos Effugit junctura unguis: scit tendere versum, Non secus ac si oculo rubricam dirigat uno.* Persius, Sat. 1.

† *Fugiemus crebras vocalium concursiones, que vastam atque hiantem orationem reddunt.* Cic. ad Herenn. lib. 4. Vide etiam Quintil. lib. 9. c. 4.

Where-e'er you find *the cooling Western Breeze*,
 In the next Line, it *whispers thro' the Trees* ;
 If *Chrystal Streams with pleasing Murmurs creep*,
 The Reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with *Sleep*.
 Then, at the *last*, and *only* Couplet fraught
 With some *unmeaning* Thing they call a *Thought*,
 A *needless Alexandrine* ends the Song,
 That like a wounded Snake, drags its slow Length along.
 Leave such to tune their own dull Rhimes, and know
 What's *roundly smooth*, or *languishingly slow* ;
 And praise the *Easie Vigor* of a Line,
 Where *Denham's* Strength, and *Waller's* Sweetness join.
 'Tis not enough no Harshness gives Offence,
 The *Sound* must seem an *Eccho* to the *Sense*.
Soft is the Strain when *Zephyr* gently blows,
 And the *smooth Stream* in *smoother Numbers* flows ;
 But when loud Surges lash the sounding Shore,
 The *hoarse, rough Verse* shou'd like the *Torrent* roar.
 When *Ajax* strives, some Rock's vast Weight to throw,
 The Line too labours, and the Words move *slow* ;

Not

Not so, when swift *Camilla* scours the Plain,
 Flies o'er th' unbending Corn, and skims along the Main.
 Hear how * *Timotheus*' various Lays surprize,
 And bid Alternate Passions fall and rise!
 While, at each Change, the Son of *Lybian Jove*
 Now burns with Glory, and then melts with Love;
 Now his fierce Eyes with sparkling Fury glow;
 Now Sighs steal out, and Tears begin to flow:
Persians and *Greeks* like Turns of Nature found,
 And the *World's Victor* stood subdu'd by Sound!
 The Pow'r of Musick all our Hearts allow;
 And what *Timotheus* was, is *Dryden* now.

Avoid *Extreams*; and shun the Fault of such,
 Who still are pleas'd too little, or too much.
 At ev'ry Trifle scorn to take Offence,
 That always shows *Great Pride*, or *Little Sense*;
 Those *Heads* as *Stomachs* are not sure the best
 Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.

Yet

**Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Musick; An Ode by Mr. Dryden.*

Yet let not each gay *Turn* thy Rapture move,
 For Fools *Admir*, but Men of Sense *Approve*;
 As things seem *large* which we thro' *Mists* descry,
Dulness is ever apt to *Magnify*.

Some the *French* Writers, some our *own* despise;
 The *Ancients* only, or the *Moderns* prize:
 Thus *Wit*, like *Faith*, by each Man is apply'd
 To *one small Sect*, and All are *damn'd beside*.
 Meanly they seek the Blessing to confine,
 And force *that Sun* but on a *Part* to Shine;
 Which not alone the *Southern Wit* sublimes,
 But ripens Spirits in cold *Northern Climes*;
 Which from the first has shone on *Ages past*,
 Enlights the *present*, and shall warm the *last*:
 (Tho' *each* may feel *Increases* and *Decays*,
 And see now *clearer* and now *darker Days*)
 Regard not then if *Wit* be *Old* or *New*,
 But blame the *False*, and value still the *True*.

Some ne'er advance a Judgment of their own,
 But *catch* the *spreading Notion* of the Town;

They

They reason and conclude by *Precedent*,
 And own *stale Nonsense* which they ne'er invent.
 Some judge of Author's *Names*, not *Works*, and then
 Nor praise nor damn the *Writings*, but the *Men*.
 Of all this *Servile Herd* the worst is He
 That in *proud Dulness* joins with *Quality*,
 A constant Critick at the Great-man's Board,
 To *fetch and carry* Nonsense for my Lord.
 What *woful stuff* this Madrigal wou'd be,
 In some starv'd Hackny Sonneteer, or me?
 But let a *Lord* once own the *happy Lines*,
 How the *Wit brightens*! How the *Style refines*!
 Before *his* sacred Name flies ev'ry Fault,
 And each *exalted Stanza teems* with *Thought*!

The *Vulgar* thus through *Imitation* err;
 As oft the *Learn'd* by being *Singular*;
 So much they scorn the Crowd, that if the Throng
 By *Chance* go right, they *purposely* go wrong;
 So Schismatics the *dull Believers* quit,
 And are but damn'd for having *too much Wit*.

D

Some

Some praise at Morning what they blame at Night;
 But always think the *last* Opinion *right*.
 A Muse by these is like a Mistress us'd,
 This hour she's *idoliz'd*, the next *abus'd*,
 While their weak Heads, like Towns unfortify'd,
 'Twixt Sense and Nonsense daily change their Side.
 Ask them the Cause; *They're wiser still*, they say;
 And still to Morrow's wiser than to Day.
We think our *Fathers* Fools, so *wise* we grow;
 Our *wiser Sons*, no doubt, will think *us* so.
 Once *School-Divines* our zealous Isle o'erspread;
 Who knew most *Sentences* was *deepest* read;
 Faith, Gospel, All, seem'd made to be *disputed*,
 And none had *Sense enough* to be *Confuted*.
Scotists and *Thomists*, now, in Peace remain,
 Amidst their *kindred Cobwebs* in *Duck-Lane*.
 If *Faith* it self has *diff'rent Dresses* worn,
 What wonder *Modes* in *Wit* shou'd take their Turn?
 Oft, leaving what is Natural and fit,
 The *current Folly* proves our *ready Wit*,

And

And Authors think their Reputation safe,
 Which lives as long as *Fools* are pleas'd to Laugh.
 Some valuing those of their own *Side*, or *Mind*,
 Still make themselves the measure of Mankind;
 Fondly we think we honour Merit then,
 When we but praise *Our selves* in *Other Men*.
 Parties in *Wit* attend on those of *State*,
 And publick Faction doubles private Hate.
Pride, *Malice*, *Folly*, against *Dryden* rose,
 In various Shapes of *Parsons*, *Criticks*, *Beaus*;
 But *Sense* surviv'd, when *merry Jests* were past;
 For rising Merit will *buoy up* at last.
 Might he return, and bless once more our Eyes,
 New *Bl—s* and new *M—s* must arise;
 Nay shou'd great *Homer* lift his awful Head,
Zoilus again would start up from the Dead.
Envy will *Merit* as its *Shade* pursue,
 But like a Shadow, proves the *Substance* too;
 For envy'd *Wit*, like *Sol* Eclips'd, makes known
 Th' *opposing Body's* Grossness, not its *own*.

D 2

When

When first that Sun too powerful Beams displays,
 It draws up Vapours which obscure its Rays;
 But ev'n those Clouds at last adorn its Way,
 Reflect new Glories, and augment the Day.

Be thou the *first* true Merit to befriend;
 His Praise is lost, who stays till *All* commend;
 Short is the Date, alas, of *Modern Rhymes*;
 And 'tis but just to let 'em live *betimes*.
 No longer now that Golden Age appears,
 When *Patriarch-Wits* surviv'd a *thousand Years*,
 Now Length of *Fame* (our *second Life*) is lost,
 And bare *Threescore* is all ev'n That can boast:
 Our Sons their Father's *failing Language* see,
 And such as *Chaucer* is, shall *Dryden* be.
 So when the faithful *Pencil* has design'd
 Some *fair Idea* of the Master's Mind,
 Where a *new World* leaps out at his command,
 And ready Nature waits upon his Hand;
 When the ripe Colours *soften* and *unite*,
 And sweetly *melt* into just Shade and Light,

When

When mellowing Time does full Perfection give,
 And each Bold Figure just begins to *Live*;
 The *treach'rous Colours* in few Years decay,
 And all the bright Creation fades away!

Unhappy *Wit*, like most mistaken Things,
 Repays not half that *Envy* which it brings:
 In *Youth* alone its empty Praise we boast,
 But soon the Short-liv'd Vanity is lost!
 Like some fair *Flow'r* that in the *Spring* does rise,
 And gaily Blooms, but ev'n in blooming *Dies*.
 What is this *Wit* that does our Cares employ?
 The *Owner's Wife*, that *other Men* enjoy,
 The more his *Trouble* as the more *admir'd*;
 Where *wanted*, scorn'd, and envy'd where *acquir'd*;
 Maintain'd with *Pains*, but forfeited with *Ease*;
 Sure *some* to *vex*, but never *all* to *please*;
 'Tis what the *Vicious fear*, the *Virtuous shun*;
 By *Fools* 'tis *hated*, and by *Knaves undone*!

Too much does *Wit* from *Ign'rance* undergo,
 Ah let not *Learning* too commence its Foe!

of

Of old, those found Rewards who cou'd excel,
 And such were Prais'd who but endeavour'd well :
 Tho' Triumphs were to Gen'als only due,
 Crowns were reserv'd to grace the Soldiers too.
 Now those that reach Parnassus' lofty Crown,
 Employ their Pains to spurn some others down ;
 And while Self-Love each jealous Writer rules,
 Contending Wits become the Sport of Fools :
 But still the Worst with most Regret commend,
 And each Ill Author is as bad a Friend.
 To what base Ends, and by what abject Ways,
 Are Mortals urg'd by Sacred Lust of Praise ?
 Ah ne'er so dire a Thirst of Glory boast,
 Nor in the Critick let the Man be lost !
 Good-Nature and Good-Sense must ever join ;
 To Err is Humane ; to Forgive, Divine.
 But if in Noble Minds some Dregs remain,
 Not yet purg'd off, of Spleen and low'r Disdain,
 Discharge that Rage on more Provoking Crimes,
 Nor fear a Dearth in these Flagitious Times.

No

No Pardon vile *Obscenity* should find,
 Tho' *Wit* and *Art* conspire to move your Mind ;
 But *Dulness* with *Obscenity* must prove
 As Shameful sure as *Impotence* in *Love*.
 In the fat Age of Pleasure, Wealth, and Ease,
 Sprung the rank Weed, and thriv'd with large Increase ;
 When *Love* was all an easie Monarch's Care ;
 Seldom at *Council*, never in a *War* :
Filts rul'd the State, and Statesmen *Farces* writ ;
 Nay *Wits* had *Pensions*, and young *Lords* had *Wit* :
 The Fair fate panting at a *Courtier's Play*,
 And not a Mask went *un-improv'd* away :
 The modest Fan was lifted up no more,
 And Virgins *smil'd* at what they *blush'd* before —
 The following Licence of a Foreign Reign
 Did all the Dregs of bold *Socinus* drain ;
 Then *first* the *Belgian Morals* were extoll'd ;
 We their *Religion* had, and they our *Gold* :
 Then Unbelieving Priests reform'd the Nation,
 And taught more *Pleasant* Methods of Salvation ;

Where

Where Heav'ns Free Subjects might their *Rights* dispute,
 Lest God himself shou'd seem too *Absolute*.
Pulpits their *Sacred Satire* learn'd to spare,
 And Vice *admir'd* to find a *Flatt'rer* there !
 Encourag'd thus, Witt's *Titans* brav'd the Skies,
 And the Press groan'd with Licenc'd *Blasphemies* —
 These Monsters, Criticks ! with your Darts engage,
 Here point your Thunder, and exhaust your Rage !
 Yet shun their Fault, who, *Scandalously nice*,
 Will needs *mistake* an Author *into Vice* ;
 All seems Infected that th'Infected spy,
 As all looks yellow to the Jaundic'd Eye.

Learn then what *MORALS* Criticks ought to show,
 For 'tis but *half a Judge's Task*, to *Know*.
 'Tis not enough, Wit, Art, and Learning join ;
 In all you speak, let Truth and Candor shine :
 That not alone what to your *Judgment's* due,
 All may allow ; but seek your *Friendship* too.

Be

Be *silent* always when you *doubt* your *Sense*;
Speak when you're *sure*, yet *speak* with *Diffidence*;
 Some positive persisting Fops we know,
 That, if *once wrong*, will needs be *always so*;
 But you, with Pleasure own your Errors past,
 And make each Day a *Critick* on the last.

'Tis not enough your Counsel still be *true*,
Blunt Truths more Mischief than *nice Falshoods* do;
 Men must be *taught* as if you taught them *not*;
 And Things *ne'er known* propos'd as Things *forgot*:
 Without *Good Breeding*, *Truth* is not approv'd,
That only makes *Superior Sense* *belov'd*.

Be Niggards of Advice on no Pretence;
 For the *worst Avarice* is that of *Sense*:
 With mean Complacence ne'er betray your *Trust*,
 Nor be so *Civil* as to prove *Unjust*;
 Fear not the Anger of the Wife to raise;
 Those best can *bear Reproof*, who *merit Praise*.

E

'Twere

'Twere well, might Criticks still this Freedom take;
 But *Appius* reddens at each Word you speak,
 And *stares, Tremendous!* with a *threatning Eye,*
 Like some *fierce Tyrant* in *Old Tapestry!*
 Fear most to tax an *Honourable Fool,*
 Whose Right it is, *uncensur'd* to be dull;
 Such without *Wit* are Poets when they please,
 As without *Learning* they can take *Degrees.*
 Leave dang'rous *Truths* to unsuccessful *Satyrs,*
 And *Flattery* to fulsome *Dedicators,*
 Whom, when they *Praise,* the World believes no more,
 Than when they promise to give *Scribbling* o'er.
 'Tis best sometimes your Censure to restrain,
 And *charitably* let dull Fools be *vain:*
 Your Silence there is better than your *Spite,*
 For who can *rail* so long as they can *write?*
 Still humming on, their old dull Course they keep,
 And *lash'd* so long, like *Tops,* are lash'd *asleep.*

False

False Steps but help them to renew the Race,
 As after *Stumbling*, Jades will mend their Pace.
 What Crouds of these, impenitently bold,
 In *Sounds* and jingling *Syllables* grown old,
 Still run on Poets in a raging Vein,
 Ev'n to the Dregs and *Squeezings* of the Brain;
 Strain out the last, dull droppings of their Sense,
 And Rhyme with all the *Rage* of *Impotence*!

Such shameless *Bards* we have; and yet 'tis true,
 There are as mad, abandon'd *Criticks* too.

* The Bookful Blockhead, ignorantly read,
 With *Loads* of *Learned Lumber* in his Head,
 With his own Tongue still edifies his Ears,
 And always *List'ning to Himself* appears.

All Books he reads, and all he reads affails,
 From *Dryden's Fables* down to *D—y's Tales*.

E 2

With

* *Nihil pejus est iis, qui paullum aliquid ultra primas litteras progressi, falsam sibi scientia persuasionem induerunt: Nam & cedere præcipiendi peritis indignantur, & velut jure quodam potestatis, quo ferè hoc hominum genus intumescit, imperiosi, atque interim sævientes, Stultitiam suam perdocent.* Quintil. lib. 1. ch. 1.

With *him*, most Authors steal their Works, or buy;
Garth did not write his own *Dispensary*.

Name a new *Play*, and *he's* the Poet's *Friend*,
 Nay show'd his Faults—but when wou'd Poets mend?

No Place so Sacred from such Fops is barr'd,
 Nor is *Paul's Church* more safe than *Paul's Church-yard*:

Nay, run to *Altars*; *there* they'll talk you dead;
 For *Fools* rush in where *Angels* fear to tread.

Distrustful *Sense* with modest *Caution* speaks;
 It still *looks home*, and *short Excursions* makes;

But *ratling Nonsense* in full *Vollies* breaks;
 And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,

Bursts out, resistless, with a thundring *Tyde*!

But where's the Man, who Counsel *can* bestow,
 Still *pleas'd* to *teach*, and yet not *proud* to *know*?

Unbias'd, or by *Favour* or by *Spite*;
 Not *dully prepossess'd*, or *blindly right*;

Tho'

Tho' Learn'd, well-bred; and tho' well-bred, sincere;
 Modestly bold, and Humanly severe?
 Who to a *Friend* his Faults can freely show,
 And gladly praise the Merit of a *Foe*?
 Blest with a *Taste* exact, yet unconfin'd;
 A *Knowledge* both of *Books* and *Humankind*;
Gen'rous Converse; a *Soul* exempt from *Pride*;
 And *Love to Praise*, with *Reason* on his Side?

Such once were *Criticks*, such the Happy *Few*,
Athens and *Rome* in better Ages knew.
 The mighty *Stagyrite* first left the Shore,
 Spread all his Sails, and durst the Deeps explore;
 He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,
 Led by the Light of the *Mæonian Star*.
 Not only *Nature* did his Laws obey,
 But *Fancy's* boundless Empire own'd his Sway.
 Poets, a *Race* long unconfin'd and free,
 Still fond and proud of *Savage Liberty*,

Re-

Receiv'd his Rules, and stood convinc'd 'twas fit
 Who conquer'd *Nature*, shou'd preside o'er *Wit*.

Horace still charms with graceful Negligence,
 And without Method talks us into Sense,
 Does like a *Friend* familiarly convey
 The truest *Notions* in the easiest way.

He, who Supream in Judgment, as in Wit,
 Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
 Yet judg'd with *Coolness* tho' he sung with *Fire* ;
 His *Precepts* teach but what his *Works* inspire.

Our *Criticks* take a contrary Extream,
 They judge with *Fury*, but they write with *Flé'me* :
 Nor suffers *Horace* more in wrong *Translations*
 By *Wits*, than *Criticks* in as wrong *Quotations*.

Fancy and Art in gay *Petronius* please,
 The *Scholar's Learning*, and the *Courtier's Ease*.

In grave *Quintilian's* copious Work we find
 The justest *Rules*, and clearest *Method* join'd ;

Thus

Thus *useful Arms* in Magazines we place,
 All rang'd in *Order*, and dispos'd with *Grace*,
 Nor thus alone the Curious Eye to please,
 But to be *found*, when Need requires, with *Ease*.

The *Muses* sure *Longinus* did inspire,
 And blest *their Critick* with a *Poet's Fire*.
 An ardent *Judge*, that Zealous in his Trust,
 With *Warmth* gives Sentence, yet is always *Just* ;
 Whose *own Example* strengthens all his Laws,
 And *Is himself* that great *Sublime* he draws.

Thus long succeeding Criticks justly reign'd,
Licence repress'd, and *useful Laws* ordain'd ;
Learning and *Rome* alike in Empire grew,
 And *Arts* still follow'd where her *Eagles* flew ;
 From the same Foes, at last, both felt their Doom,
 And the same Age saw *Learning* fall, and *Rome*.
 With *Tyranny*, then *Superstition* join'd,
 As that the *Body*, this enslav'd the *Mind* ;

All

All was *Believ'd*, but nothing *understood*,
 And to be *dull* was *constru'd* to be *good* ;
 A *second* Deluge Learning thus o'er-run,
 And the *Monks* finish'd what the *Goths* begun.

At length, *Erasmus*, that *great*, *injur'd* Name,
 (The *Glory* of the *Priesthood*, and the *Shame* !)
 Stemmi'd the *wild Torrent* of a *barb'rous* Age,
 And drove those *Holy Vandals* off the Stage.

But see ! each *Muse*, in *Leo's* Golden Days,
 Starts from her Trance, and trims her wither'd Bays !
Rome's ancient *Genius*, o'er its *Ruins* spread,
 Shakes off the *Dust*, and rears his rev'rend Head :
 Then *Sculpture* and her *Sister-Arts* revive ;
Stones leap'd to *Form*, and *Rocks* began to *live* ;
 With *sweeter Notes* each *rising Temple* rung ;
 A *Raphael* painted, and a † *Vida* sung !

Im-

† M. Hieronymus Vida, an excellent Latin Poet, who writ an *Art of Poetry* in Verse.

Immortal *Vida* ! on whose honour'd Brow
The Poet's *Bays* and Critick's *Ivy* grow :
Cremona now shall ever boast thy Name,
As next in Place to *Mantua*, next in Fame !

But soon by Impious Arms from *Latium* chas'd,
Their *ancient Bounds* the banish'd *Muses* past ;
Thence Arts o'er all the *Northern World* advance ;
But *Critic Learning* flourish'd most in *France*.
The *Rules*, a Nation born to serve, obeys,
And *Boileau* still in Right of *Horace* sways.
But we, brave *Britains*, *Foreign Laws* despis'd,
And kept *unconquer'd*, and *unciviliz'd*,
Fierce for the *Liberties of Wit*, and bold,
We still defy'd the *Romans*, as of old.
Yet *some* there were, among the *founder Few*
Of those who *less presum'd*, and *better knew*,

F

Such

Who durst assert the *juster Ancient Cause*,
 And here restor'd Wit's *Fundamental Laws*.
 Such was *Roscomon*—not more *learn'd than good*,
 With *Manners gen'rous* as his *Noble Blood*;
 To him the *Wit of Greece and Rome* was known,
 And ev'ry *Author's Merit*, but his own.
 Such late was *Walsh*, — the *Muses Judge and Friend*,
 Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
 To *Failings mild*, but *zealous* for *Desert*;
 The *clearest Head*, and the *sincerest Heart*.
 This humble *Praise*, lamented *Shade!* receive,
 This *Praise* at least a grateful *Muse* may give!
 The *Muse*, whose early *Voice* you taught to *Sing*,
 Prescrib'd her *Heights*, and prun'd her *tender Wing*,
 (Her *Guide* now *lost*) no more attempts to *rise*,
 But in low *Numbers* short *Excursions* tries:

Con-

Content, if hence th' Unlearn'd their Wants may view,
The Learn'd reflect on what before they knew :
Careless of *Censure*, nor too fond of *Fame*,
Still pleas'd to *praise*, yet not afraid to *blame*,
Averse alike to *Flatter*, or *Offend*,
Not *free* from *Faults*, nor yet too vain to *mend*.

F I N I S.



ON CRIVETICIS M.

Content, if hence in Urban's then Wides they view,
 The hand's reflect on what before they knew,
 Carrels of Caspar, not too fond of Fraw,
 Still pleas'd to pass, yet not afraid to blame,
 Avere alike to blame, or Offend, or be
 Not free from Faults, nor yet too vain to seek

FINIS



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