

THE
REMARKABLE
HISTORY

OF THE

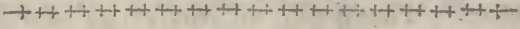
Miser of Berkshire :

JOHN ELWES, ESQ.

MEMBER OF THREE SUCCESSIVE PARLIAMENTS FOR THAT COUNTY.

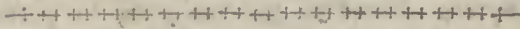
With Singular Anecdotes, &c.

Supposed to be the greatest instance of Penury that ever existed.



WRITTEN BY

CAPTAIN TOPHAM.



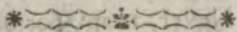
A Miser is an Enemy to Mankind; for how can he feel for others. Who is ever cruel to himself? His breast is steeled against Humanity: His Heart knows no Mirth; nor does the Year of Sensibility bedew his Cheek. Gold, that's a Blessing to others, to him doth prove a Curse: Care torments him, and he has no Comforter. O'KEEFFE.

FALKIRK

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1810.

THE
HISTORY
OF
JOHN ELWES, ESQ.



MEGGOT was the family name of Mr. Elwes; and his name being John, the conjunction of Jack Meggot induced strangers to imagine sometimes that his friends were addressing him by an assumed appellation. The father of Mr. Elwes was an eminent brewer; and his dwelling-house and offices were situated in South-wark; which borough was formerly represented in parliament by his grandfather, Sir George Meggot. During his life, he purchased the estate now in possession of the family of the Calverts, at Marcham, in Berkshire.

THE father died when the late Mr. Elwes was only 4 years old: so that little of the singular character of Mr. Elwes is to be attributed to him: but from the mother it may be traced with ease: She was left nearly one hundred thousand pounds by her husband, and yet starved herself to death!

THE only children from the above marriage, were Mr. Elwes, and a daughter, who married

the father of the late Colonel Timms; and from thence came the intail of some part of his estate.

Mr. ELWES, at an early period of life, was sent to Westminster School, where he remained ten or twelve years. He certainly during that time, had not misapplied his talents; for he was a good classical scholar to the last; and it is a circumstance very remarkable, yet well authenticated, that he never read afterwards. Never, at any period of his future life, was he seen with a book; nor had he, in all his different houses, left behind him two pounds worth of literary furniture. His knowledge in accounts was little; and, in some measure, may account for his total ignorance as to his own concerns. The contemporaries of Mr. Elwes, at Westminster, were Mr. Worsley, late Master of the Board of Works, and the late Lord Mansfield; who, at that time, borrowed all that young Elwes would lend. His Lordship, however, afterwards changed his disposition.

Mr ELWES from Westminster-School removed to Geneva, where he shortly after entered upon pursuits more congenial to his temper than study. The riding-master of the academy had then three of the best horsemen in Europe for his pupils; viz. Mr. Worsley Mr. Elwes, and Sir Sidney Meadows. Elwes of the three was accounted the most desperate: the young horses were put into his hands always; and he was, in fact the rough-riding of the other two. He was introduced, during this period, to Voltaire, whom, in point of appearance, he some-

what resembled; but though he has often mentioned this circumstance, neither the genius, the fortune, nor the character, of Voltaire, ever seemed to strike him as worthy of envy.

Returning to England, after an absence of two or three years, he was to be introduced to his uncle, the late Sir Harvey Elwes, who was then living at Stoke, in Suffolk, the most perfect picture of human penury perhaps that ever existed. In him the attempts of saving money were so extraordinary, that Mr. Elwes never quite reached them, even at the most covetous period of his life.!

To this Sir Harvey Elwes he was to be heir, and of course it was policy to please him. On this account it was necessary, even in old Mr. Elwes, to masquerade a little; and as he was at that time in the world, and its affairs, he dressed like other people. This would not have done for Sir Harvey. The nephew, therefore, used to stop at a little inn at Chelmsford, and begin to dress in character.—A pair of small iron buckles, worsted stockings darned, a worn out old coat, and a tattered waistcoat, were put on; and forwards he rode to visit his uncle; who used to contemplate him with a kind of miserable satisfaction; and seemed pleased to find his heir bidding fair to rival him in the unaccountable pursuit of avarice. There they would sit—saving souls!—with a single stick upon the fire, and with one glass of wine, occasionally, betwixt them, inveighing against the extravagance of the times; and when evening shut in, they would

immediately retire to rest, as going to bed saved candle-light. — The nephew, however, had then what, indeed, he never lost — a very extraordinary appetite — and this would have been an unpardonable offence in the eye of his uncle! Mr. Elwes was therefore obliged to partake of a dinner first, with some country neighbour, and then return to his uncle with a little diminutive appetite, that quite engaged the heart of the old gentleman. — A partridge, a small pudding, and one potatoe, did the whole business! and the fire was even suffered to die away while Sir Harvey was at dinner, as eating was a sufficient exercise.

Sir Harvey, in truth, was a most singular character, and the way in which he lived was no less so. His seclusion from the world nearly reached that of an hermit: and, extreme avarice excepted, a more blameless life was never led by mortal.

SKETCH OF SIR HARVEY ELWES.

Sir HARVEY ELWES succeeded Sir JERVAISE, a very worthy gentleman, who had involved, as far as they would go, all the estates he received, and left behind him. — Sir Harvey, on his death, found himself possessed nominally of some thousands a-year, but really with an income of one hundred pounds per annum. — On his arrival at Stoke, the family seat, he said, “that never would he leave it till he had entirely cleared the paternal estate.” — This he not only accomplished, but, be-

sides, lived to realize above one hundred thousand pounds. — In youth he had been given over for a consumption, so that he had no constitution; and no passions — He was timid, shy, and diffident in the extreme: of a thin spare habit of body, and without a friend upon earth. — The hoarding up and the counting his money formed the greatest joy. Next to that was partridge-setting; at which he was so great an adept, and game was then so plentiful, that he has been known to take five hundred brace of birds in one season! — But he lived upon partridges, he and his whole household, consisting of one man and two maids. — What they could not eat, he turned loose again, as he never gave any thing away to his neighbours. — Sr Harvey and his man never missed a day, during the partridge season, if the weather was tolerable; and his breed of dogs being remarkably good, he seldom failed taking great quantities of game.

At all times he wore a black velvet cap much over his face; a worn-out full-dressed suit of cloaths, and an old great coat, with worsted stockings drawn up over his knees — He rode a thin thorough-bred horse, and the horse and his rider both looked as if a gust of wind would have blown them away together — When the weather was not fine enough to tempt him abroad; he would walk backwards and forwards in his old hall, to save the expense of fire. — If a farmer in his neighbourhood came in on business, he would strike a light in a tinder-box that he kept by him, and putting one single stick

upon the grate, would not add another until the first was nearly consumed — Having little connection with London, he generally had three or four thousand pounds at a time in his house — A set of fellows, who were afterwards known by the appellation of the Thaxted Gang, (and who were afterwards all hung) formed a plan to rob him. — They were totally unsuspected at that time, each having some apparent occupation during the day, and went out only at night, upon good intelligence. It was Sir Harvey's custom to retire to his bed-chamber at eight o'clock: where, after taking a basin of water-gruel, by the light of a small fire, he went to bed, to save the unnecessary extravagance of a candle. — The gang, who perfectly knew the hour when his servant went to the stable, leaving their horses in a small grove on the Essex side of the river, walked across, and hid themselves in the church porch till they saw the man come up to his horses, when they immediately fell upon him, and, after some little struggle, bound and gagged him; ran up towards the house, tied the two maids together, and going up to Sir Harvey, presented their pistols, and sternly demanded his money. — Never did Sir Harvey behave so well as in this transaction: When the villains asked for his money, he would give them no answer till they had assured him that his servant, a great favourite, was safe. He then delivered them the key of a drawer, in which was fifty guineas: But they well knew he had much more in the house, and again threatened his life, without he discovered where it was deposited. — At length he reluctantly shewed them the

pieces, and they turned out a large drawer, which contained twenty-seven hundred guineas! — This they packed up in two large baskets, and actually carried off! A robbery which, for quantity of specie, was perhaps never equalled. — They told him before they went off, that they should leave a man behind, who would murder him if he even stirred for assistance. — On which he very coolly, and, indeed, with some simplicity, took out his watch, which they had not asked him for, and said, Gentlemen, I do not want to take any advantage of you; therefore, upon my honour, I will give you twenty minutes for your escape: After that time, nothing shall prevent me from seeing my servant. He was strictly as good as his word; when the time expired, he went and parted the man. — Tho' search was made by the Justice of the village, the robbers were not discovered. — And when they were apprehended, some years afterwards for other offences, and were known to be the men who had robbed Sir Harvey, he would not appear against them:—No, no, said he, I have lost my money; I will not lose my time also. So that however culpable he may be considered on the score of penury, he may certainly be acquitted of the passion of revenge.

Of what temperance can effect, Sir Harvey was an instance: At an early period of life, he was given over for a consumption; and he lived till betwixt eighty and ninety years of age.

Amongst the few acquaintances he had (and they were few indeed) was an occasional club held

at his own village of Stoke; and there were members of it two Baronets, besides himself, Sir Cordwell Firbrass, and Sir John Bernardson. — The reckoning to these congenial souls was always an object of investigation. — As they were one day settling this difficult point, an odd fellow, who was a member, called out to a friend that was passing, For Heaven's sake, step up stairs, and assist the poor! Here are three Baronets, worth a million of money, quarrelling about a farthing!

After Sir Harvey's death, the only tear dropped upon his grave, fell from the eye of his servant, who had long and faithfully attended him. — To that servant he bequeathed a farm of 50l. per annum, to him and to his heirs.

In the chastity and abstinence of his life, Sir Harvey Elwes was a rival to Sir Isaac Newton, for he would have held it unpardonable to have given—even his affections; and, as he saw no lady whatever, he had but little chance of bartering matrimonially for money.

When he died, he lay in state, such as it was, at his seat at Stoke. — Some of the tenants observed, with more humour than decency, That it was well Sir Harry could not see it — His fortune, which had become immense, fell to his nephew Mr. Meggot, who, by will, was ordered to assume the name and arms of Elwes. — Thus lived, and thus died, the uncle of old Mr. Elwes, whose possessions, at the time of his death, were supposed to be at least two hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and whose

annual expenditure was about one hundred and ten pounds! — Tho' the robbery before-mentioned probably did not accelerate his death, yet it lay heavy on his spirits; but more particularly when employed in the delightful task of counting his gold. However incredible this may appear, yet it is strictly true, that his cloaths cost him nothing, for he took them out of an old chest, where they had lain since the gay days of Sir Jervaise. — He kept his household chiefly upon game, and fish from his own pond. The cows, which grazed before his own door, furnished milk, cheese, and butter, for his little economical household; and what fuel he did burn, his woods supplied. — To those who cannot exist out of the bustle of society, and the fever of public scenes, it may be curious to know, that he was a man who had the courage to live, as it were, nearly seventy years alone!

To the whole of his uncle's property Mr. Elwes succeeded; and it was imagined, that his own was not at the time very inferior — He got, too, an additional seat; but he got it, as it had been, most religiously delivered down for ages past. — The furniture was most sacredly antique! — Not a room was painted, nor a window repaired! — The beds above stairs, were all in canopy and state; where the worms and moths held undisturbed possession!

Mr. ELWES had now advanced beyond the 40th year of his age; and for 15 years previous to this period it was that he was known in all the fashionable circles of London — He had always a turn for play; and it was only late in life, and

from paying always, and not always being paid that he conceived disgust at the inclination.

The acquaintances which he had formed at Westminster School, and at Geneva, together with his own large fortune, all conspired to introduce him into whatever society he liked best. — He was admitted a member of the club at Arthur's, and various other clubs of that period. — And as some proof of his notoriety at that time as a man of deep play, Mr. Elwes, the late Lord Robert Bertie, and some others, are noticed in a scene in the Adventures of a Guinea, for the frequency of their midnight orgies. — Few men, even from his own acknowledgment, had played deeper than himself, and with success more various. — He once played two days and a night without intermission; and the room being a small one, the party were nearly up to the knees in cards. — He lost some thousands at that sitting. — The late Duke of Northumberland, who would never quit a table where any hope of winning remained, was of the party.

After sitting up a whole night at play, for thousands with the most fashionable and profligate men of the time, amidst splendid rooms, gilt sofas, wax lights, and waiters attendant on his call, he would walk out about four in the morning, not towards home, but into Smithfield, to meet his cattle, which were coming to market, from Thaydon-Hall, a farm of his in Essex: There would this same man, forgetful of the scenes he had just left, stand in the cold or rain, bartering with a carcass.

butcher for a shilling. — Sometimes he would walk on in the mire to meet them; and more than once he has gone on foot the whole way to his farm, without stopping, which was 17 miles from London, after sitting up the whole night! Had every man been of the mind of Mr. Elwes, the race of Inn-keepers must have perished; and post chaises have been turnrd back to those who made them; for it was the business of his life to avoid both!

He always travelled on horse-back — To see him setting out on a journey was a matter truly curious! His first care was to put two or three eggs, boiled hard, into his great coat pocket, or any scraps of bread which he found. — His next attention was, to get out of London, into that road where the turnpikes were the fewest; then stopping under any hedge where grass presented itself for his horse, and a little water for himself, he would sit down and refresh himself and his horse together!

An inn upon the road, and an apothecary's bill, were equal objects of aversion to Mr. Elwes. — The words Give and Pay, were not found in his vocabulary; and therefore, when he once received a very dangerous kick from one of his horses, who fell in going over a leap, none could persuade him to have any assistance. — He rode the chase through, with his leg cut to the bone! and it was only some days afterwards, when it was feared an amputation would be necessary, that he consented to go up to London, and, dismal day! part with some of his money for advice.

One day he put his eldest boy upon a ladder, to get some grapes for the table, when, by the ladder slipping, he fell down, and hurt his side: The boy had the precaution to go to a Surgeon and get blooded: On his return, his father ask'd where he had been, and what was the matter with his arm? He told him that he had got bled.—Blad! blad! said the old gentleman: But what did you give? A shilling, answered the boy.—Pshaw! returned the father, you are a blockhead! Never part with your blood and money together.

In the penury of Mr. Elwes, there was something that seemed like a judgment from heaven! for all earthly comforts he voluntarily denied himself. He would walk home in the rain in London, rather than pay a shilling for a coach.—He would sit with wet cloaths, rather than be at the expence of a fire to dry them.—He would eat his provisions in the last stage of putrefaction, rather than be at the expence of purchasing a fresh joint from the butcher. And he wore a wig for above a fortnight, which he picked up out of a rut in a lane.—This was the act of extremity of laudable economy! for, to all appearance, it was the cast-off wig of some beggar! The day in which he first appeared in this ornamental dress, exceeded all the power of farce! for he had torn a brown coat, which he generally wore, and had therefore been obliged to have recourse to the old chest of Sir Jervaille, from whence he had selected a full-dressed green velvet coat, with slashed sleeves; and there he sat at dinner in boots, the aforesaid green velvet coat, his own white hair

appearing round his face, and this black stray wig at the top of all!

One dark night Mr. Elwes, hurrying along, went with such violence against the pole of a sedan chair, that he cut both his legs very deep'y! As usual he thought not of any assistance; but Colonel Timms, at whose house he then was, in Orchard Street, insisted upon calling a doctor: He at length submitted, and an apothecary in consequence attended; who immediately began to expatiate on the bad consequences of breaking the skin; the good fortune of his being sent for; and the peculiar bad appearance of Mr. Elwes's wound.—Very probably, said Mr. Elwes.—But, Mr. —, I have one thing to say to you:—In my opinion, my legs are not much hurt: Now, you think they are.—So I will make this agreement; I will take one leg, and you shall take the other; you shall do what you please with your's, and I will do nothing to mine: And I will wager your bill, that my leg gets well before your's.—He exultingly beat the apothecary by a fortnight!

The rooms of his seat at Stoke, that were now much out of repair, and would have all fallen in, but for his son; John Elwes, Esq. who had resided there, he thought too expensively furnished, and that worse things might have done.—If a window was broken, there was no repair, but that of a little brown paper, or that of piecing in a bit of broken glass, which had, at length, been done so frequently, and in so many shapes, that it would have puzzled

a mathematician to say what figure they described! To save fire, he would walk about the remains of an old green-house, or sit with a servant in the kitchen. — During the harvest, he would amuse himself with going into the fields to glean the corn on the grounds of his own tenants; and they used to leave a little more than common, to please the old gentleman, who was as eager after it as any pauper in the parish — In the advance of the season, his morning employment was to pick up any stray chips, bones, or other things, to carry to the fire, in his pocket; and he was one day surpris'd by a neighbouring gentleman in the act of pulling down a crow's nest for this purpose! On the gentleman expressing his surpris'e why he gave himself that trouble, Oh, Sir, replied he, it is really a shame that these creatures should be allowed to do so. Do but see what waste they make!

He still rode about the country on one of his mares; and always kept her on the soft turf adjoining the road, to save the expence of shoes; and, he said, the turf was most pleasant for her foot! And when any gentleman call'd to pay him a visit, and the boy, who attend'd in the stables, was profuse enough to put a little hay before his horse, old Elwes would slyly steal back into the stable, and take away the hay very carefully.

To save the expence of going to a butcher, he would have a whole sheep killed, and so eat mutton to the end of the chapter. — When he occasionally had his canal drawn, though sometimes

horse-loads of small fish were taken, not one would he suffer to be thrown in again, for he observed, he should never see them more! — Game in the last state of putrefaction, and meat that walked about his plate, would he continue to eat, rather than have new things killed before the old provision was exhausted! — With his diet, his dress kept pace, equally in the last stage of absolute dissolution! — Sometimes he would walk about with a tattered brown coloured hat; and sometimes with a white and red woollen cap!

When any friends, who might occasionally be with him, were absent, he would carefully put out his own fire, and walk to the house of a neighbour; and thus make one fire serve both. — His shoes he never would suffer to be cleaned, lest they should be worn out the sooner. — But still, with all this self-denial, he thought himself ever profuse; and frequently said, he must be a little more careful of his property. — When he went to bed, he would put five or ten guineas into a bureau, and then, full of his money, after he had retired to rest, sometimes in the middle of the night, he would come down to tea if it was safe. — The irritation of his mind was unceasing! — He thought every body extravagant; and when a person was talking to him one day of the great wealth of old Mr. Jennings, (who is supposed to be worth a million), and that they had seen him that day in a new carriage; Aye, aye, said old Elwes, he will soon see the end of his money!

Mr. Elwes denied himself every thing, except the common necessaries of life; and, indeed, it might have been admitted doubtful, whether or not, if his manors, his fish ponds, and grounds in his own hands, had not furnished a subsistence, where he had not any thing actually to buy, he would not, rather than have bought any thing, have starved!

He one day dined upon the remaining part of a moor-hen, which had been brought out of the river by a rat! — At another time, he eat an undigested part of a pike, which a larger one had swallowed, but had not finished, and which was taken in this state in a net! — At the time this last circumstance happened, he discovered a strange kind of satisfaction; for he said to Captain Topham, who happened to be present, Aye! this is killing two birds with one stone! Mr. Elwes, at this time, was perhaps worth nearly 800,000*l.* and at this period he had not made his Will, of course, was not saving from any sentiment of affection for any person. His thoughts unceasingly ran upon money! money! money! — and he saw now no one but whom he imagined was deceiving and defrauding him!

As, in the day, he would not allow himself any fire, he went to bed as soon as day closed, to save candle; and had begun to deny himself even the pleasures of sleeping in sheets — In short, he had now nearly brought to a climax the moral of his whole life, the perfect vanity of wealth, without using it.

On removing from Stoke, he went to his farmhouse at Thaydon-Hall; a scene of more ruin and

desolation, if possible, than either of his houses in Suffolk or Berkshire — It stood alone, on the borders of Epping Forest; and an old man and woman, his tenants, were the only persons with whom he could hold any converse. — Here he fell ill; and, as he would have no assistance, and had not even a servant, he lay unattended, and almost forgotten, for nearly a fortnight; indulging, even in death, that avarice which malady could not subdue. — It was at this period he began to think of making his will; seeing, perhaps, that his sons would not be entitled by law, to any part of his property, should he die intestate: and, on coming to London, he made his last Will and Testament. — The following is an attested copy.

—*—*—

THE WILL

OF THE LATE JOHN ELWES ESQ.

*Extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court
of Canterbury.*

IN the name of GOD, Amen. — I, JOHN ELWES, of Stoke, in the county of Suffolk, Esquire, do make and declare this Writing to be my Last Will and Testament, in manner following: (that is to say), In the first place, I direct that all my just debts, funeral and testamentary expences, be paid as soon as conveniently may be after my decease. — And I do give, devise, and bequeath, all and every my real estates, messuages or tenements, farms, lands, tythes, and hereditaments, situate, standing, lying,

and being in the several parishes or places of Stoke, Thaydon, and Marcham, in the counties of Suffolk, Essex, and Berks, with all and every the barns, stables, cut-houses, buildings, and appurtenances thereunto belonging; and all other my real estates whatsoever, and wheresoever situate, standing, lying, or being, with their and every of their rights, members, and appurtenances; and also all and every my personal estate, goods, chattels, and effects whatsoever, and of what nature, kind or quality soever, or wheresoever the same may be, unto my son, George Elwes, now living and residing at my mansion-house at Marcham, in the county of Berks, and my son, John Elwes, late a Lieutenant in his Majesty's Second Troop of Horse-Guards, and usually residing at my mansion-house at Stoke, in the county of Suffolk, equally to be divided between them, share and share alike; to have and to hold all and every my said real and personal estates whatsoever and wheresoever, with the rights, privileges, and appurtenances thereunto belonging or appertaining unto them my said sons, George Elwes and John Elwes, and their heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, for evermore, equally to be divided between them as tenants in common. And I hereby direct, that the executors of this my will, do and shall, as soon as conveniently may be after my death, pay all and every such legacies or bequests as I may think fit to give to any person whomsoever, by any codicil, or paper-writing in the nature of a codicil, or testamentary schedule, to be written or signed by me, whether the same shall or shall not be attested by any subscribing

witnesses. — And I do nominate, constitute, and appoint my said sons, George Elwes, executors of this my last will and testament; and hereby revoking all former wills by me at any time heretofore made, do make and declare this writing only as and for my last will and testament. — In witness whereof, I, the said John Elwes, have to this writing, contained in two sheets of paper, which I declare as and for my last will and testament, set my hand and seal, (that is to say,) my hand to each of the said sheets, and my hand and seal to this last sheet, and to the label by which they are affixed together, the sixth day of August, one thousand, seven hundred, and eighty-six.

JOHN ELWES.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared, by the said John Elwes, as and for his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who, in his presence, and in the presence of each other, and at his request, have subscribed our names, as witnesses to the execution thereof.

FELIX BUCKLEY:

EDWARD TOPHAM.

THOMAS INGRAHAM.

The property here disposed of, may amount, perhaps, to five hundred thousand pounds! — The entailed estates fall to Mr. Timms, son of the late Richard Timms, Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Troop of Horse Guards.

The sons named by Mr. Elwes in the will above, were his natural children, by Elizabeth Moren, formerly his house-keeper at Marcham in Berkshire.

Mr. Elwes, shortly after executing his will, gave, by letter of attorney, the power of managing, receiving, and paying all his monies, into the hands of Mr. Ingraham, his lawyer, and his youngest son, John Elwes, Esq; who had been his chief agents.

Nor was the act by any means improper. — The lapses of his memory had now become frequent and glaring — All recent occurrences he forgot entirely; and as he never committed any thing to writing, the confusion he made was inexpressible! — As an instance of this, the following anecdote may serve: — He had one evening given a draft on Messrs. Hoares his bankers, for twenty pounds; and having taken it into his head, during the night, that he had over-drawn his account, his anxiety was unceasing! — He left his bed, and walking about his room with that little feverish irritation that always distinguished him, waited with the utmost impatience till morning came, when, on going to his banker, with an apology for the great liberty he had taken, he was assured there was no occasion for his apology, as he happened to have in their hands, at that time, the small sum of fourteen thousand seven hundred pounds!

However singular this act of forgetfulness may appear, it serves to mark, amidst all his anxiety about money, that extreme conscientiousness which

was to the honour of his character. — If accident placed him in debt to any person; even in the most trivial manner, he was never easy till it was paid: And it should be noted, that never was he known, on any occasion, to fail in what he said. — Of the punctuality of his word, he was so scrupulously tenacious, that no person ever requested better security; and he was so particular in every thing of promise, that in any appointment or meeting, or the hour of it, he exceeded military exactness.

Mr. Elwes passed the summer of 1788 at his house in Welbeck Street, London, without any other society than that of two maid-servants; for he had now given up the expence of keeping any male domestic. — His chief employment used to be that of getting up early in the morning to visit his houses in Marybone, which during the summer were repairing — As he was there generally by four o'clock in the morning, he was of course on the spot before the workmen; and he used contentedly to sit down on the steps before the door, to scold them when they did come — The neighbours, who used to see him appear thus regularly every morning, and who concluded, from his apparel, he was one of the workmen, observed, there never was so punctual a man as the old carpenter — During the whole morning he would continue to run up and down stairs, to see the men were not idle for an instant, with the same anxiety as if his whole happiness in life had been centered in the finishing this house regardless of the greater property he had at stake in various places, and for

ever employed in the minutiae only of affairs — Indeed, such was his anxiety about this house, the rent of which was not above fifty pounds a-year, that it brought on a fever, which nearly cost him his life — In the muscular and unincumbered frame of Mr. Elwes, there was every thing that promised extreme length of life; and he lived to above 70 years of age, without any natural disorder.

On the day before Mr. Elwes took his gratuitous journey into Berkshire, he delivered to the late Mr. Partis that copy of his last will and testament which he himself had kept, to be carried to Messrs. Hoares, his bankers.

Mr. Elwes carried with him into Berkshire, five guineas and an half, and half a crown. — Lest the mention of this sum may appear singular, it should be said, that, previous to his journey, he had carefully wrapped it up in various folds of paper, that no part of it might be lost.

His very singular appetite Mr. Elwes retained till within a few days of his dissolution, and walked on foot twelve miles but a fortnight before he died.

The first symptoms of more immediate decay, was his inability to enjoy his rest at night. He was frequently heard at midnight as if struggling with some one in his chamber, and crying out, "I will keep my money, I will; nobody shall rob me of my property!" — On a y one of the family going into his room, he would start from his fever of

anxiety, and, as if waking from a troubled dream, again hurry into bed, and seem unconscious of what had happened. — At other times, when perfectly awake, he would walk to the spot where he had hidden his money, to see if it was safe.

In the autumn of 1789, his memory was gone entirely; his perception of things was decreasing very rapidly; and as the mind became unsettled, gusts of the most violent passion usurped the place of his former command of temper. — For six weeks previous to his death, he would go to rest in his cloathes, as perfectly dressed as during the day. — He was one morning found fast asleep betwixt the sheets, with his shoes on his feet, his stick in his hand, and an old torn hat upon his head!

Mr. Elwes, on the 18th of November, 1789, discovered signs of that utter and total weakness, which carried him to his grave in eight days — On the evening of the first day, he was conveyed to bed; from which he rose no more. — His appetite was gone — He had but a faint recollection of any thing about him; and his last coherent words were addressed to his son, Mr. John Elwes, in hoping “ he had left him what he wished.” — On the morning of the 26th of November he expired without a sigh!

Thus died Mr. Elwes, the most perfect model of human penury which has been presented to the public for a long series of years.