

will always, to a certain degree, produce success.

We have something to say to the author: we believe he possesses talents, but he is deficient in simplicity, that amiable grace in writing. We would endeavour to form an excuse for him, on the supposition, that he probably is a youthful writer; but we are less confident in this supposition, because we have observed, with much pain, that it is a general failing, into which our Irish writers are too often apt to fall. They affect too much ornament, and are not sufficiently refined to adopt an easy perspicuous style. A profusion of ornament, and an attempt at finery, often mislead to substitute tinsel for the sterling gold. We wish not to offend, but in the beginning of our critical career, we are desirous to enter our protest against a false showy taste. The best English writers within the last forty years especially, furnish us with many models of correct taste, which are recommended to the imitation of our Irish authors.

The preface to this little book is in a very turgid style, and obscurity appears to be the leading character of the work. We meet with such words as dispension, ignomes, tantaline; expressions, which an acquaintance with the English language does not justify. Great abilities are necessary to confer the privilege of coining words. If every writer were at liberty to use new-invented words, the English language would soon be reduced to an unintelligible jargon, and every author must add his own glossary to his book.

We notice the epithet, "vengeful," twice applied to justice; we do not like the term. Vengeance is not a godlike attribute, nor ought it to be admitted into a system of human jurisprudence. To punish for the purpose of producing reform, can be the only legitimate end of punishment; but a contrary sentiment has produced innumerable evils in legislation, and introduced a severity of punishment which has completely defeated its avowed purpose.

Our criminal laws are sanguinary in the letter, and lax in the execution. A principle of humanity arises in the breasts of judges, jurors, and prosecutors, which inclines them rather to let the offender escape, than inflict the punishment of death, a punishment disproportioned to the offence. That the judge should be counsel for the prisoner, can only be tolerated as a mitigation of inordinate severity. If punishments were proportioned to the offences, the judge should hold an even

balance between the prisoner and the prosecutor. Certainty should take place of severity of punishment. On the trial of a woman, we once saw a judge act on the maxim of being counsel for the prisoner, and brow-beat the evidence for the prosecution. The woman was, notwithstanding, found guilty, and the prosecutor, who did not wish to have her hanged, petitioned to have the sentence changed to transportation, which was afterwards done; and to this the judge, consented, though he declared he had no doubt of her guilt; yet but a few minutes before, this same judge had been exerting himself to procure a verdict of acquittal. To prevent the commission of crimes, the criminal law should be mitigated. We most heartily wish success to Sir Samuel Romilly's beginnings in this good work, which he introduced into parliament last session, as the commencement of a general plan, in his bill to render private stealing from the person not a capital offence: and we earnestly desire, that no imbecile dread of innovation, the epidemical insanity of the present day, may prevent the success of a reform, which is called for, not only on the principles of philanthropy, but of sound policy.

We cannot avoid noticing several flagrant violations of measure and grammar.

- " 'Twas he who told each struggling to stay" ...
 " That thou with ruthless hand *inflicts* the blow,"
 " For *e'er* to wisdom's voice will ope the ear."
 " As primer'd boys resort (*to*) their daily School."
 " We scarce one *lin'ment* of thy mother trace.

To conclude, we think it somewhat strange, that in a city dignified by the only university in the kingdom, no person could be found to direct the printer to the proper form of arranging a quotation from Juvenal in the title page.

K.

The Post Captain; or, the Wooden Walls well manned; comprehending a view of Naval society and manners; by the Author of "Edward; a view of Society in France," &c. 3d edition, corrected. p.p. 232. 7s. London, 1808.

TO notice this work may be thought superfluous; perhaps presumptuous. Supported by the name of the author, sanctioned by the approbation of the pub-

lic, praise or censure is equally useless. Yet, if a book of bad tendency be thus supported and sanctioned, its effects are the more injurious. The celebrity of the author recommends, the force of imitation disseminates the principles. To counteract these is our duty; the greater, the more widely extended the malady; the stronger, the more speedy should be the antidote. What might awe us to silence, requires us to raise our voices higher; to impress the maxims of truth with greater force, as they will be more strongly resisted.

Dr. Moore has done much for his fellow-men; his pen has been a sword to prostrate vice, and exalt virtue to a more venerable title; why then debase the pure coin to which his character had given universal currency, with such alloy? His advocates may offer to this, his latest born, the continuance of applause justly bestowed on his former productions: his friends will regret that he had not closed his honourable career before he gave birth to this child of his dotage.

The contrast between the morality of this and the former writings of the same author is such, that we thought, as we wished, that it was unjustly offered to the public under a false name: but internal evidence contradicts such a supposition. The features bear too strong a similitude to doubt its legitimacy.

Dr. Moore's forte is character...excellent in single scenes...inferior in their connection...bold in his groups...feeble in their combination...Zeluco is an exception to this; of all his novels the best and least noticed. The Post-captain is an amphibious creature, half lands-man, half tar; or rather, an animal out of its proper element, a holiday-buck in trowsers, who rings the changes on a few sea phrases learned by rote. The plot is a perfect tad-pole, all head and tail; perhaps a concatenation of heads and tails, like one of those reptiles, in which, when cut in several pieces, each enlivens into a kind of half existence, and becomes a creature of the same species. A captain appears on the quarter deck of the *Desdemona*...Brilliant by name...a combination of all the qualities which should adorn the hero of a British seventy-four...a superannuated merchant comes on board who hoped to renovate the decays of climate and age by inhaling a fresh supply of health from the lips of a young and buxom spouse...a young sailor is certainly preferable to an old merchant...Flora thought so...the captain pressed...an infringement on the decalogue, is,

in the doctor's opinion, no breach of the articles of war...both are willing for a "long pull, a strong pull, and a pull together"...The ship arrives in port...how unlucky...the pair could only commit adultery in theory...The captain now recollects that he is in love with a lady on shore...well thought on...observe, reader, fidelity is to be no part of a British Sailor's character...alas! how fallen, how changed!...He flies to see her...She is to be married to Lord Fiddlefaddle, a nobleman and a volunteer. Two respectable titles you will say...but the doctor thinks otherwise...in his mind, the merit of a British sailor is not sufficient to support itself...it must be built on the ruins of every other. The only characters which are not naval, are volunteer officers and clergymen...the former of these are all rendered as contemptible as the Doctor's wit, which is not small, can make them. Of the clergyman he gives nothing, except the name...but he takes care to tell us that it is Cringewell. Of an English volunteer, take the following specimen.

"Lord Fiddlefaddle...Our fatigues (on a review day) were without any hyperbole, not exceeded by Hannibal when he crossed the Alps. We marched and counter-marched at least a dozen miles...there was no intermission to our toil. Should the French ever have the temerity to invade us, they will find veterans to oppose." And we trust, notwithstanding this sneer, we sincerely trust they will; even in those volunteers who are here and in other places held up as objects of derision.

The Captain, is an indescribable hodge-podge of sublimity and sea-cant, which could not fail of having an irresistible effect on a well educated young lady, prevails on her to elope. "But, reflect, Cassandra, thrice will the moon hide her head in the ocean before the day arrives (meaning thereby the wedding day) and on the preceding night, guided by its friendly beams...shows off your boat with me...Oh! what a shove was there...but now worth this...and now worth nothing. And so ends the first tale.

Lieutenant Hurricane, a very good kind of a sailor, must get a wife. The old merchant dies, and he boards the widow. Eut, alas! he catches a tartar...she is jealous...her jealous fits are excellent, endowed with a full portion of the true *vis comica*...but she is cured, and the doctor gives us very broad hints how. And so ends the second tale.

The sameness of a sea life, for these two officers take their wives on board, is di-

verted by sundry dialogues, which had we not been better informed by the Doctor, so far from escaping the lips of British officers, and being relished by British matrons we would have only looked for in the precincts of Broadstairs, Wapping, or Pembroke-street, Plymouth.

But there are two other officers to be provided for, a captain Tempest, intended for an Irishman; for he says, "by J.....," ...very impudent and very stupid; he must have a wife; another lady sees him in the day and elopes with him at night, and so ends the third tale.

The gale blows strong to the port of matrimony. Lieutenant Echo also steers the same course. He comes and conquers. We had a different opinion of our country-women on the other side of the water...and so ends the fourth tale.

And now, reader, when all are married, you think the book is to be closed. Far from it...There is still a length of tail behind. They must visit their friends, and then comes a masquerade, where all the dresses of lords and ladies we never heard of before, are described in the language of a newspaper. Then comes a tour through the South of England, copied, as we should guess by the style, from some itinerary of watering places. Old Homer, in relating his travels, is said to have introduced his friends' names to do them honour, but as it appears he got very little thanks for the compliment. The doctor, seems to have done the same, and perhaps with the same success.

An ill-arranged story is but a small fault. Ample amends are made by the many entertaining scenes interspersed through it; no sailor but will find himself at home, and think that he is acting over again the jests and quips, and frolics which once enlivened his hours on shipboard. We blame Dr. Moore, for not suffering the British sailor to rest on the broad basis of his own merits. We blame him also for giving in to the ungenerous prejudice against the marines. This may be allowable in a sailor, it may be necessary in a government whose policy is division; but it is insufferable in a writer who ought to be above the prejudices of a quarter-deck, or the cabals of a cabinet.

In one place the Captain says... "Another bottle of wine here; You, Steward!... don't you see *this bottle is a marine.*" Again, "The lady, Sir, is English; her husband, at least, said so...*He may tell that to the marines...the sailors will never believe him.*" This last is so good a joke that it is kept up through the whole book.

But, our principal charge is the indecency (which though veiled in seaphrases, is not the less impressive, by requiring a little attention to catch the figurative meaning) the immorality and grossness which pervades a book professing to be a true picture of naval manners. The clergy cannot escape.

"Hurricane," says the Captain, "I am very glad you have brought the young lady aboard. *I hate to see a priest. A ship never gets safe to port that has a priest in her.* But a fine girl is a charming acquisition."

"She might tell the parson so, but I'll be d.....d if the sailors will believe it."

"A thousand persons would jump mast high at a salary of 20*£.* a year, and be found in their rations..." "Oh d.....n all parsons," says Tempest, "*I think it unzinous to meet one.*"

Not even the Bible is safe.

"Let me stay on deck a little longer," said Cassandra, "the sea is so awful, it reminds me of a passage in the Bible. They that go down in ships, that do business in the great waters, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

"Then you read the bible sometimes," said the captain.

"Yes, my dear," said Cassandra, "it always makes one cheerful."

"And do you believe about Jonas and the whale?" said the captain... "That will only do for the marines."

To show that we do not wish to derogate from the real merits of this book, the following extract shows what the writer might have done.

"Be ever memorable the morning of January the 1st, 1801, which heaped fresh honours on the sons of Britannia! Oh! fleeting Time! scatter if thou wilt, the rest of these pages to the winds of heaven; but let that be sacred which records the achievements of Neptune's legitimate children"

"At eight o'clock both ships crossed their top-gallant yards; and in somewhat more than half an hour, the boatswain on board the French frigate piped the hands aloft to weigh anchor, and her fore-top-sail was loosened, as a signal for sailing."

"Captain Brilliant lost no time to do the same. His fore top-sail was in a moment cast loose from the yard; the capstern bars were manned, the cat-fall over-hauled down; and as a kind of challenge, the topions were taken out of the main-deck guns."

"The French frigate had now weighed, and stood out of the bay, with her

jack, ensign, and pendant flying; nor did an interval of a minute elapse before the anchor of the *Desdemona* was hove up the bow, and sail made on the ship."

"The men, fore and aft, were now at their quarters; and Captain Brilliant, looking over the break of the quarter-deck, vociferated to them through his speaking trumpet."

"Stand by, my boys!"

"All ready!" was the reply.

"Upon which our hero ran up along side the French frigate; and calling to his people, "Fire away! they discharged their broadside, which was returned by the enemy before the sound was out of the *Desdemona's* guns."

"And on the quarter-deck of glory were to be seen the master anticipating the orders of the captain; the marine officer fring his division over the quarter; and Lieutenant Hurricane calling to the men at the quarter-deck guns and carronades, "Keep yourselves cool, my lads! Mind the heave of the sea! Now, strike it into her!"

"At this period, the hammocks in the quarter-deck nettings of the *Desdemona* caught fire, from a wad of the enemy; upon which young Echo, of whom we have before spoken, jumped upon his gun, and lugging out his knife, cut them away overboard."

"At this juncture a crash was heard in the main-deck, which was followed by doleful groans."

"Jump, Mr Echo," said the captain, "into the waste: the Frenchman's shot is playing at hell and turn-up jack there!"

"The midshipman soon returned."

"A shot, sir," said Mr. Echo, "has dismounted one of the midship guns, killed the third lieutenant, and wounded almost every man at the gun."

"What," cries lieutenant Hurricane, "has death dropped the peak of my messmate, poor Balcony!"

"Huzza! my sons!" cried captain Brilliant to the people at the main-deck guns. "Beauty! that's the fire!"

"The exhortations of Captain Brilliant were interrupted by the carpenter. He came upon deck to acquaint the captain that the enemy's shot had taken such effect, that there were several feet water in the well; and that even if recourse were had to the pumps, it would be impracticable to keep the ship half an hour above water."

"Be it so! Mr. Chips," said the captain. "But hark you! say not a word about the matter. I will soon have a clear well."

"The two frigates were now so close along side of one another, that their yard-arms were mutually locked by their rigging."

"Hurricane!" cried captain Brilliant, "I will board the Frenchman in the smoke. Hark you, call the boarders. I will put myself at their head. In the mean time, be ready yourself to follow me with a fresh gang of volunteers."

"The boarders now assembled, to the amount of seventy; men equal to any heroic enterprize; men who would have gone through flames had their duty imposed on them the task. They were armed with cutlasses and pistols."

"Are you ready, my sons!" cried captain Brilliant.

"All ready, sir!" was the reply.

"Then follow me?" cried the hero.

"Captain Brilliant now boarded the enemy's ship, followed by his men, who were all contending for the honour of fighting by his side."

"The French officers and sailors collected to oppose the assailants. But such was the discipline, such the intrepidity of the British tars, that resistance was of no avail. Brilliant, with his troop of boarders, made his way through a host of enemies. The first lieutenant followed in succession, with volunteers from the ship's company; and the *Desdemona*, like the fabled horse of Troy, poured out heroes from her womb!"

"The Frenchmen called for quarter. But before they had made the supplication, young Echo had got aft and hauled down their colours."

O si sic omnia! we should not then, as we have done, begin our task with unwillingness, or finish it with regret. But these and other merits have forced it on our notice. Were it all in the same vein as the censurable parts, we never should have drawn it from its obscurity, as it is its real beauties will veil or recommend its improprieties. Many young persons will form their opinions of sea affairs from the picture here drawn. Many young sea-officers will model their character by that of a Brilliant or an Echo. They will think that the vices here decked in such dazzling colours are essential to their shining in their profession. We wish to guard them against an example so dangerous. If imitated, degrading to the British navy; and insuring to the ill-judging imitator, a certain exclusion from that society which alone can give polish to the manners, add gallantry to the courage, and bestow a pleasing and virtuous recompence on the labours of the true-born British sailor.