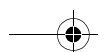
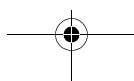
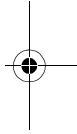
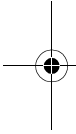
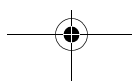
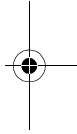
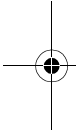
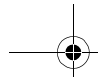


Articles from  
*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*  
1831–2







## DR PARR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. [No. I]

First published in *Blackwood's*, XXIX, January 1831, pp. 61–81.

Reprinted in *F*, XIV, *Essays on Philosophical Writers and Other Men of Letters* (1854), pp. 133–77, 277–80.

Revised in *SGG* as 'Whiggism in its Relations to Literature', VI, *Sketches Critical and Biographic* (1857), pp. 30–76, 178–81. The *SGG* text carries many accidental variants, but only one substantive variant, from *F*.

There are three manuscripts. They all belong almost certainly to the same set of page proofs for the article as revised for *SGG*, and taken together they form a complete set of proofs for the article. The manuscripts are as follows:

MS A: Huntington Library, HM 36042. These page proofs correspond to the passage below running from p. 6.1 'THE time is come' to p. 13.29 'Letters addressed to', with those variants from *SGG* running from p. 443, *Title* 'DR PARR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES' to p. 451, 13.22 'Dissenters.'. The MS breaks in mid-sentence, but is picked up again at MS B.

MS B: British Library, C. 60. o. 3. These page proofs correspond to the passage below running from p. 13.29 'private correspondents, and' to p. 32.34 'the most favourable con-', with those variants from *SGG* running from p. 451, 13.31–5 'post-office; and...In all' to p. 456, 32.30 'flattering and'. The MS breaks in mid-word, but is picked up again at MS C.

MS C: Huntington Library, HM 36042. These page proofs correspond to the passage below running from p. 32.34–5 'struction of his meaning' to p. 32.41 'and a divine.', with those variants from *SGG* running from p. 456, 32.36 'being a' to p. 456, 32.41 'in establishing his character'.

These page proofs contain over a dozen substantive variants, and these appear in the textual notes.

De Quincey's 1857 correspondence with James Hogg, the publisher of *SGG*, shows that De Quincey's early revisions of this article were based on the text from *F* (see Houghton Library, Harvard, bMS ENG 1009 (135); see also Bonner, pp. 80, 82).

Samuel Parr (1747–1825; *DNB*) was a clergyman and schoolmaster whose disputatious scholarship often descended to pedantry. He was educated at Harrow and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and later became the perpetual curate of Hatton in Warwickshire. Perhaps his most profound influence as a teacher was on the young Walter Savage Landor, who recalled that 'my first exercises in argument and eloquence were under his eye and guidance, corrected by his admonition, and animated by his applause' (Derry, p. 65). Parr was well known for his large personal library of about 10,000 volumes, and for his Whig



## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

pamphlets. His proudest boast was that he had been a friend of the great Whig statesman Charles James Fox, while his own erudition gained him considerable contemporary distinction and the nickname 'the Whig Dr Johnson'. Parr wrote the Latin epitaph on Johnson in St Paul's Cathedral. His works include *Two Sermons, Preached at Norwich* (1780), *Tracts by Warburton* (1789), and *Characters of the Late Charles James Fox* (1809). These efforts brought him a great deal of recognition, and the praise of a long and highly diversified line of writers, from Boswell, Johnson and Sheridan, through Coleridge, Cobbett and Byron, to Carlyle and the young Bulwer-Lytton (see Derry). Parr, however, is best remembered now for his *Spital Sermon* (1801), which contained an attack on William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793). The philosopher replied in *Thoughts Occasioned by the Perusal of Dr Parr's Spital Sermon* (1801). Both Parr's diatribe and Godwin's response were featured in the first number of the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1802).

Parr was also notorious for his eccentricities – 'his monstrous wig, his velvet coat, his lisping speech and penetrating eye, his love of smoking, and affected laugh with his shoulders', in Lord Holland's neat summary (Derry, p. 114). Such characteristics made him an easy mark for De Quincey and many other Tory polemicists. As De Quincey discusses, perhaps the most famous Tory assault was by Thomas James Mathias, who in his *Pursuits of Literature* (1794–7) scornfully dismissed Parr's reputation as 'the Whig Dr Johnson'. Later, the 'Ettrick Shepherd' in John Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianae* series commemorated the death of 'The Man with the Wig' by asking 'Do ye recollect my shooting his wig for a ptarmigan?' In *The Doctor* (1834–7), Robert Southey mocked Parr's 'awful wig', and slightly contrasted 'that portentous head' with the little pieces of scholarship that it produced. In Whig circles, however, Parr was famed as a conversationalist, a brilliant classicist, and an impassioned defender of liberal principles. Sydney Smith called him 'by far the most learned man of the day', and Thomas Macaulay referred to Parr as 'the greatest scholar of the age'. In Thomas Moore's view, Parr joined 'the massy erudition of a former age' to 'all the free and enlightened intelligence of the present'. In 1853 Landor simply said, 'Here lies our honest friend Sam Parr: / A better man than most men are' (*Blackwood's*, 20 (October 1826), p. 627; *The Doctor*, ed. John Wood Warter (London: Longmans, 1865), p. 17; Derry, pp. xi, 78; Field, vol. II, p. 212; Derry, p. 287).

De Quincey's assessment of Parr was in four instalments, and ran in *Blackwood's* for January, February, May and June, 1831. De Quincey was reviewing three recent publications: *The Works of Samuel Parr, LL.D. with Memoirs of his Life and Writings, and a Selection from his Correspondence*, ed. John Johnstone, 8 vols (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green), 1828; Rev. William Field, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Opinions of the Rev. Samuel Parr, LL.D. With Biographical Notices of Many of his Friends, Pupils, and Contemporaries*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn), 1828; and E. H. Barker, *Parriana; or Notices of the Rev. Samuel Parr, LL.D.* (London: Henry Colburn), 1828–9. All three publications were produced by close associates of Parr. John Johnstone (1768–1836; *DNB*), physician and biographer, wrote two works in collaboration with Parr. William Field (1768–1851; *DNB*), unitarian minister, lived near Parr for almost thirty

## DR PARR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

years and shared his devotion to classical scholarship. Edmund Henry Barker (1788–1839; *DNB*), classical scholar, dedicated several of his works to Parr.

In the review De Quincey combines autobiography, scholarship and politics. In this first instalment, in particular, he draws on his recollections of his 1812 meeting with Parr, turning personal incident into marketable magazine copy in a way that began with his assessment of his long-time friend John Wilson (see Vol. 7, pp. 3–27), passed through his recollections of Hannah More (see Vol. 9, pp. 323–57) and culminated in his famous Lake reminiscences of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey (see Vols 10, 11). At the same time, all four parts of this essay draw heavily on the three editions of Parr under review, and De Quincey incorporates gossip, commentaries and dozens of allusions and references from these sources. Indeed, he seems to have conceived this assessment as a kind of companion piece to his two-part review of J. H. Monk's *Life of Richard Bentley* (1830), completed for *Blackwood's* only three months earlier (see Vol. 7, pp. 79–159). Revealingly, when De Quincey revised these essays in the late 1850s he told his daughter Emily that Bentley 'was all which Parr pretended to be; the very Prince of scholars' (Symonds, p. 400). De Quincey's thoughts in this regard may have been prompted by *F*, where in 1854 'Bentley' and 'Parr' appeared back-to-back as volume XIV.

Yet more centrally, while the Parr review is strictly speaking a departure from the political articles De Quincey was writing for *Blackwood's* at this time, it is heavily informed by the dramatic events and heated debates of these months, including the outbreak of revolution in Europe, the agrarian 'Swing Riots' in southern England, and the collapse of the Duke of Wellington's Tory ministry in November, which opened the door to Lord Grey and the creation of the first Whig government in a generation (see Vol. 7, pp. 236–64). In July 1816 Parr wrote that he was 'for Napoleon, against all his opponents, and especially against the English. It is a choice of evils, I grant you'. Such sentiments infuriated De Quincey, and in 1827 he described Parr as a man whose 'opinion was of little value on any subject' (Parr, vol. VIII, p. 313; Vol. 5, p. 206). Now he brought the full weight of his Tory prejudices to bear on a full-length consideration, in which the object was to offer, as Symonds notes,

an emblem of the type of ideological construct valued by the new, apparently liberal, Whig government. Dr Parr accordingly has to be shown up as a man of second-rate attainments...His judgment...is shown to be hopelessly shallow and flawed, and his political stance courageous but on the wrong side of Jacobinism. (p. 400)

In 1857, when De Quincey revised these essays for *SGG*, he admitted how time-and-place specific the original *Blackwood's* articles were: 'Twenty-five years ago, I felt strong scruples in approaching the subject of Dr Parr, so much had a *partisan* interest invested the Doctor: he was known, in fact, too well, and too polemically' (see below, p. 443, 6.1).

De Quincey's review was part of a considerable contemporary interest in Parr. Like *Blackwood's*, the *London Magazine*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, and the *Quarterly Review* covered the recent spate of publications on Parr. Elizabeth Barrett read Barker's *Parriana*, though she rightly pronounced it 'almost a parody of minute biography'. Of De Quincey's review itself, Landor found it 'insolent



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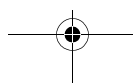
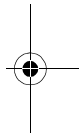
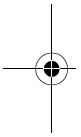
and flippant. Parr had his foibles as even the strongest men have: we never say of a weak one *he* has his foibles. Parr was incapable of a long continuous work....His mind was splintery. But he seldom wrote a sentence without something good and striking in it'. Later, Leslie Stephen described De Quincey's assessment as 'coloured by...prejudice', though he acknowledged that it contained one of De Quincey's 'best criticisms' (Derry, pp. xvi, xvii; *DNB*, vol. XLIII, p. 363).

For the most thorough recent examination of Parr, see Derry.

THE time is come when, without offence, the truth may be spoken of Dr Parr. Standing by the side of the grave, men's eyes, as it were, fastened upon the very coffin of an excellent person, all literary people under any restraint of honourable feelings – all writers who have trained themselves to habits of liberal sympathy and of generous forbearance – every body, in short, but the very rash or very juvenile, the intemperate or malignant – put a seal upon their lips. Grief, and the passionate exaggerations of grief, have a title to indulgent consideration, which, in the upper walks of literature, is not often infringed; amongst polished Tories, amongst the coterie of this journal, we may say – *never*.<sup>1</sup> On this principle it was that we prescribed to ourselves most willingly a duty of absolute silence at the time of Dr Parr's death, and through the years immediately succeeding. The sorrow of his numerous friends was then keen and raw. For a warm-hearted man – and Dr Parr was such – there is an answerable warmth of regret. Errors and indiscretions are forgotten; virtues are brought forward into high relief; talents and accomplishments magnified beyond all proportions of truth. These extravagancies are even graceful and becoming under the immediate impulses which prompt them: and for a season they are, and ought to be, endured. But this season has its limits. Within those limits the rule is – *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Beyond them, and when the privilege of recent death can no longer be sustained, this rule gives way to another – *De mortuis nil nisi verum et probabiliter demonstratum*.<sup>2</sup> This canon has now taken effect with regard to Dr Parr. The sanctities of private grief have been sufficiently respected, because the grief itself has submitted to the mitigation of time. Enough has been conceded to the intemperance of sorrowing friendship: the time has now arrived for the dispassionate appreciation of equity and unbiassed judgment.

Eighteen years have passed away since we first set eyes upon Dr Samuel Parr. Off and on through the nine or ten years preceding, we had heard him casually mentioned in Oxford, but not for any good.<sup>3</sup> In most cases, the anecdote which brought up his name was some pointless parody of a Sam-Johnsonian increpation, some Drury-Lane counterfeit of the true Jovian thunderbolts:

Demens qui nimbos et non imitabile fulmen  
Aere et cornipedum sonitu simularet equorum,<sup>4</sup>



## DR PARR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

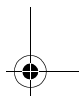
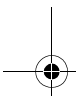
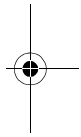
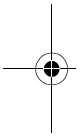
In no instance that we recollect had there appeared any felicity in these colloquial fulminations of Dr Parr. With an unlimited license of personal invective, and with an extravagance of brutality not credible, except in the case of one who happened to be protected by age and by his petticoats, – consequently with one power more than other people enjoy, who submit themselves to the restraints of courtesy, and to the decencies of social intercourse, – the Doctor had yet made nothing of his extra privilege, nor had so much as once attained a distinguished success. There was labour, indeed, and effort enough, preparation without end, and most tortuous circumgyration of periods; but from all this sonorous smithery of hard words in *osity* and *ation*, nothing emerged – no wrought massy product – but simply a voluminous smoke. Such had been the fortune, whether fairly representing the general case or not, of our own youthful experience at second hand in respect to Dr Parr and his colloquial prowess. When we add, that in those years of teeming and fermenting intellects, at a crisis so agitating for human interests upon the very highest scale, no mere philologist or *grammaticaster* – though he had been the very best of his class – could have held much space in our thoughts; and, with respect to Dr Parr in particular, when we say that all avenues to our esteem had been foreclosed from our boyish days by one happy sarcasm of the Pursuits of Literature,<sup>5</sup> where Parr had been nicknamed, in relation to his supposed model, *the Birmingham Doctor*;<sup>\*</sup> and, finally, when we assure the reader that he was the one sole specimen of a Whig parson that we had ever so much as heard of within the precincts of the Church of England; – laying together all this, it may be well presumed, that we did not anticipate much pleasure or advantage from an hour's admission to Dr Parr's society. In reality, having heard all the fine colloquial performers of our own times, we recoiled from the bare possibility of being supposed to participate in the curiosity or the interest which, in various degrees, possessed most of those who on that morning surrounded us. The scene of this little affair was – a front drawing-room in the London mansion of one of Dr Parr's friends. Here was collected a crowd of morning visitors to the lady of the house: and in a remote back drawing-room was heard, at intervals, the clamorous laugh of Dr Samuel Parr, then recently arrived from the country upon a visit to his London friend. The miscellaneous company assembled were speedily apprised *who* was the owner of that obstreperous laugh – so monstrously beyond the key of good society; it transpired, also, *who* it was that provoked the laugh; it was the very celebrated *Bobus* Smith.<sup>7</sup> And, as a hope was expressed that one or both of these

\* One of Dr Parr's biographers argues that this *sobriquet* had no foundation in fact, the Doctor not being either by birth or residence a denizen of this great *officina* for the arts of imitative and counterfeit manufacture.<sup>6</sup> But the truth is, that he had sufficiently connected himself with Birmingham in the public mind, by his pointed intercourse with the Dissenters of that town, and by the known proximity to Birmingham of his common and favourite residence, to furnish a very plausible basis to a cognomen that was otherwise specially fitted to express the relations of his style and quality of thinking to those of Johnson.



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gentlemen might soon appear amongst us, most of the company lingered in the reasonable expectation of seeing Dr Sam, – we ourselves, on the slender chance of seeing Mr Bobus. Many of our junior readers, who cannot count back far beyond the year in question, (1812,) are likely to be much at a loss for the particular kind of celebrity, which illustrated a name so little known to fame in these present days, as this of Bobus Smith. We interrupt, therefore, our little anecdote of Dr Parr, with the slightest outline of Mr Smith's story and his pretensions. Bobus, then, (who drew his nickname, we conjecture, though the *o* was pronounced long, from subscribing the abbreviated form of *Bob<sup>us</sup>*, for his full name *Robertus*) – a brother of the Rev. Sydney Smith, who now reposes from his jovial labours in the Edinburgh Review, upon the bosom of some luxurious English Archdeaconry,<sup>8</sup> – had first brought himself into great notice at Cambridge by various specimens of Latin verse, in the Archaic style of Lucretius.<sup>9</sup> These we have sought for in vain; and, indeed, it appears from a letter of Mr Smith's to Dr Parr, that the author himself has retained no copies.<sup>10</sup> These Latin verses, however, were but bagatelles of sport. Mr Smith's serious efforts were directed to loftier objects. We had been told, as early as 1806, (how truly we cannot say,) that Mr Bobus had publicly avowed his determination of first creating an ample fortune in India, and then returning home to seize the post of Prime Minister, as it were by storm; not that he could be supposed ignorant, how indispensable it is in ordinary cases, that good fortune, as well as splendid connexions, should concur with commanding talents, to such a result. But a condition, which for other men might be a *sine qua non*,<sup>11</sup> for himself he ventured to waive, in the audacity, said our informant, of conscious intellectual supremacy. So at least the story went. And for some years, those who had heard it continued to throw anxious gazes towards the Eastern climes, which detained her destined premier from England. At length came a letter from Mr Bobus, saying, 'I'm coming.' The fortune was made: so much, at least, of the Cambridge menace had been fulfilled; and in due time Bobus arrived. He took the necessary steps for prosecuting his self-created mission: he caused himself to be returned to Parliament for some close borough: he took his seat: on a fitting occasion he prepared to utter his maiden oration:<sup>12</sup> for that purpose he raised himself bolt-upright upon his pins: all the world was hushed and on tiptoe when it was known that Bobus was on his legs: you might have heard a pin drop. At this critical moment of his life, upon which, as it turned out, all his vast cloud-built fabrics of ambition were suspended, when, if ever, he was called upon to rally, and converge all his energies, suddenly his presence of mind forsook him: he faltered: rudder and compass slipped away from him: and – oh! Castor and Pollux!<sup>13</sup> – Bobus foundered! nor, from that day to this, has he been heard of in the courts of ambition. This catastrophe had occurred some time before the present occasion; and an event which had entirely extinguished the world's interest in Mr Bobus Smith had more than doubled ours. Consequently we waited with much solicitude. At length the door opened; which







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recalls us from our digression into the high-road of our theme; for not Mr Bobus Smith, but Dr Parr entered.

Nobody announced him; and we were left to collect his name from his dress and his conversation. Hence it happened, that for some time we were disposed to question ourselves whether this might not be Mr Bobus even, (little as it could be supposed to resemble him,) rather than Dr Parr, so much did he contradict all our rational preconceptions. 'A man,' said we, 'who has insulted people so outrageously, ought not to have done this in single reliance upon his professional protections; a brave man, and a man of honour, would here have carried about with him, in his manner and deportment, some such language as this, – "Do not think that I shelter myself under my gown from the natural consequences of the affronts I offer; mortal combats I am forbidden, sir, as a Christian minister, to engage in; but, as I find it impossible to refrain from occasional license of tongue, I am very willing to fight a few rounds, in a ring, with any gentleman who fancies himself ill-used." Let us not be misunderstood; we do not contend that Dr Parr should often, or regularly, have offered this species of satisfaction. But we *do* insist upon it – that no man should have given the very highest sort of provocation so wantonly as Dr Parr is recorded to have done, unless conscious that, in a last extremity, he was ready, like a brave man, to undertake a short turn-up, in a private room, with any person whatsoever whom he had insulted past endurance. A doctor, who had so often tempted a cudgeling, ought himself to have had some ability to cudgel. Dr Johnson assuredly would have acted on that principle. Had volume the second of that same folio with which he floored Osborn, happened to lie ready to the prostrate man's grasp, nobody can suppose that Johnson would have gainsaid his right to retaliate;<sup>14</sup> in which case, a regular succession of rounds would have been established. Considerations such as these, and the Doctor's undeniable reputation (granted even by his most admiring biographers) as a sanguinary flagellator,<sup>15</sup> throughout his long career of pedagogue, had prepared us – nay, entitled us – to expect in Dr Parr a huge carcass of man, fourteen stone at the least. Even his style, pury and bloated, and his sesquipedalian words, all warranted the same conclusion. Hence, then, our surprise, and the perplexity we have recorded, when the door opened, and a little man, in a buz wig,<sup>16</sup> cut his way through the company, and made for a *fauteuil*<sup>17</sup> standing opposite to the fire. Into this he *lunged*; and then forthwith, without preface or apology, began to open his talk upon us. Here arose a new marvel and a greater. If we had been scandalized at Dr Parr's want of thewes and bulk, conditions so indispensable for enacting the part of Sam. Johnson, much more, and with better reason, were we now petrified with his voice, utterance, gestures, and demeanour. Conceive, reader, by way of counterpoise to the fine\* enunciation of Dr Johnson, an infantine lisp – the worst we ever

\* Boswell has recorded the remarkably distinct and elegant articulation and intonation of Johnson's English.<sup>18</sup>

## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

heard – from the lips of a man above sixty, and accompanied with all sorts of ridiculous grimaces and little stage gesticulations. As he sat in his chair, turning alternately to the right and to the left, that he might dispense his edification in equal proportions amongst us, he seemed the very image of a little French gossiping abbé.<sup>19</sup>

Yet all that we have mentioned, was, and seemed to be, a trifle by comparison with the infinite pettiness of his matter. Nothing did he utter but little shreds of calumnious tattle – the most ineffably silly and frivolous of all that was then circulating in the Whig *salons* of London against the Regent.<sup>20</sup> He began precisely in these words: ‘O! I shall tell you’ (laying a stress upon the word *shall*, which still further aided the resemblance to a Frenchman) ‘a stoh-ee’ (lispingly for story) ‘about the Pince Thegent’ (such was his nearest approximation to *Prince Regent*.) ‘Oh, the Pince Thegent – the Pince Thegent! – what a sad, sad man he has turned out! But you *shall* hear. Oh! what a Pince! what a Thegent! – what a sad Pince Thegent!’ And so the old babbler went on, sometimes wringing his little hands in lamentation, sometimes flourishing them with French grimaces and shrugs of shoulders, sometimes expanding and contracting his fingers like a fan. After an hour’s twaddle of the lowest and most scandalous description, suddenly he rose, and hopped out of the room, exclaiming all the way, ‘*Oh! what a Pince, oh, what a Thegent, – did any body ever hear of such a sad Pince – such a sad Thegent – such a sad, sad Pince Thegent? Oh, what a Pince,*’ &c., *da capo*.<sup>21</sup>

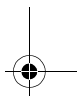
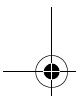
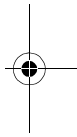
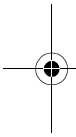
Not without indignation did we exclaim to ourselves, on this winding up of the scene, ‘And so that then, that lithping slander-monger, and retailer of petty scandal and gossip, fit rather for washerwomen over their tea, than for scholars and statesmen, is the champion whom his party propound as the adequate antagonist of Samuel Johnson! Faugh!’ – – We had occasion, in this instance, as in so many others which we have witnessed, to remark the conflict between the natural and the artificial (or adopted) opinions of the world, and the practical triumph of the first. A crowd of ladies were present: most of them had been taught to believe that Dr Parr was a prodigious scholar, and in some mysterious way, and upon something not exactly known or understood except by learned men, a great authority, and, at all events, what is called a *public character*. Accordingly, upon his first entrance, all of them were awed – deep silence prevailed – and the hush of indefinite expectation. Two minutes dispersed *that* feeling; the Doctor spoke, and the spell was broken. Still, however, and long afterwards, some of them, to our own knowledge, continued to say – ‘We suppose’ (or, ‘we have been told’) ‘that Dr Parr is the modern Johnson.’ Their artificial judgments clung to them after they had *evidently* given way, by a spontaneous movement of the whole company, to the natural impression of Dr Parr’s conversation. For no sooner was the style and tendency of Dr Parr’s gossip apparent, than a large majority of those present formed themselves into little parties, entered upon their own affairs, and, by a tacit convention, agreed to consider the Doctor as addressing himself exclu-



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sively to the lady of the house and her immediate circle. Had Sam. Johnson been the talker, nobody would have presumed to do this; secondly, nobody, out of a regard to his own reputation, would have been so indiscreet as to do this; he would not have acknowledged weariness had he felt it: but, lastly, nobody would have wished to do this: weariness was impossible in the presence of Sam. Johnson. Neither let it be said, that perhaps the ladies present were unintellectual, and careless of a scholar's conversation. They were not so: some were distinguished for ability – all were more or less tinctured with literature. And we can undertake to say, that any man of tolerable colloquial powers, speaking upon a proper topic, would have commanded the readiest attention. As it was, every one felt (if she did not even whisper to her neighbour) 'Here, at least, is nothing to be learned.'

Such was our first interview with Dr Parr; such its issue. And now let us explain our drift in thus detailing its circumstances. Some people will say, the drift was doubtless to exhibit Dr Parr in a disadvantageous light – as a petty gossip, and a man of mean personal appearance. No; by no means. Far from it! We have a mean personal appearance ourselves; and we love men of mean appearance. Having one spur more than other men to seek distinction in those paths where nature has not obstructed them, they have one additional chance (and a great one) for giving an extended development to their intellectual powers. Many a man has risen to eminence under the powerful reaction of his mind in fierce counter-agency to the scorn of the unworthy, daily evoked by his personal defects, who with a handsome person would have sunk into the luxury of a careless life under the tranquillizing smiles of continued admiration. Dr Parr, therefore, lost nothing in our esteem by shewing a meanish exterior. Yet even this was worth mentioning, and had a value in reference to our present purpose. We like Dr Parr; we may say even, that we love him for some noble qualities of heart that really *did* belong to him, and were continually breaking out in the midst of his singular infirmities. But this, or even a still nobler moral character than Dr Parr's, can offer no excuse for giving a false elevation to his intellectual pretensions, and raising him to a level which he will be found incapable of keeping when the props of partial friendship are withdrawn. Our object is to value Dr Parr's claims, and to assign his true station both in literature and in those other walks of life upon which he has come forward as a public man. With such a purpose before us, it cannot be wholly irrelevant to notice even Dr Parr's person, and to say, that it was at once coarse, and in some degree mean; for his too friendly biographers have repeatedly described his personal appearance in flattering terms, and more than once have expressly characterised it as 'dignified';<sup>22</sup> which it was *not*, according to any possible standard of dignity, but far otherwise; and it is a good inference from such a misstatement to others of more consequence. His person was poor; and his features were those of a clown – coarse, and ignoble, with an air, at the same time, of drollery, that did not sit well upon age, or the gravity of his profession.<sup>23</sup> Upon one feature, indeed, Dr Parr valued himself





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exceedingly; this was his eye: he fancied that it was peculiarly searching and significant: he conceited, even, that it frightened people; and had a particular form of words for expressing the severe use of this basilisk function: 'I *inflicted* my eye upon him,'<sup>24</sup> was his phrase in such cases. \* But the thing was all a mistake: his eye could be borne very well: there was no mischief in it. Doubtless, when a nervous gentleman, in a pulpit, who was generally the subject of these inflictions, saw a comical looking old man, from below, levelling one eye at him, with as knowing an expression as he could throw into it, – mere perplexity as to the motive and proper construction of so unseasonable a personality might flutter his spirits; and to the vain, misjudging operator below, might distort this equivocal confusion, arising out of blank ignorance of his meaning, into the language of a conscious and confessing culprit. Explanations, in the nature of the thing, would be of rare occurrence: for some would not condescend to complain; and others would feel that the insult, unless it was for the intention, had scarcely body enough and tangible shape to challenge enquiry. They would anticipate, that the same man, who, in so solemn a situation as that between a congregation and their pastor, could offer such an affront, would be apt to throw a fresh ridicule upon the complaint itself, by saying – 'Fix my eye upon you, did I? Why, that's all my eye with a vengeance. Look at you, did I? Well, sir, a cat may look at a king.' This said in a tone of sneer: and then, with sneer and strut at once, 'I trust, sir, – humbly, I take leave to suppose, sir, that Dr Parr is not so obscure a person, not so wholly unknown in this sublunary world, but he may have license to look even at as great a man as the Reverend Mr so-and-so.' And thus the worthy doctor would persevere in his mistake, that he carried about with him, in his very homely collection of features, an organ of singular power and effect for detecting hidden guilt.

A mistake at all events it was; and his biographers have gone into it as largely under the delusions of friendship, as he under the delusions of vanity. On this, therefore, we ground what seems a fair inference – that, if in matters so plain and palpable as the character of a man's person, and the expression of his features, it has been possible for his friends to fall into gross errors and exaggerations, much more may we count upon such fallacies of appreciation in dealing with the subtler qualities of his intellect, and his less determinable pretensions as a scholar. Hence we have noticed these lower and trivial misrepresentations as presumptions with the reader, in aid of our present purpose, for suspecting more weighty instances of the same exaggerating

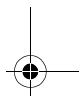
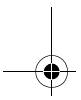
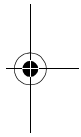
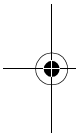
\* Lord Wellesley has been charged with a foible of the same kind; how truly, we know not. More than one person of credit assured us, some six-and-twenty years ago, that at his levees, when Governor-General of India, he was gratified, as by a delicate stroke of homage, upon occasionally seeing people throw their eyes to the ground – dazzled, as it were, by the effulgent lustre of *his*. This is possible; at the same time we cannot but acknowledge that our faith in the story was in some slight degree shaken by finding the same foppery attributed (on tradition, however) to Augustus Caesar, in the Memoirs of Suetonius.<sup>25</sup>





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spirit. The *animus*, which prompted so unserviceable a falsification of the real case, is not likely to have hesitated in coming upon ground more important to Dr Parr's reputation, and at the same time much more susceptible of a sincere latitude of appraisal, even amongst the neutral. It is with a view to a revision of too partial an adjudication, that we now institute this enquiry. We call the whole estimates to a new audit; and submit the claims of Dr Parr to a more equitable tribunal. Our object, we repeat, is – to assign him his true place, as it will hereafter be finally assigned in the next, or more neutral generation. We would anticipate the award of posterity; and it is no fault of ours, that, in doing so, it will be necessary to hand the doctor down from that throne in the cathedral of English clerical merit, on which the intemperate zeal of his friends has seated him for the moment, into some humble prebendal stall. Far more agreeable it would naturally have been to assist in raising a man unjustly depreciated, than to undertake an office generally so ungracious as that of repressing the presumptuous enthusiasm of partisans, where it may *seem* to have come forward, with whatever exaggerations, yet still in a service of disinterested friendship, and on behalf of a man who, after all, was undeniably clever, and, in a limited sense, learned. The disinterestedness, however, of that admiration which has gathered about Dr Parr is not so genuine as it may appear. His biographers (be it recollected) are bigots, who serve their superstition in varnishing their idol: they are Whigs, who miss no opportunity of undervaluing Tories and their cause: they are Dissenters, who value their theme quite as much for the collateral purpose which it favours of attacking the Church of England, as for its direct and avowed one of lauding Dr Parr.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in the letters (which, in the undigested chaos of Dr Johnstone's collection, form three volumes out of eight) Dr Parr himself obtains a mischievous power, which, in a more regular form of composition, he would not have possessed, and which, as an honest man, we must presume that he would not have desired. Letters addressed to private correspondents, and only by accident reaching the press, have all the license of private conversation. Most of us, perhaps, send a little treason or so at odd times through the post-office; and as to *scand. magn.*,<sup>27</sup> especially at those unhappy (luckily rare) periods when Whigs are in power,<sup>28</sup> if all letters are like our own, the Attorney-General would find practice for a century in each separate day's correspondence. In all this there is no blame. *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*<sup>29</sup> But publication is another thing. Rash insinuations, judgments of *ultra* violence, injurious anecdotes of loose or no authority, and paradoxes sportively maintained in the certainty of a benignant construction on the part of the individual correspondent – all these, when printed, become armed, according to circumstances of time and person, with the power of extensive mischief. It is undeniable, that through Dr Parr's published letters are scattered some scores of passages, which, had he been alive, or had they been brought forward in a direct and formal address to the public, would have called forth indignant replies of vehement expostulation or blank contradiction. And





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many even of his more general comments on political affairs, or on the events and characters of his times, would have been overlooked only upon the consideration that the place which he occupied, in life or in literature, was not such as to aid him in giving effect to his opinions.

In many of these cases, as we have said already, the writer had a title to allowance, which those who publish his letters have *not*. But there are other cases which call for as little indulgence to him as to them. In some of his political intemperances, he may be considered as under a twofold privilege: first, of place – since, as a *private* letter-writer, he must be held as within the protection and the license of his own fireside; secondly, of time – since, on a general rule of construction, it may be assumed that such communications are not deliberate, but thrown off on the spur of the occasion; that they express, therefore, not a man's settled and abiding convictions, but the first momentary impulses of his passion or his humour. But in many of his malicious sarcasms, and disparaging judgments, upon contemporaries who might be regarded, in some measure, as competitors with himself, either for the prizes of clerical life, or for public estimation, Dr Parr could take no benefit by this liberal construction. The sentiments he avowed in various cases of this description were not in any respect hasty or unconsidered ebullitions of momentary feeling. They grew out of no sudden *occasions*; they were not the product of accident. This is evident; because uniformly, and as often almost as he either spoke or wrote upon the persons in question, he gave vent to the same bilious jealousy in sneers or libels of one uniform character; and, if he forbore to do this in his open and avowed publications, the fair inference is, that his fears or his interest restrained him; since it is notorious, from the general evidence of his letters and his conversation, that none of those whom he viewed with these jealous feelings could believe that they owed any thing to his courtesy or his moderation.

For example, and just to illustrate our meaning, in what terms did he speak and write of the very eminent Dean of Carlisle, and head of Queen's College, Cambridge – the late Dr Isaac Milner? How did he treat Bishop Herbert Marsh? How, again, the illustrious Bishop Horsley?<sup>30</sup> All of them, we answer, with unprovoked and slanderous scurrility; not one had offered him any slight or offence, – all were persons of gentlemanly bearing, though the last (it is true) had shewn some rough play to one of Parr's pet heresiarchs,<sup>31</sup> – all of them were entitled to his respect by attainments greatly superior to his own, – and all of them were more favourably known to the world than himself, by useful contributions to science, or theologic learning. Dean Milner had ruined his own activities by eating opium;<sup>32</sup> and he is known, we believe, by little more than his continuation of the Ecclesiastical History, originally undertaken by his brother Joseph, and the papers which he contributed to the London Philosophical Transactions.<sup>33</sup> But his researches and his accomplishments were of wonderful extent; and his conversation is still remembered by multi-



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tudes for its remarkable compass, and its almost Burkian\* quality of elastic accommodation to the fluctuating accidents of the occasion. The Dean was not much in the world's eye: at intervals he was to be found at the tables of the great; more often he sought his ease and consolations in his honourable academic retreat. There he was the object of dislike to a particular intriguing *clique* that had the ear of Dr Parr.<sup>35</sup> He was also obnoxious to the great majority of mere worldlings, as one of those zealous Christians who are usually denominated *evangelical*, and by scoffers are called *the saints*; that is to say, in common with the Wilberforces, Thorntons, Hoares, Elliots, Babingtons, Gisbornes,<sup>36</sup> &c., and many thousands of less distinguished persons, in and out of Parliament, – Dean Milner assigned a peculiar emphasis, and a more significant interpretation, to those doctrines of original sin, the terms upon which redemption is offered – regeneration, sanctification, &c., which have the appearance of being the *characteristic* and peculiar parts in the Christian economy. Whether otherwise wrong or right in these views, it strikes us poor lay critics (who pretend to no authoritative knowledge on these great mysteries), that those who adopt them, have, at all events, a *prima facie*<sup>37</sup> title to be considered less worldly, and more spiritual-minded, than the mass of mankind; and such a frame of mind is at least an argument of fitness for religious contemplations, in so far as temper is concerned, be the doctrinal (or merely intellectual) errors what they may. Consequently, for our own parts, humbly sensible as we are of our deficiencies in this great science of Christian philosophy, we could never at any time join in the unthinking ridicule which is scattered by the brilliant and the dull upon these peculiarities. Wheresoever, and whensoever, we must freely avow, that evidences of real non-conformity to the spirit of this impure earth of ours, command our unfeigned respect. But *that* was a thing which the worthy Dr Parr could not abide. He loved no high or aerial standards in morals or in religion. Visionaries, who encouraged such notions, he viewed (to express it by a learned word) as *ἀεροβατούντας*,<sup>38</sup> and as fit subjects for the chastisement of the secular arm. In fact, he would have persecuted a little upon *such* a provocation. On Mr Pitt and the rest who joined in suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, Dr Parr was wont to ejaculate his pastoral benediction in the following after-dinner toast – ‘*Qui suspenderunt, suspendantur.*’<sup>39</sup> And afterwards, upon occasion of the six bills provoked by the tumults at Manchester, Glasgow,<sup>40</sup> &c., his fatherly blessing was daily uttered in this little fondling sentiment, – ‘Bills for the throats of those who framed

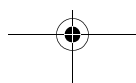
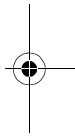
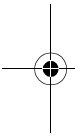
\* Those who carry a spirit of distinguishing refinement into their classifications of the various qualities of conversation, may remark one peculiar feature in Edmund Burke's style of talking, which contra-distinguished it from Dr Johnson's: it grew – one sentence was the rebound of another – one thought rose upon the suggestion of something which went before. Burke's motion, therefore, was all a going forward. Johnson's, on the other hand, was purely regressive and analytic. That thought which he began with, contained, by involution, the whole of what he brought forth. The two styles of conversation corresponded to the two theories of generation, – one (Johnson's) to the theory of *Preformation* (or Evolution), – the other (Burke's) to the theory of *Epigenesis*.<sup>34</sup>



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the bills!’<sup>41</sup> On the same principle, he would have prayed fervently – had any Isaac Milner infested his parish – ‘Let those, who would exalt our ideals of Christianity, be speedily themselves exalted!’ And, therefore, if any man enquires upon what grounds it was that Dr Parr hated with an intolerant hatred – scorned – and sharpened his gift of sneer upon – the late Dean of Carlisle – we have here told him ‘the reason why;’<sup>42</sup> and reason enough, we think, in all conscience. For be it known, that, over and above other weighty and obvious arguments for such views, Dr Parr had a standing personal irritation connected with this subject – a continual ‘thorn in the flesh’<sup>43</sup> – in the relations subsisting between him and his principal, the incumbent of his own favourite and adopted parish. As the position of the parties was amusing to those who were in possession of the key to the right understanding of it, viz. a knowledge of their several views and opinions, we shall pause a moment to describe the circumstances of the case.

Dr Parr, it is well known, spent a long period of his latter life at Hatton, a village in Warwickshire. The living of Hatton belonged to Dr Bridges, who, many a long year ago, was well known in Oxford as one of the fellows in the magnificently-endowed college of Magdalen; that is to say, Dr Bridges was the incumbent at the time when some accident of church preferment brought Dr Parr into that neighbourhood.<sup>44</sup> By an arrangement which we do not exactly understand, the two doctors, for their mutual convenience, exchanged parishes. We find it asserted by Dr Johnstone, that on Dr Parr’s side the exchange originated in a spirit of obliging accommodation.<sup>45</sup> It may be so. However, one pointed reservation was made by Dr Bridges [whether in obedience to church discipline or to his private scruples of conscience – we cannot say] viz. – that, once in every year, (according to our remembrance, for a series of six consecutive Sundays,) he should undertake the pulpit duties of the church. On this scheme the two learned clerks built their *alterni foedera regni*;<sup>46</sup> and, like two buckets, the Drs Bridges and Parr went up and down reciprocally for a long succession of years. The waters, however, which they brought up to the lips of their parishioners, were drawn from two different wells; for Dr Bridges shared in the heresy of the Dean of Carlisle. Hence a system of energetic (on Dr Parr’s side, we may say – of fierce) mutual counteraction. Each, during his own reign, laboured to efface all impressions of his rival. On Dr Bridges’s part, this was probably, in some measure, a necessity of conscience; for he looked upon his flock as ruined in spiritual health by the neglect and ignorance of their pastor. On Dr Parr’s it was the mere bigotry of hatred, such as all schemes of teaching are fitted to provoke which appeal to a standard of ultra perfection, or exact any peculiar sanctity of life. Were Bridges right, in that case, it was clear that Parr was wrong by miserable defect. But, on the other hand, were Parr right, then Bridges was wrong only by superfluity and redundance. Such was the position, such the mutual aspects, of the two doctors. Parr’s wrath waxed hotter and hotter. Had Dr Bridges happened to be a vulgar sectarian, of narrow education, of low breed-







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ing, and without distinguished connexions, – those *etesian*<sup>47</sup> gales or annual monsoons, which brought in his periodical scourge, would have been hailed by Parr as the harbingers of a triumph in reversion. Yielding the pulpit to his rival for a few Sundays, he would have relied upon the taste of his parishioners for making the proper distinctions. He would have said, – ‘You have all eyes and ears – you all know that fellow; you all know me: I need say no more. Pray, don’t kick him when he comes again.’ But this sort of contempt was out of the question; and that kindled his rage the more. Dr Bridges was a man of fortune; travelled and accomplished; familiar with courts and the manners of courts. Even that intercourse with people of rank and fashion, which Parr so much cultivated in his latter years, and which, to his own conceit, placed him so much in advance of his own order, gave him no advantage over Dr Bridges. True, the worthy fanatic (as some people called him) had planted himself in a house at Clifton near Bristol, and spent all his days in running up and down the lanes and alleys of that great city, carrying Christian instruction to the dens of squalid poverty, and raising the torch of spiritual light upon the lairs of dissolute wretchedness. But, in other respects, he was a man *comme il faut*. However his mornings might be spent, his *soirées*<sup>48</sup> were elegant; and it was not a very unusual event to meet a prince or an ambassador at his parties. Hence, it became impossible to treat him as altogether abject, and a person of no social consideration. In that view, he was the better man of the two. And Parr’s revenge, year after year, was balked of its food. In this dilemma of impotent rage, what he could – he did! – And the scene was truly whimsical. Regularly as Dr Bridges approached, Dr Parr fled the country. As the wheels of Dr Bridges were heard muttering in advance, Dr Parr’s wheels were heard groaning in retreat. And when the season of this annual affliction drew to a close, when the wrath of Providence was spent, and the church of Hatton passed from under the shadows of eclipse into renovated light, then did Dr Parr – cautiously putting out his feelers to make sure that the enemy was gone – resume the spiritual sceptre. He congratulated his parish of Hatton that their trials were over; he performed classical *lustrations*, and Pagan rites of expiation; he circled the churchyard nine times *withershins* (or inverting the course of the sun;) he fumigated the whole precincts of Hatton church with shag tobacco; and left no stone unturned to cleanse his little Warwickshire fold from its piacular<sup>49</sup> pollution.

This anecdote illustrates Dr Parr’s temper. Mark, reader, his self-contradiction. He hated what he often called ‘rampant orthodoxy’ and was never weary of running down those churchmen who thought it their duty to strengthen the gates of the English church against Popish superstitions and Popish corruptions on the one hand, or Socinianism on the other.<sup>50</sup> Yet, let any thing start up in the shape of zealous and fervid devotion – right or wrong – and let it threaten to displace his own lifeless scheme of ethics, or to give a shock of galvanism to his weekly paralytic exhortations ‘not upon any account or consideration whatsoever to act *improperly* or in opposition to the dictates of



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reason, decorum, and prudence;<sup>51</sup> let but a scintillation appear of opposition in that shape, and who so ready to persecute as Dr Parr? Fanaticism, he would tell us, was what he could not bear; fanaticism must be put down: the rights of the church must be supported with rigour; if needful, even with severity. He was also a great patron of the church as against laymen; of the parson as against the churchwarden; of the rector's right to graze his horse upon the graves; of the awful obligation upon his conscience to allow of no disrespectable, darned, or ill-washed surplice; of the solemn responsibility which he had undertaken in the face of his country to suffer no bell-ringing except in canonical hours; to enforce the decalogue, and also the rubric; to obey his ecclesiastical superiors within the hours of divine service; and finally, to read all proclamations or other state documents sent to him by authority, with the most dutiful submission, simply reserving to himself the right of making them as ridiculous as possible by his emphasis and cadence.\* In this fashion Dr Parr manifested his reverence for the church establishment; and for these great objects it seemed to him lawful to persecute. But as to purity of doctrine, zeal, primitive devotion, the ancient faith as we received it from our fathers, or any service pretending to be more than lip service, for all such questionable matters it was incumbent upon us to shew the utmost liberality of indifference on the most modern and showy pattern, and, except for popery, to rely upon Bishop Hoadly.<sup>53</sup> This explanation was necessary to make the anecdote of Dr Bridges fully intelligible; and that anecdote was necessary to explain the many scornful allusions to that reverend gentleman, which the reader will find in Dr Johnstone's collection of letters;<sup>54</sup> but above all, it was necessary for the purpose of putting him in possession of Dr Parr's character and position as a member of the Church of England.

To return from this digression into the track of our speculations, Dean Milner and Dr Bridges stood upon the same ground in Dr Parr's displeasure. Their offence was the same: their criminality perhaps equal: and it was obviously of a kind that, for example's sake, ought not to be overlooked. But Herbert Marsh was not implicated in their atrocities. No charge of that nature was ever preferred against *him*. His merits were of a different order; and, confining our remarks to his *original* merit, and that which perhaps exclusively drew upon him the notice of Mr Pitt's government, not so strictly clerical. His earliest public service was, his elaborate statement of the regal conferences at Pilnitz, and his consequent justification of this country in the

\* Dr Parr's casuistry for regulating his practice in the case of his being called upon to read occasional forms of prayer, proclamations, &c., which he did not approve as a politician (and observe, he never *did* approve them) was this: read he must, was his doctrine; thus far he was bound to dutiful submission. *Passive* obedience was an unconditional duty, but not *active*. Now it *would* be an active obedience to read with proper emphasis and decorum. Therefore every body sees the logical necessity of reading it into a farce, making grimaces, 'inflicting one's eye,' and in all ways keeping up the jest with the congregation. Was not this the boy for Ignatius Loyola?<sup>52</sup>





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eyes of Europe, on the question then pending between her and the French Republic, with which party lay the *onus* of first virtual aggression, and with which therefore by implication, the awful responsibility, for that deluge of blood and carnage which followed.<sup>55</sup> This service Herbert Marsh performed in a manner to efface the remembrance of all former attempts. His next service was more in the character of his profession – he introduced his country to the very original labours in Theology of the learned Michaelis, and he expanded the compass and value of these labours by his own exertions.<sup>56</sup> Patriots, men even with the feeblest sense of patriotism, have felt grateful to Dr Marsh for having exonerated England from the infinite guilt of creating a state of war lightly – upon a weak motive – upon an unconsidered motive – or indeed upon any motive or reason whatsoever; for a reason supposes choice and election of the judgment, and choice there can be none without an acknowledged alternative. Now it was the triumphant result of Dr Marsh's labours, that alternative there was practically none, under the actual circumstances, for Great Britain; and that war was the mere injunction of a flagrant necessity, coupling the insults and the menaces of France with what are now known to have been the designs, and indeed the momentary interests, of the predominant factions at that epoch. Herbert Marsh has satisfied every body almost but the bigots, (if any now survive,) of Jacobinism as it raged in 1792 and 1793, when it held its horrid Sabbaths over the altar and the throne, and deluged the scaffold with innocent blood. All but those he has satisfied. Has he satisfied Dr Parr? No. Yet the Doctor was in an absolute frenzy of horror, grief, and indignation, when Louis XVI was murdered.<sup>57</sup> And, therefore, if the shedding of what he allowed to be most innocent blood could justify a war, and the refusal of all intercourse but the intercourse of vengeance with those who, at that period, ruled the scaffold, then in that one act (had there even been wanting that world of weightier and prospective matter, which did in fact impel the belligerents) Dr Parr ought in reason to have found a sufficient justification of war. And so perhaps he would. But *Dīs aliter visum est*; and his *Dī* and *Dī majorum gentium*<sup>58</sup> – paramount to reason, conscience, or even to discretion, unless such as was merely selfish, were the Parliamentary leaders from whom he expected a bishopric (and would very possibly have got it had some of them lived a little longer in the first decade of this century, or he himself lived to the end of this present decade.\*) Hence it does not much surprise us, that, in spite of his natural and creditable horror, on hearing of the fate of the French king, he relapsed into Jacobinism so fierce, that two years after a friend, by way of agreeable flattery, compliments him as being only '*half a sansculotte*;<sup>60</sup> a compliment, however, which he doubtless founded more upon his confidence in Dr Parr's original goodness of heart, and the almost

\* Had Mr. Fox lived a little longer, the current belief is, that he would have raised Dr Parr to the mitre; and had the Doctor himself survived to November of this present year, Lord Grey would perhaps have tried his earliest functions in that line upon him.<sup>59</sup>



## WORKS OF DE QUINCEY: VOLUME 8

inevitable contagion of English society, than on any warrant which the Doctor had yet given him by words or by acts, or any presumption even which he was able to specify, for so advantageous an opinion. Well, therefore, might Herbert Marsh displease Dr Parr. He was a Tory, and the open antagonist of those by whom only the fortunes of *sansculottes*, thorough-bred or half-bred, had any chance of thriving; and he had exposed the hollowness of that cause to which the Doctor was in a measure sold.

As to Horsley, his whole life, as a man of letters and a politician, must have won him the tribute of Dr Parr's fear and hatred; a tribute which he paid as duly as his assessed taxes. Publicly, indeed, he durst not touch him; for the horrid scourge which Horsley had wielded at one time, in questions of scholarship and orthodoxy, still resounded in his ears. But in his letters and conversation, Dr Parr fretted for ever at his eminence, and eyed him grudgingly and malignly; and those among his correspondents, who were not too generous and noble-minded to pay their court through his weaknesses, evidently were aware that a sneer at Bishop Horsley was as welcome as a basket of game. Sneers, indeed, were not the worst: there are to be found in Dr Parr's correspondence some dark insinuations, apparently pointed at Horsley, which involve a sort of charges that should never be thrown out against any man without the accompaniment of positive attestations. What may have been the tenor of that bishop's life and conversation, we do not take upon us to say.<sup>61</sup> It is little probable, at this time of day, under the censorious vigilance of so many unfriendly eyes, and in a nation where even the persons upon the *judicial* bench exhibit in their private lives almost a sanctity of deportment, that a dignitary of the English church will err by any scandalous immorality. Be that however as it may, and confining our view to Horsley in his literary character, we must say, that he is far beyond the reach of Dr Parr's hostility. His writings are generally excellent: as a polemic and a champion of his own church, he is above the competition of any modern divine. As a theologian, he reconciles the nearly contradictory merits of novelty and originality with well-meditated orthodoxy: and we may venture to assert, that his *Sermons* produced the greatest impression, and what the newspapers call 'sensation,' of any English book of pure divinity, for the last century.<sup>62</sup> In saying this we do not speak of the sale; what that might be, we know not; we speak of the strength of the impression diffused through the upper circles, as apparent in the reverential terms, which, after the appearance of that work, universally marked the sense of cultivated men in speaking of Bishop Horsley – even of those who had previously viewed him with some dislike in his character of controversialist. Let the two men be compared; not the veriest bigot amongst the Dissenters, however much he would naturally prefer as a companion, or as a subject for eulogy, that man who betrayed\* the interests of his own church to him who

\* We shall have an opportunity farther on of shewing what was Parr's conduct to the church of which he professed himself a member, and in what sense he could be said to have betrayed it. At present we shall protect ourselves from misconstruction, by saying that his want



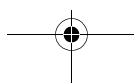
## DR PARR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

was its column of support and ornament, could have the hardihood to insinuate that Dr Horsley was properly, or becomingly, a mark for the scurrilities of Dr Parr. In what falls within the peculiar province of a schoolmaster, we think it probable (to make every allowance which candour and the simplicity of truth demand) that Dr Parr had that superior accuracy which is maintained by the practice of teaching. In general reach and compass of intellect, in theology, in those mixed branches of speculative research which belong equally to divinity and to metaphysics, (as in the Platonic philosophy, and all which bears upon the profound doctrine of the Trinity,) or (to express the matter by a single word) in philosophic scholarship, and generally in vigour of style and thought, we suppose Horsley to have had, in the eyes of the public, no less than in the reality of the case, so prodigiously the advantage, that none but a sycophant, or a false friend, would think of suggesting seriously a comparison so disadvantageous to Dr Parr. But at all events, let the *relations* of merit be what they may in Horsley, certainly his absolute merit is unquestionable; and the continued insults of Dr Parr are insufferable.

Upon these flagrant justifications, individual attacks past counting, besides a general *system* of disparagement and contumely towards the most distinguished pretensions in church and state, unless ranged on the side of the Whigs, or even if presuming to pause upon those extremities which produced a schism in the Whig club itself, we stand for a sufficient apology in pressing the matter strongly against Dr Parr. A rejoinder on *our* side has in it something of vindictive justice. Tories, and not Tories only, but all who resist anarchists, (for that Dr Parr did not blazon himself in that character, was due to the lucky accident which saved him from any distressing opportunities of *acting* upon his crazy speculations,)<sup>63</sup> have an interest in depressing to their proper level those who make a handle of literature for insidious party purposes, polluting its amenities with the angry passions proper to our civil dissensions, and abusing the good-nature with which we Tories are always ready to welcome literary merit, without consideration of politics, and to smile upon talent though in the ranks of our antagonists. The Whigs are once more becoming powerful, and we must now look more jealously to our liberties. Whigs are not the kind of people to be trusted with improper concessions: Whigs 'rampant,' (to use Dr Parr's word,)<sup>64</sup> still less. Had Dr Parr been alive at this hour, he would have stood fair for the first archbishopric vacant; for we take it for granted that the Duke of Wellington, according to his peculiar system of tactics, would long ere now have made him a bishop.<sup>65</sup> Let us therefore appraise Dr Parr; and to do this satisfactorily, let us

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of fidelity to the rights and interests of the church was not deliberate or systematic; in this, as in other things, he acted from passion – often from caprice. He would allow only this or that doctrine of the church to be defended; he would ruinously limit the grounds of defence: and on these great questions, he gave way to the same rank personal partialities, which, in the management of a school, had attracted the notice, and challenged the disrespect, of boys.





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pursue him through his three characters, the triple *role* which he supported in life – of Whig politician; secondly, of scholar, (or, expressing our meaning in its widest extent, of literary man;) and finally, of theologian.

These questions we shall discuss in a separate paper; and, from the many personal notices which such a discussion will involve, and the great range of literary topics which it will oblige us to traverse, we may hope to make it not unamusing to our readers. There are, in every populous community, many different strata of society, that lie in darkness, as it were, to each other, from mere defect of mutual intercourse; and in the literary world there are many chambers that have absolutely no communication. Afterwards, when twenty – thirty – sixty years have passed away – by means of posthumous memoirs, letters, anecdotes, and other literary records – they are all brought in a manner face to face; and we, their posterity, first see them as making up a whole, of which they themselves were imperfectly conscious. Every year makes further disclosures; and thus a paradox is realized – that the more we are removed from personal connexion with a past age of literature, the better we know it. Making Dr Parr for the moment a central figure to our groups, we shall have it in our power to bring upon the stage many of the persons who figured in that age as statesmen, or leaders in political warfare; and most of those who played a part, prominent or subordinate, in literature; or who conspicuously filled a place amongst the civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of the state.

Meantime, as an appropriate close to this preliminary paper, we shall put a question – and, in a cursory way, we shall discuss the proper answer to it – upon Dr Parr as a man of the world, and ambitious candidate for worldly distinctions; in short, as the architect of his fortunes. Was he, in this light, an able and successful man? Or, separating the two parts of that question which do not *always* proceed concurrently, if he were not successful in a degree corresponding to his own wishes and the expectations of his friends, if it is notorious that he missed of attaining those prizes which he never hesitated to avow as the objects that stimulated his ambition, in what degree are we to ascribe his failure to want of talent, to misdirection of his talent, to a scrupulous and fastidious integrity, to the injustice of his superiors, or, finally, to mere accidents of ill luck? One man in each ten thousand comes into this world, according to the homely saying, ‘with a silver spoon in his mouth;’<sup>66</sup> but most of us have a fortune to make – a station to create. And the most general expression, by far the most absolute and final test, of the degrees in which men differ as to energy and ability, is to be found in the large varieties of success which they exhibit in executing this universal object. Taking life as a whole, luck has but little sway in controlling its arrangements. Good sense and perseverance, prudence and energy, these are the fatal deities that domineer over the stars and their aspects. And when a man’s coffin knocks at the gates of the tomb, it is a question not unimportant, among other and greater questions, What was he on beginning life, what is he now? Though in this, as

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in other things, it is possible to proceed in a spirit of excess, still, within proper restrictions, it is one even of a man's moral obligations, to contend strenuously for his own advancement in life; and as it furnishes, at the same time, a criterion as little ambiguous as any for his intellectual merits, few single questions can be proposed so interesting to a man's reputation, as that which demands the amount of his success in playing for the great stakes of his profession or his trade. What, then, was the success of Dr Parr?

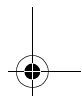
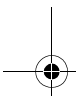
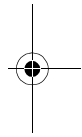
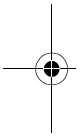
The prizes which the Doctor set before his eyes from his earliest days, were not very lofty, but they were laudable; and he avowed them with a *naïveté* that was amusing, and a frankness that availed at least to acquit him of hypocrisy. They were two – a mitre and a coach-and-four. 'I am not accustomed,' says he, (writing to an Irish bishop,) 'to dissemble the wishes I once had' [this was in 1807, and he then had them more than ever] 'of arriving at the profits and splendour of the prelacy, or the claims to them which I believe myself to possess.'<sup>67</sup> The bishopric he did not get; there he failed. For the coach-and-four, he was more fortunate. At the very latest period of his life, when the shades of death were fast gathering about him, he found himself able to indulge in this luxury – and, as his time was obviously short, he wisely resolved to make the most of it; and upon any or no excuse, the Doctor was to be seen flying over the land at full gallop, and scouring town and country with four clerical-looking long-tailed horses.<sup>68</sup> We believe he even meditated a medal, commemorating his first ovation by a faithful portrait of the coach and his own episcopal wig in their meridian pomp; he was to have been represented in the act of looking out of the window, and 'inflicting his eye' upon some hostile parson picking his way through the mud on foot. On the whole, we really rejoice that the Doctor got his coach and his four resounding coursers. The occasional crack of the whip must have sounded pleasantly in his ears at a period when he himself had ceased to operate with that weapon – when he was no more than an *emeritus* professor, and  $\mu\alpha\sigma\tau\iota\gamma\omicron\phi\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$ <sup>69</sup> no longer. So far was well; but still, we ask, how came it that his coach panels wanted their appropriate heraldic decoration? How was it that he missed the mitre? – Late in life, we find him characterising himself as an 'unpreferred, calumniated, half-starving country parson';<sup>70</sup> no part of which, indeed, was true; but yet, we demand, – How was it that any colourable plea existed, at that time of his career, to give one moment's plausibility to such an exaggeration? Let us consider.

Dr Parr was the son of a country practitioner in the humbler departments of medicine. Parr, senior, practised as a surgeon, apothecary, and accoucheur.<sup>71</sup> From him, therefore, his son could expect little assistance in his views of personal aggrandizement. But *that* was not necessary. An excellent Latin scholar, and a man who brought the rare sanction (sanctification – we were going to say) of clerical co-operation and countenance to so graceless and reprobate a party as the Whigs, who had scarcely a professional friend to say grace at their *symposia*, must, with any reasonable discretion in the conduct of his life, have



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been by much too valuable an article on the Whig establishment to run any risk of neglect. The single clerk, the one sole *reverend* man of letters, who was borne upon their books, must have had a priceless value in the eyes of that faction – when ‘taking stock’<sup>72</sup> and estimating their alliances. To them he must have been what the *Emperor of Morocco* is to the collector of butterflies.<sup>73</sup> To have lost this value, to have forfeited his hold upon their gratitude, and actually to have depreciated as he grew older, and better known to the world – implies too significantly some gross misconduct, or some rueful indiscretions. The truth is this; and for Parr’s own honour, lest worse things should be thought of him than the case really warrants, his friends ought to make it known – though a man of integrity, he could not be relied upon: in a muster of forces, he was one of the few that never could be absolutely reckoned and made sure of. Neither did his scruples obey any known law: he could swallow a camel, and strain at a gnat,<sup>74</sup> and his caprice was of the most dangerous kind; not a woman’s caprice, which is the mere mantling of levity, and readily enough obeys any fresh impulse, which it is easy to apply in an opposite direction. Dr Parr’s caprices grew upon another stock; they were the fitful outbreaks of steady, mulish wrong-headedness. This was a constitutional taint, for which he was indebted to the accoucheur. Had the father’s infirmity reached Dr Parr in his worldly career, merely in that blank neutral character, and affected his fortunes through that pure negative position of confessed incapacity to help him, which is the whole extent of disastrous influence that the biographical records ascribe to him – all would have been well. But the old mule overruled his son to the end of his long life, and controlled his reiterated opportunities of a certain and brilliant success, by the hereditary taint in the blood which he transmitted to him, in more perhaps than its original strength. The true name for this infirmity is, in the vulgar dialect, *pig-headedness*. Stupid imperturbable adherence, deaf and blind, to some perverse view that abruptly thwarted and counteracted his party, making his friends stare, and his opponents laugh; in short, as we have said, pure pig-headedness, – *that* was the key to Dr Parr’s lingering preferment: and, we believe, upon a considerate view of his whole course, that he threw away ten times the amount of fortune, rank, splendour, and influence that he ever obtained; and with no countervailing indemnity from any moral reputation, such as would attend all consistent sacrifices to high-minded principle. No! on the contrary, with harsh opposition and irritating expressions of powerful disgust from friends in every quarter – all conscious that, in such instances of singularity, Dr Parr was merely obeying a demon, that now and then mastered him, of wayward – restive – moody self-conceit, and the blind spirit of contradiction. Most of us know a little of such men, and occasionally suffer by such men in the private affairs of life – men that are unusually jealous of slights, or insufficient acknowledgments of their personal claims and consequence: they require to be courted, petted, caressed: they refuse to be compromised or *committed* by the general acts of their party: no, they must be







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pecially consulted; else they read a lesson to the whole party on their error, by some shocking and revolting act of sudden desertion, which, from a person of different character, would have been considered perfidy. Dr Johnstone himself admits, that Parr was 'jealous of attention, and indignant at neglect;' and on one occasion endeavours to explain a transaction of his life, by supposing that he may have been 'hurried away by one of those torrents of passion, of which there are too many instances in *his* life.'<sup>\*</sup> – Of the father, Parr obstetrical, the same indulgent biographer remarks, (p. 10,) that he was 'distinguished by the rectitude of his principles;' and, in another place, (p. 21,) he pronounces him, in summing up his character, to have been 'an honest, well-meaning Tory;' but, at the same time, confesses him to have been 'the petty tyrant of his fireside,' – an amiable little feature of character, that would go far to convince his own family, that 'rectitude of principles' was not altogether incompatible with the practice of a ruffian.<sup>75</sup>

Tory, however, Parr, senior, was *not*: he was a Jacobite, probably for the gratification of his spleen, and upon a conceit that this arrayed him in a distinct personal contest with the House of Hanover;<sup>76</sup> whereas, once confounded amongst the prevailing party of friends to that interest, as a man-midwife, he could hardly hope to win the notice of his Britannic Majesty. His faction, however, being beaten to their heart's content, and his own fortune all going overboard in the storm, he suddenly made a bolt to the very opposite party: he ratted to the red-hot Whigs: and the circumstances of the case, which are as we have here stated them, hardly warrant us in putting a very favourable construction upon his motives. As was the father, so was the son: the same right of rebellion reserved to himself, whether otherwise professing himself Jacobite or Whig; the same peremptory duty of passive obedience for those of his household; the same hot intemperances in politics; the same disdain of accountableness to his party leaders; and, finally, the same 'petty tyranny of the fireside.' This last is a point on which all the biographers are agreed: they all record the uncontrollable ill temper and hasty violence of Dr Parr within his domestic circle.<sup>77</sup> And one anecdote, illustrating his intemperance, we can add ourselves. On one occasion, rising up from table, in the middle of a fierce discussion with Mrs Parr, he took a carving knife, and applying it to a portrait of that lady hanging upon the wall, he drew it sharply across the jugular, and cut the throat of the picture from ear to ear, thus murdering her in effigy.<sup>78</sup>

This view of Parr's intractable temper is necessary to understand his life, and in some measure to justify his friends. Though not (as he chose himself to express it, under a momentary sense of his slow progress in life, and the

<sup>\*</sup> Page 307, vol i. – The Doctor adds – 'As in the lives of us all.' But, besides that this addition defeats the whole meaning of his own emphasis on the word *his*, it is not true that men generally yield to passion in their political or public lives. Having adopted a party, they adhere to it; generally for good and for ever. And the passions, which occasionally govern them, are the passions of their party – not their own separate impulses as individuals.

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reluctant blossoming of his preferment) 'a half-starved parson,' yet most unquestionably he reaped nothing at all from his long attachment to Whiggery, by comparison with what he would have reaped had that attachment been more cordial and unbroken, and had he, in other respects, borne himself with more discretion; and above all, had he abstained from offensive personalities. This was a rock on which Parr often wrecked himself. Things, and principles, and existing establishments, might all have been attacked with even more virulence than he exhibited, had his furious passions allowed him to keep his hands off the persons of individuals. Here lay one class of the causes which retarded his promotion. Another was his unbecoming warfare upon his own church. 'I am sorry,' said one of his earliest, latest, and wisest friends, (Bishop Bennet,) – 'I am sorry you attack the church, for fear of consequences to your own advancement.'<sup>79</sup> This was said in 1792. Six years after, the writer, who had a confidential post in the Irish government, and saw the dreadful crisis to which things were hurrying, found it necessary to break off all intercourse with Dr Parr;<sup>80</sup> so shocking to a man of principle was the careless levity with which this minister of peace, and his immediate associates, themselves in the bosom of security, amongst the woods of Warwickshire, scattered their firebrands of inflammatory language through the public, at a period of so much awful irritation. Afterwards, it is true, that when the Irish crisis had passed, and the rebellion was suppressed, his respect for Parr as a scholar led him to resume his correspondence. But he never altered his opinion of Parr as a politician: he viewed him as a man profoundly ignorant in politics; a mere Parson Adams<sup>81</sup> in the knowledge of affairs, and the real springs of political action, or political influence; but unfortunately with all the bigotry and violent irritability that belong to the most excited and interested partisan; having the passions of the world united with the ignorance of the desert; coupling the simplicity of the dove with the fierce instincts of the serpent.

The events of his life moved under this unhappy influence. Leaving college prematurely upon the misfortune\* of his father's death, he became an assistant at Harrow under the learned Dr Sumner.<sup>83</sup> About five years after, on Dr Sumner's death, though manifestly too young for the situation, he entered into a warm contest for the vacant place of head-master. Notwithstanding the support of Lord Dartmouth and others, he lost it; and unfortunately for his peace of mind, though, as usual, he imagined all sorts of intrigues against himself, yet the pretensions of his competitor, Benjamin Heath, were such as

\* Even *that* was possibly barbed in some of its consequences to Parr, by his own imprudence. The widow (his stepmother) is said to have injured Parr by her rapacity. But, if so, Parr had certainly himself laid the foundation of an early hatred between them, by refusing to lay aside his mourning for his own mother, on the marriage day of this second Mrs Parr with his father. We do not much quarrel with his conduct on that occasion, considering his age (sixteen) and the relation of her for whom he mourned. But still the act was characteristic of the man, and led to its natural results.<sup>82</sup>

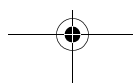
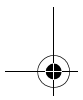
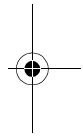
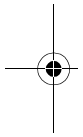


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to disabuse all the world of any delusive conceit, that justice had not been done.<sup>84</sup> Parr, it must be remembered, then only twenty-five years old, had, in no single instance, distinguished himself; nor had he even fifty years after – no, nor at the day of his death – given any evidences to the world that he was comparable to Heath as a Grecian. The probable ground of Heath's success was a character better fitted to preside over a great school, (for even the too friendly biographers of Parr admit that he did not command the respect of the boys,<sup>85</sup> and his better established learning. Naturally enough, Parr was unwilling to admit these causes, so advantageous to his rival, as the true ones. What, then, is *his* account of the matter? He says, that he lost the election by a vote which he had given to John Wilkes, in his contest for Middlesex. To John Wilkes – mark *that*, reader! Thus early had this 'gowned student'<sup>86</sup> engaged his passions and his services in the interest of brawling, intriguing faction.

This plan failing, he set up a rival establishment in the neighbourhood of Harrow, at Stanmore;<sup>87</sup> and never certainly did so young a man, with so few of the ordinary guarantees to offer – that is to say, either property, experience, or connexions – meet with such generous assistance. One friend lent him two thousand pounds at two per cent, though his security must obviously have been merely personal. Another lent him two hundred pounds without any interest at all. And many persons of station and influence, amongst whom was Lord Dartmouth, gave him a sort of countenance equally useful to his interests, by placing their sons under his care. All came to nothing however; the establishment was knocked up, and clearly from gross defects of management.<sup>88</sup> And, had his principal creditor pressed for repayment, or had he shewn less than the most generous forbearance, which he continued through a space of 21 years, (in fact, until the repayment was accomplished without distress,) Parr must have been ruined; for in those days there was no merciful indulgence of the laws to hopeless insolvents; unless by the favour of their creditors, they were doomed to rot in prison. Now, in this one story we have two facts illustrated, bearing upon our present enquiry – first, the extraordinary good luck of Parr; secondly, his extraordinary skill in neutralizing or abusing it.

What young man, that happens to be penniless at the age of twenty-five, untried in the management of money, untried even as the *presiding* master in a school, would be likely to find a friend willing to intrust him, on his personal responsibility, (and with no prospect for the recovery of his money, except through the tardy and uncertain accumulation of profits upon an opposition school,) with so large a sum as two thousand pounds? Who, in an ordinary way, could count upon the support of a nobleman enjoying the ear and confidence of royalty? Lastly, who would so speedily defeat and baffle, by his own unassisted negligence and flagrant indiscretions, so much volunteer bounty? At this time of his life, it strikes us, in fact, that Dr Parr was mad. The students at Stanmore were indulged in all sorts of irregularities.<sup>89</sup> *That*, perhaps,



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might arise from the unfortunate situation of the new establishment – too near to its rival; and in part, also, from the delicate position of Parr, who, in most instances, had come under an unfortunate personal obligation to the young gentlemen who followed him from Harrow. But in his habits of dress and deportment, which drew scandal upon himself, and jealousy upon his establishment, Parr owed his ill success to nobody but himself. Mr Roderick, his assistant, and a most friendly reporter, says, that at this time he ‘brought upon himself the ridicule of the neighbourhood and passengers by many foolish acts; such as riding in high prelatical pomp through the streets on a black saddle, bearing in his hand a long cane or wand, such as women used to have, with an ivory head *like a crosier*, which was probably the reason why he liked it.’ We see by this he was already thinking of the bishopric. ‘At other times he was seen stalking through the town in a dirty striped morning-gown: *Nil fuit unquam sic impar sibi*.’<sup>90</sup> When we add, that Dr Parr soon disgusted and alienated his weightiest friend amongst the residents at Stanmore, Mr Smith, the accomplished rector of the place,<sup>91</sup> we cannot wonder that little more than five years saw that scheme at an end.\*

The school at Stanmore he could not be said to leave; it left *him*: such was his management, that no fresh pupils succeeded to those whom the progress of years carried off to the universities. When this wavering rushlight had at length finally expired, it became necessary to think of other plans, and in the spring of 1777 he accepted the mastership of Colchester school. Even there, brief as his connexion was with that establishment, he found time to fasten a quarrel upon the trustees of the school in reference to a lease; and upon this quarrel he printed (though he did not publish) a pamphlet.<sup>94</sup> Sir William Jones, his old schoolfellow, to whom, as a lawyer, this pamphlet was submitted, found continual occasion to mark upon the margin such criticisms as these, ‘*too violent – too strong*.’ The contest was apparently *de lanâ caprinâ*.<sup>95</sup> so at least Sir William thought.†

\* Laying together all the incidents of that time, it is scarcely possible to doubt that Parr conducted himself with great impropriety. Benjamin Heath neither answered the letter in which Parr attempted to clear himself from the charge of exciting the boys of Harrow to insurrection against Heath’s authority, nor did he so much as leave his card at Stanmore, in acknowledgement of Parr’s call upon him.<sup>92</sup> As to Mr Smith, the rector, celebrated for his wit and ability, the early associate of Johnson and Garrick, from being ‘the warmest of Parr’s friends,’ (such is Mr Roderick’s language,) he soon became cool, and finally ceased to speak. Mr Roderick does not acquit his friend of the chief blame in this rupture.<sup>93</sup>

† Dr Johnstone, however, speaking of the pamphlet as a composition, discovers in it ‘all the peculiarities of Parr’s style – its vigour, its vehemence, its clearness,’ its *et caetera, et caetera*; and, lastly, its ‘splendid imagery:’ and obviously, by way of a specimen of this last quality, he quotes the following most puerile rhetoric: ‘I had arrayed myself in a panoply of the trustiest armour – in the breastplate of innocence, the shield of the law, the sword of indignation, and the helmet of intrepidity. When I first entered the lists against these hardy combatants, I determined to throw away the scabbard,’ and so forth. The *sword* of indignation! Birch-rod he surely means.<sup>96</sup> However, we must think, that the bombs of contempt, and the mortars of criticism, ought to open upon any person above the age of eight years who could write such stilted fustian.



## DR PARR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

But, luckily, he was soon called away from these miserable feuds to a more creditable sort of activity. In the summer of 1778, the mastership of the public grammar-school at Norwich became vacant: in the autumn, Parr was elected: and in the beginning of 1779, he commenced his residence in that city. Thus we see that he was unusually befriended in all his undertakings. As a private speculator at Stanmore, as a candidate for Colchester, as a candidate for Norwich, he was uniformly successful, as far as it is possible that encouragement the most liberal, on the part of others, can overrule a man's own imprudence. The mastership of Norwich has certainly been considered a valuable prize by others. How it happened that Parr found it otherwise, or whether mere restlessness and love of change were his governing motives, does not appear; but it is certain, that in August 1785, he sent in his resignation; and at Easter 1786, he went to reside at the parsonage house of Hatton, in the county of Warwick, where he opened a private academy. And though, as old age advanced, he resigned his pupils, Hatton continued to be his place of residence.

This, then, was the haven, the perpetual curacy of Hatton, into which Dr Parr steered his little boat, when he had already passed the meridian\* of his life. And (except upon a visit) he never again left it for any more elevated abode. For a philosopher, we grant that a much happier situation cannot be imagined than that of an English rural parson, rich enough to maintain a good library. Dr Parr was exactly in those circumstances: but Dr Parr was no philosopher. And assuredly this was not the vision which floated before his eyes at Stanmore, when he was riding on his 'black saddle,' in prelatical pomp, with his ivory crosier in his fist. The coach-and-four and mitred panels, must then have flourished in the foreground of the picture. But at that time he was between 25 and 30: now he was turned 40 – an age when, if a man should not have made his fortune, at least he ought to see clearly before him the road by which it *is to be* made. Now what was Parr's condition at this time, in respect to that supreme object of his exertions? – We have no letter on that point in this year, 1786: but we have one in 1782, when it does not appear (and indeed can hardly be supposed possible) that his situation was materially different. Writing to a man whom he valued, but then under a cloud of distress, and perhaps wishing to excuse himself for not sending him money,<sup>98</sup> he thus states the result of his labours up to that date: – 'You desire my confidence; and I therefore add, that the little progress I have made in worldly matters, the heavy loss I have sustained by the war, the inconsiderable advantages I have gained by a laborious and irksome employment, and the mortifying discouragements I have met with in my clerical profession, have all conspired to depress my spirits, and undermine my constitution. I was

\* By *meridian*, we mean the month which exactly bisected his life. Dr Parr lived about eleven months less than eighty years; and he was about two months more than forty when he came to live at Hatton.<sup>97</sup>

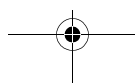
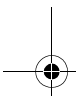
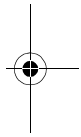
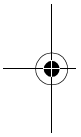




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content to give up ecclesiastical preferment, while I had a prospect of making some comfortable provision for my old age in my business as a teacher: but the best of my years have now elapsed; and I am, through a most vexatious and trying series of events, not a shilling richer than when I went to Stanmore. I have this very week closed an account, on which I stood indebted near L.2000, which I was obliged to borrow when I launched into active life. My house at Stanmore, I sold literally for less money than I expended on the repairs only. To this loss of more than a thousand pounds, I am to add near L.700, which I *may* lose entirely, and *must* lose in a great measure, by the reduction of St Vincent and St Kitt's.<sup>99</sup> My patience, so far as religion prescribes it, is sufficient to support me under this severity of moral trial. But the hour is past in which I might hope to secure a comfortable independency; and I am now labouring under the gloomy prospect of toiling, with exhausted strength, for a scanty subsistence to myself and my family. It is but eighteen months that I could pronounce a shilling my own. Now, indeed, *meo sum pauper in aere*<sup>100</sup> – but my integrity I have ever held fast.'

Possibly; but integrity might also have been held fast in a deanery; and certainly Dr Parr will not pretend to hoax us with such a story, as, that 'integrity' was all that he contemplated from his black saddle in Stanmore. Undoubtedly, he framed to himself some other good things, so fortunately arranged, that they could be held *in commendam*<sup>101</sup> with integrity. Such, however, was the naked fact, and we are sorry for it, at the time when Dr Parr drew near to his fortieth year – at which age, as all the world knows, a man must be a fool if he is not a physician.<sup>102</sup> Pass on, reader, for the term of almost another generation; suppose Dr Parr to be turned of sixty, and the first light snows of early old age to be just beginning to descend upon him, and his best wig to be turning grey; – were matters, we ask, improved at that time? Not much. Twenty years from that Easter on which he had entered the gates of Hatton, had brought him within hail of a bishopric; for his party were just then in power. Already he could descry his sleeves and his rochet; already he could count the pinnacles of his cathedral; – when suddenly Mr Fox died, and his hopes evanesced in spiral wreaths of fuming Orinoco.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunate Dr Parr! Once before he had conceived himself within an inch of the mitre; *that* was in the king's first illness, when the regency intrigue gave hopes, at one time, that Mr Pitt would be displaced. Dr Parr had then been summoned up to London; and he had gone so far as to lay down rules for his episcopal behaviour.<sup>104</sup> But the king suddenly recovered; many a grasping palm was then relaxed abruptly; and, alas! for Dr Parr, whether people died or recovered, the event was equally unfortunate. Writing, on August 25, 1807, to the Bishop of Down, he says, – 'If Mr Fox had lived and continued in power, he certainly would have made me a bishop.'<sup>105</sup> Now, if Dr Parr meant to say that he had a distinct promise to that effect, that certainly is above guessing; else we should almost presume to guess, that Mr Fox neither would, nor possibly could, have made Dr Parr a bishop. It is true, that Mr Fox meant to have promoted the



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Bishop of Llandaff of that day, who might seem to stand in the same circumstances as a literary supporter; at least Lord Holland<sup>106</sup> said to a friend of ours, – ‘Had our party remained in office, we should have raised the Bishop of Llandaff to the Archbishopric of York.’ But then why? Lord Holland’s reason was this, – ‘For he’ (meaning Dr Watson) ‘behaved very well, I can assure you, to us,’ (meaning by *us* the whole coalition probably of Grenvilles<sup>107</sup> and Foxes.) Now, this reason (we fear) did not apply, in Mr Fox’s mind, to Dr Parr; he had behaved violently, indiscreetly, foolishly, on several occasions; he had thoroughly disgusted all other parties; he had not satisfied his own. And once, when, for a very frivolous reason, he gave a vote for Mr Pitt at the Cambridge election, we are satisfied ourselves that he meditated the notable policy of raving; conceiving, perhaps, that it was a romantic and ideal punctilio of honour to adhere to a doomed party; and the letter of Lord John Townshend, on that occasion, convinces us, that the Whigs viewed this very suspicious act in that light. Even Dr Johnstone, we observe, doubts whether Mr Fox would have raised Dr Parr to the mitre.<sup>108</sup> And, as to everybody else, they shuddered at his very name. The Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, gave him a hearty curse, *more suo*,<sup>109</sup> instead of a prebend; and Lord Grenville assigned, as a reason against making him a bishop, his extreme unpopularity\* with his own order.<sup>110</sup> As one proof of that, even the slight distinction of preaching a visitation sermon had never once been offered to Dr Parr, as he himself tells us, in 1816,<sup>111</sup> when he had completed his seventieth year, notwithstanding he had held preferment in five different counties. Nor was it, in fact, offered for six years more; and then, being a hopeful young gentleman of seventy-six, he thought proper to decline the invitation.

Next, for the emoluments of his profession, – Was he better off, as regards *them*? Else, whence came the coach-and-four? We answer, that, by mere accidents of good luck, and the falling-in of some extraordinary canal profits, Dr Parr’s prebend in the cathedral of St Paul’s, given to him by Bishop Lowth upon the interest of Lord Dartmouth, in his last year or two, produced him an unusually large sum;<sup>112</sup> so that he had about three thousand a-year, and we are glad of it. He had also an annuity of three hundred a-year, granted by the Dukes of Norfolk and Bedford in consideration of a subscription made for Dr Parr by his political friends.<sup>113</sup> But this was a kind of charity which would not have been offered, had it not been felt that, in the regular path of his profession, he had not drawn, nor was likely to draw, any conspicuous prizes. In fact, but for the two accidents we have mentioned, his whole regular income from the church, up to a period of advanced age, when Sir Francis Burdett

\* Parr’s extreme and well-merited unpopularity with an order whom he had, through life, sneered at and misrepresented, is a little disguised to common readers by the fact, that he corresponds with more than one bishop on terms of friendship and confidence. But this arose, generally speaking, in latter life, when early schoolfellows and pupils of his own, in several instances, were raised to the mitre.

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presented him to a living of about L.200 per annum, was L.93 on account of his living – and L.17 on account of his prebend.<sup>114</sup>

Such were the ecclesiastical honours, and such the regular ecclesiastical emoluments of Samuel Parr. We do not grudge him the addition, as regards the latter, which, in his closing years, he drew from the liberality of his friends and the accidents of luck. On the contrary, we rejoice that his last days passed in luxury and pomp; that he sent up daily clouds of undulating incense to the skies; and that he celebrated his birthday with ducal game and venison from the parks of princes; finally, we rejoice that he galloped about in his coach-and-four, and are not angry that, on one occasion, he nearly galloped over ourselves.

Still, we rejoice that all these luxuries came to him irregularly, and not at all, or indirectly, and by accident, through the church. As regards *that*, and looking not to the individual, but entirely to the example, we rejoice that, both for her honours and emoluments, Dr Parr missed them altogether. Such be the fate, we pray heartily, of all unfaithful servants, in whatsoever profession, calling, or office of trust! So may *those* be still baffled and confounded, who pass their lives in disparaging and traducing their own honourable brethren; and who labour (whether consciously and from treachery, or half-consciously and from malice and vanity) for the subversion of institutions which they are sworn and paid to defend!

Our conclusion, therefore, the *epimythion*<sup>115</sup> of our review, is this – that, considered as a man of the world, keenly engaged in the chase after rank and riches, Dr Parr must be pronounced to have failed; that his rare and late successes were casual and indirect; whilst his capital failures were due exclusively to himself. His two early bosom-friends and schoolfellows, Dr Bennet and Sir W. Jones, he saw raised to the rank of a bishop and a judge – whilst he was himself still plodding as a schoolmaster. And this mortifying distinction in their lots was too obviously imputable, not to any more scrupulous integrity in *him*, flattering and soothing as that hypothesis was to his irritated vanity, but solely to his own hot-headed defect of self-control – baffling the efforts of his friends, and neutralizing the finest opportunities. Both of those eminent persons, the bishop, as well as the judge, deeply disapproved of his conduct; though they agreed in candour, and in the most favourable construction of his meaning; and though they allowed him the largest latitude for his politics – one of them being a liberal Tory, and the other an ardent Whig. And yet, with the full benefit of this large privilege, he could not win their toleration to his indiscretions. So that, purely by his own folly, and in headstrong opposition to the concurring tendencies of his opportunities and his aids, Samuel Parr failed utterly as a man of the world. It remains to enquire – how much better he succeeded in establishing his character as a politician, a scholar, and a divine.