

ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE SECOND VOLUME.*

NEVER was a greater outcry raised among the hypocrites of all classes, than against this publication. What with the “great vulgar” protesting, the “small” abusing,¹ lawyers denouncing, “divines” cursing, scandal-mongers bawling, dunces of all sorts shrieking—all the sore places of the community seem to have been touched, and the “body politic” agitated accordingly.²

“As when the long-ear’d, milky mothers wait
At some sick miser’s triple-bolted gate,
For their defrauded, absent foals they make
A moan so loud, that all the Guild³ awake;
Sore sighs Sir Gilbert,⁴ starting at the bray,
From dreams of millions, and three groats to pay:
So swells each windpipe: ass intones to ass,
Harmonic twang! of leather, horn, and brass;
Such as from lab’ring lungs th’enthusiast blows,
High sounds, attempered to the vocal nose;
Or such as bellow from the deep divine:
There, Webster!⁵ peal’d thy voice; and, Whitfield!⁶ thine;
But far o’er all sonorous Blackmore’s⁷ strain:
Walls, steeples, skies, bray back to him again.
In Tottenham fields⁸ the brethren with amaze,
Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze!
Long Chancery Lane,⁹ retentive, rolls the sound,
And courts to courts return it round and round.”—*Dunciad*.

All these people deserve no better answer than a laughing quotation. But we will just admonish some well-meaning persons,

* Author: Leigh Hunt / Transcribed by Ilaria Natali; Annotated by Giacomo Ferrari.

not over strong in their understandings, that with respect to the religious part of the business, they are most grossly and “irreligiously” taken in, if they suffer themselves to be persuaded, that it is we who would lessen the divinity of what is really divine. It is these pretended “divines” and their abettors, who lessen it; —those raisers-up of absurd and inhuman imaginations, which they first impudently confound with divine things, and then, because we shew the nonsense of the imaginations, as impudently call their exposers blasphemers. Were we inclined to retort their own terms upon them, we should say that there was nothing in the world more “blasphemous” than such charges of blasphemy. The whole secret is just what we have stated. They first assume unworthy notions of the Divine Spirit, and then because that very Spirit is in fact vindicated from their degradations by an exposure of the absurdity and impossibility of such notions, they assume a divine right to denounce the vindicators, and to rouse up all the fears, weakness, and ignorance of society, in defence of the degradation. Of this stuff have the “Scribes, Pharisees, and Hypocrites”¹⁰ in all ages been made, whenever established opinion was to be divested of any of its corruptions. “He blasphemeth!” quoth the modern tribunal. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” quoth the Quarterly.¹¹ *This* is the point, which persons who undertake to be didactic in Reviews, should answer; and not a hundred things which we never said.

There is a more generous indignation which we allow might be felt by some persons upon another point, but still owing to real want of information on the subject. We allude to what has been said in the *Liberal* of the late King.¹² *The Vision of Judgment*¹³ was written in a fit of indignation and disgust at Mr. Southey’s¹⁴ nonsense; and we confess that had we seen a copy of it in Italy, before it went to press (for we had none by us) we should have taken more pains to explain one or two expressions with regard to that Prince. Had the Preface¹⁵ also, entrusted to Mr. Murray,¹⁶ been sent, as it ought to have been, to the new publisher, much of the unintended part of the effect produced upon weak minds

would have been explained away at once;—that effect, which the hypocritical enemies of the Liberal at once delighted to assist in producing, and most pretended to deprecate. But the virtues of the late King, though of a negative kind, were of a kind nevertheless exceedingly calculated to excite a great many feelings in favour of him in a society like that of England; while his vices (pardon us, dear self-love of our countrymen, for supposing that you *have* vices) were equally calculated to be overlooked in a certain general blindness prevailing on that subject. Yet to those vices,—extreme self-will for instance, sullenness of purpose, a strong natural vindictiveness, &c. was owing the bloody protraction of the American War:¹⁷ to those vices, as well as to Mr. Pitt's¹⁸ haughty sympathy with them, was mainly owing the general war against liberty which was roused among the despots of the continent: and if certain staid and well-intentioned people suppose, that persons quite as moral and as pious as themselves, could not hold the late King in a light very different from their own, and much more revolting than even we hold it, they are most egregiously mistaken. What was thought of George the Third's natural character by a man of the highest respectability, who knew him intimately at court,—to wit, his own Governor when Prince of Wales,¹⁹—may be seen by those *who wish to do us justice*, in the Memoirs of James, Earl of Waldegrave, published by the aforesaid Mr. Murray.²⁰ See also Dr. Franklin's Life,²¹ Junius,²² and the opinion of Mr. Southey's friend, the author of Gebir.²³ What the Earl of Waldegrave prophesied of that character, may be seen also in Mr. Murray's publication. We think that prophecy came to pass. The most pious and virtuous person we ever knew,²⁴ even in the ordinary sense of those terms (and she might have stood by the side of the most virtuous, in the most extraordinary) thought so too, and taught some of us to think so in our childhood. The ruin of her family and prospects was brought upon her, to her knowledge, by that Prince's temper and obstinacy; and though the strict religious way in which she was brought up might have induced her to carry too far her opinion

of the *cause* of that calamitous and awful affliction under which he suffered,²⁵ the parasites of his memory are under a much greater mistake, when instead of turning their knowledge on that point to its great and proper account (which has never yet been hinted even in this great nation of reasoning freemen!) they fancy they can put down all thoughts upon such subjects, and all the unfortunate consequences of such *facts*, by raising a hypocritical cry against a few hasty expressions, uttered in that very spirit of sympathy with the community at large, which they count as nothing.

We cannot close this Advertisement without adding our cordial voice (truly humble on the present occasion) to the universal harmony prevailing in England on the subject of the glorious rights and equally glorious behaviour of Spain.²⁶ We must also say, how much surprise and relief have been afforded to us by the political plain-speaking (granting even it ends in little more) of the accomplished person who has succeeded that vizor of a statesman, Lord Castlereagh.²⁷

EDITORIAL NOTES

¹ Reference to Horace, *Ode*, III.i.1-2: "Hence, ye Profane; I hate ye all; / Both the Great, Vulgar, and the Small" (trans. by Abraham Cowley).

² The following verses are a "laughing quotation" (see Hunt below) from the mock-heroic poem *The Dunciad* (247-64) by Alexander Pope (1688-1744). This vitriolic satire against contemporary literature, culture and politics was published in different versions between 1728 and 1743. The excerpt targets the main detractors of the first volume of *The Liberal* mentioned in the previous lines of the "Advertisement to the second volume". Lines 257-58, which were not added until 1743, prove that Hunt here is quoting from *The Dunciad in Four Books* (London: "Printed for M. Cooper at the Globe in Pater-noster-row", 1743), a revised and augmented version of the original three books. This and the following notes on *The Dunciad* are based on Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books*, rev. ed., edited by Valerie Rumbold (Harlow: Longman, 2009).

³ The tradesmen's guilds, *i.e.* the City of London.

⁴ Sir Gilbert Heathcote (1651?-1733), Whig merchant, Lord Mayor of London, member of Parliament and co-founder of the Bank of England. Sir Gilbert was a rich commoner, considered by Pope miserly and self-righteous towards the poor.

⁵ William Webster (1689-1758), High-Church clergyman and journalist in the ministerial interest.

⁶ George Whitefield (1714-70), leading preacher of Calvinist Methodism.

⁷ Sir Richard Blackmore (1654-1729), physician and prolific epicist, was among Pope's favourite butts due to his bombastic verses (his "sonorous strain" or braying). The long-lasting feud between the two started with Blackmore's 1717 tirade against Pope's blasphemous writings and never really ended.

⁸ Open country north of Westminster.

⁹ Chancery Lane in London was home to the Court of Chancery, here mocked for its lengthy and expensive procedures.

¹⁰ "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).

¹¹ "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:28, 34) is a reference to the episode of Saint Paul in Ephesus. There he is opposed by an ignorant mob agitated by the silversmiths, whose revenues from selling silver idols of the goddess Diana are threatened by Paul's preaching. Hunt's "Quarterly" is the conservative, tory journal *The Quarterly Review*. The slogan chanted by the biblical mob might be a thrust made at the journal's bigotry or at the recent attacks on Shelley, since *The Quarterly* did not explicitly review *The Liberal*.

¹² King George III (reigned 1760-1820).

¹³ Lord Byron's *The Vision of Judgment*, published in the first issue of *The Liberal*, is a satirical poem depicting a dispute in Heaven over the soul of the late king George III.

¹⁴ The poet laureate Robert Southey (1774-1843) appears in a negative light in several of the contributions in *The Liberal*. He was considered a renegade by Leigh Hunt and Lord Byron for renouncing his radical, revolutionary ideals and supporting the Tory establishment (see "The Blues", 8).

¹⁵ The Preface to the *Vision of Judgment* was supposed to appear in the first issue of *The Liberal* but, according to Hunt, John Murray failed to give John Hunt that part of Byron's manuscript, which instead was included in the second edition (January 1823). The Preface was meant to tone down the critique of George III in *The Vision* and direct it at its true target, Robert Southey.

¹⁶ John Samuel Murray (1778-1843) founded *The Quarterly Review* in 1809 with its editor William Gifford. Murray is often associated with Lord Byron, since he published his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and other poetry. Their long friendship gradually deteriorated and collapsed around the time *The Liberal* was published.

¹⁷ The United States War of Independence (1775-83).

¹⁸ William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806), Tory politician and prime minister in the periods 1783-1801 and 1804-6. Arch-rival of Charles James Fox (1749-1806). Among the counterrevolutionary "vices" mentioned by Hunt might be Pitt's conviction – exacerbated in the 1790s by the escalating threat from revolutionary political doctrines – that the privileges and support of the church hierarchy should be safeguarded.

¹⁹ "Prince of Wales" is, and has been since the thirteenth century, the title traditionally given to the male heir apparent to the throne of England, of the United Kingdom, and Great Britain. Hunt refers here to the future George III.

EDITORIAL NOTES

²⁰ James Earl Waldegrave K G, *Memoirs from 1754 to 1758* (London: John Murray, 1821). James Second Earl Waldegrave (1715-63) was confidant of George II, knight of the Garter ("K G"), and governor – *i.e.* tutor, educator – to the future George III. The assessment of character he gave of twenty-one-year-old George in the *Memoirs* (1758) is all but flattering.

²¹ Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), statesman, political philosopher, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America. The War of Independence changed radically and for the worse his opinion of King George III (See *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Carl Van Doren (New York: Viking Press, 1945), p. 701).

²² *Letters of Junius* is a series of pseudonymous letters critical of the reign of King George III, written between 1769 and 1772, and published in 1772. Junius is now thought to have been Sir Philip Francis (1740-1818), Whig politician and pamphleteer.

²³ *Gebir* is an anti-monarchic epic poem published anonymously in 1798 by Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864), revised, and published again in English and Latin in 1803. Robert Southey's originally favourable review of *Gebir* surely contrasted, in Hunt's eyes, with his current reactionary nationalism.

²⁴ Reference to Hunt's mother Mary (Shewell) Hunt (1752-1805). Hunt's father Isaac had to flee America due to his loyalist sympathies, and his American property was confiscated. These circumstances caused the "ruin" of the "prospects" of the Hunt family.

²⁵ King George III suffered from recurrent episodes of an unidentified mental illness.

²⁶ Probable reference to news from Spain concerning the *Trienio liberal* (1820-23), the three-year period during which a liberal government ruled Spain under the reinstated 1812 Cádiz Constitution.

²⁷ Robert Stewart (1769-1822), Viscount Castlereagh and Marquess of Londonderry, British statesman and politician. He was hated by Byron, who celebrated his suicide in the "Epigrams on Lord Castlereagh" (*The Liberal*, issue 1, 164) and by Percy Shelley. Leigh Hunt's "*vizor* [outward show] of a statesman" might be a reference to Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* (1819): "I met murder on the way — / He had a mask like Castlereagh —" (II). Hunt is possibly welcoming an unidentified speech by George Canning (1770-1827), Castlereagh's successor as leader of the House of Commons.