

**THE REVIEWER REVIEWED:
OR, A REPLY TO THE
"SATURDAY REVIEW" ON
"WHISTON'S DEMOSTHINES."**

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The reviewer reviewed: or, a Reply to the "Saturday review" on "Whiston's demosthines." by Robert Whiston

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ROBERT WHISTON

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THE "SATURDAY REVIEW"

ON

"WHISTON'S DEMOSTHENES."

BY THE

REV. ROBERT WHISTON, M.A.

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Ficta omnia celeriter tanquam foveuli decidunt.—CICERO.

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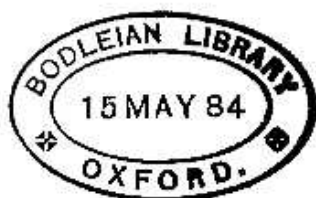
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A

REPLY,

&c.

IN the "Saturday Review" of the 3rd of September last is an article on Vol. I. of a new edition of Demosthenes, contributed by myself to the Series of the "Bibliotheca Classica." The Author, whoever he may be, has pronounced a most unfavourable opinion on my labours and scholarship, and he has certainly not shown me consideration in any respect. Of this, however, I am not weak enough to complain, nor should I under ordinary circumstances reply to criticism, however severe, but simply learn from it one of those lessons which an enemy teaches so much better than a friend, and endeavour to avoid giving occasion for it hereafter. But the article in question differs so much from ordinary criticism; it exhibits such a spirit of unfairness; and shows so much resolution to depreciate and disparage, that I may well be excused for exposing the misrepresentations and blunders with which it abounds, and showing how incompetent the Reviewer was for his task. He commences with an insinuation that 'Mr. Whiston is more likely to *besoul* his fellow-labourers than to suffer from contact with them,' and ends with some elegant extracts from the vernacular of the 'pig-driver' and the 'horse-keeper,' which he quotes as

'parallels for' Mr. Whiston's English. The writer would, perhaps, not deny that he is consistent with himself in spirit and in temper throughout his article, which is altogether of such a character that I cannot in justice to myself or others leave it unanswered.

The Reviewer's first objection is rather a strange one. It is founded on the fact that 'I have endeavoured to make the work generally useful,' and not contemplated one class of readers only. From this he would infer that my 'Commentary cannot be intelligent, or even intelligible,'—a statement for which we have all the weight of his assertion, and—nothing more.

Well, my reply is very simple. If the volumes of the 'Bibliotheca Classica' were all composed for one class of readers only, it would fail from want of funds. No one class of purchasers would be sufficiently numerous to pay the expenses of such an undertaking,—a fact which an Editor, if he has any conscience, will bear in mind, and regulate his commentary accordingly. For simply stating that I have endeavoured to do this, the Reviewer represents me as 'mouthing great promises,' and applies to me the school-boy quotation—

"Quid feret hic tanto dignum promissor hiatus?"

He then says, 'we believe we shall give our readers a *fair idea* of the scholarship of this edition by an examination of Mr. W.'s Commentary on the De Corona,' which he selects 'for this reason,—that *every one* who reads Demosthenes has read it.' But if this be true, surely it justifies an Editor in his endeavour to compile a commentary for general use, and not for the select few of one class only. If every one who reads Demosthenes reads this speech, the commentary upon it should be written in remembrance of this multiplicity of readers, even at the risk of 'common-place matter.' Of this, indeed, the Reviewer asserts that 'Mr. W.'s annotations contain a considerable amount,' and he then gives his 'fair idea' of them by these two specimens:—

δὴ σου] 'I presume.'

ἄς μὲν . . . ἄς δέ] For τὰς μὲν and τὰς δέ.

Now my first thought upon these extracts was that the 'considerable amount' was at any rate composed of rather minute parts, the aggregate of which might not have been accurately summed up by the Reviewer, who, by the way, has peculiar notions on the precise meaning of 'half-a-dozen.' But I soon found out that he had equally peculiar notions as to the proper way of 'giving a *fair idea*' of my commentary, and that the plan of quoting it as I wrote it was not his plan. For example, it might be supposed that his quotation, 'For τὰς μὲν and τὰς δέ,' with a full stop at the end, was the whole of the note. But, in fact, it is only the beginning of it, and it goes on thus:—

'For τὰς μὲν and τὰς δέ, the regular inflexions of the demonstrative τός, as we find ὄς in Homer, and καὶ ὄς in prose. See note, p. 5.'

which runs thus:—

'It is remarkable, that as in Greek ὄς, the old demonstrative, afterwards became ὄ, as in ὄ μὲν and ὄ δέ, so in Sanscrit *sas*, 'he,' and *śhas* 'this,' the nominative of *tad* and *etad*, drop the final *s* before any consonant, hard or soft (Monier Williams, Gram. p. 36).'

Now it is not for me to say, that the note as a whole is otherwise than 'common-place:' of that the reader must judge. But I may urge that the Reviewer's suppression proves that he did not think so, and if he did not, why then he has unfairly suppressed the truth to suggest what is not true.

He then observes, 'Mr. W. is fond of illustrating Greek idioms in a rather peculiar way. Instead of explaining the rationale of *the* phrase (a phrase!), or pointing to a parallel passage from any Greek author, he adduces some manifest Græcism from Milton, somewhat on the principle of "ignotum per ignotius." We have two instances in one page:—

παρακόσιν αλοθίσθαι] . . . With the construction comp.

Milton, Sams. Agonistes: "Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed."

ἀκούουσιν] 'they are called' Milton, P. L. iii. :—

"Or *hear'st* thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who *can* tell!"

After this blunder—for Milton wrote and I quoted 'who *shall*,' not 'who *can* tell'—the Reviewer adds, 'The absurdity of this is, that no one but a Greek scholar can possibly construe these affectations of Milton's;' and after a remark on the condition of Mr. Whiston's mind, he observes, 'Milton (with Mr. W. of course) is a primary fact—a standard by which every other writer and every language may be measured.'

Does he then mean that I have compared 'Milton's affectations' with the idioms of any other writer than Demosthenes, or his Græcisms with any other language than Greek? I affirm that I have not; and in making this statement I question the Reviewer's veracity, and challenge him, whoever he may be, and whatever his motives, to prove his assertion.

Again: I deny his other assertion, that 'none but a Greek scholar' can construe the two quotations from Milton: and I support my denial by something more than assertion. For I affirm, that any intelligent Englishman, if he knew Latin enough to construe

"Sensit ~~ne~~ medius delapsus in hostes,"

in Virgil, would understand the line

"Knowing as needs I must by thee betrayed,"

and that he would at once understand

"Or *hear'st* thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who *shall* tell!"

if he had ever construed in Horace,

"Matutine Pater, non *Jane libentius audis*."

Nay, more, I assert what every scholar knows, that this 'hear'st thou rather' of Milton is not merely a Græcism, but a Latinism, and actually an English copy of the Latin '*libentius audis*' of

Horace, who repeats this usage of 'audire' in the following verses:—

"Subtilis veterum iudex et callidus audis,"—Sat. ii. 7. 101.

"Rexque paterque,

audisti coram."—Epist. i. 7. 37.

"Tu recta vivis si curas cæce quod audis."—Epist. i. 16, 17.

This is, I know, 'common-place' demonstration enough; but 'less than thorough will not do' for the Reviewer, and therefore I add Bishop Newton's note on 'Milton's affectation,' which runs thus:

"Or dost thou rather hear this address, dost thou delight rather to be called 'pure ethereal stream?' An excellent Latinism, as Dr. Bentley observes, Hor. Sat. ii. vi. 20:—

"Matutine pater seu Jæne libentius audis!"

And we have an expression of the same kind in Spenser, *Fæerie Queen*, i. v. 23:

"If old Aveugle's sons so evil hear."

So that this 'Græcism' is after all really an 'excellent Latinism,' which Spenser also had adopted before Milton, though I readily believe that the Reviewer was innocent of any knowledge of the fact. But I charge him with worse than ignorance,—he has acted dishonestly. That line of Horace,

"Matutine Pater, seu Jæne libentius audis,"

was quoted by me in the same note as 'Milton's affectation;' but the Reviewer wished to insinuate that I 'had a peculiar way of illustrating Greek idioms by quoting Milton' exclusively; so he suppressed what proved the contrary, and carefully omitted the Latin quotation which proved that the 'manifest Græcism' was, as Bentley called it, an 'excellent Latinism.' Such tricks spare me the necessity of speculating on 'the condition of his mind,' and furnish, no doubt, an accurate 'standard' by which his 'language may be measured,' to say nothing of his conscience. At the same time he observes, 'we have two instances' (of quotations from Milton) 'on one page,' but he does not tell his readers that on the opposite side without turning a page—there are two illustrations not from Milton—one in fact from Shakspeare and