FIRST IMPRESSIONS: OR TRADE IN THE WEST. A COMEDY. IN FIVE ACTS

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First Impressions: Or Trade in the West. A comedy. In Five Acts by Horatio Smith

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HORATIO SMITH

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Trieste

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

OR

TRADE IN THE WEST.

A COMEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT

The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

By HORATIO SMITH.

LONDON:
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1813.

Price Three Shillings.

PROLOGUE,

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE COMEDY.

Spoken by Mr. Powell.

When man, the savage, left the forest glen,
To dwell in cities with his fellow men,
Sheltered from storms his cultivated mind,
Expanding, shed it's blossoms on the wind;
And infant Science, with a smile, unfurl'd
Her peaceful banners o'er the moral world:
Then first to aid her civilising views,
She woo'd the magic numbers of the muse,
Uprear'd the stage, and bade it live to be
A nation's glass, a world's epitome.—

Here in the compass of this narrow field,
Man and his motley changes stand reveal'd;
Here, at one view, each various class displays
Its faults and virtues to the common gaze.—
Rank while it spreads the mellowing control,
Of graceful manners, and the gifted soul,
Its own soft attributes may steel and brace,
By the rough virtues of a ruder race.—
By such collision, is the public mind
In due progression rounded and refined,
Till every prominent and pointed trait,
Is polished down and civilized away.—

Thus has the Drama's equalising hand,
Unnerved itself in polishing the land.—

Fled the strong features which our Grandsires show'd,
The quaint extremes of manners, life, and mode :
Would we their coarser characters recall,
You deem us vulgar and unnatural :—
Our inexpressive moderns would we paint,
" How spiritless !" you cry, " How dull, how faint !"
Hard is the task to write what none may blame,
What Nature sanctions, and what critics claim.
If perils rise in such combined array,
To strike the proved and practised with dismay,
How must *he* tremble whose advent'rous pride,
Would grasp the Hydra with a hand untried !
Such is our Bard, whose youthful muse essays,
For the first time to snatch the Comic Bays.
Be, then, your doom untemper'd to his due,
True to yourselves, but not to him untrue ;
Such as mild Justice might herself dispense,
To *Inexperience and a First Offence.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR TOBY HARBOTTLE	*Mr. Lovegrove.*
SIR THOMAS TRAPWELL	*Mr. Munden.*
HARCOURT	*Mr. Elliston.*
FORTESCUE	*Mr. Rae.*
TRIFLETON	*Mr. Wrench.*
FRAMPTON	*Mr. R. Phillips.*
SAPLING	*Mr. Oxberry.*
DIPPER	*Mr. Smith.*
DIGGORY	*Mr. Chatterley.*
STOCKTON	*Mr. Carr.*
LADY ANEMONE	*Mrs. Sparks.*
LADY TRAPWELL	*Mrs. Edwin.*
LOUISA	*Miss Kelly.*
LÆTITIA FREEMANTLE	*Mrs. Glover.*
PHŒBE MURRAY	*Miss Boyce.*
SUSAN	*Mrs. Scott.*

Servants, Waiter, Bailiffs, &c.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Room in a Hotel.

Enter FORTESCUE.

Fortes. O London, London, thou myriad mass of immortal triflers; thou mighty vortex of revolting vices and fantastic follies, with what mingled emotions do I once more tread thy busy precincts. — Friendship! Love! — the worldly and heartless beings who dwell within this populous desert know not the meaning of the words. 'Twas this conviction that drove me into exile, and if I return to these haunts of selfishness, 'tis but to wreak the only revenge a mind like mine can inflict:—to punish the friend who has wronged me, by heaping favours on his head; and by an eternal banishment from England, attest the sincerity of my attachment to the woman by whom I have been rejected. O Harcourt! still could I almost doubt your perfidy; but no——here—here is the fatal evidence of your duplicity. Again let me peruse it, lest the air of London, like the stream of Lethe, should "steep my senses in forgetfulness." *(Reads)* "To Mrs. Freemantle. My dear Cousin, I have observed with surprize and concern the complacency with which you still receive the attentions of the man against whom I have