

**AN AUTHOR'S CONDUCT TO THE
PUBLIC, STATED IN THE
BEHAVIOUR OF DR. WILLIAM
CULLEN, HIS MAJESTY'S
PHYSICIAN AT EDINBURGH**

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An Author's Conduct to the Public, Stated in the Behaviour of Dr. William Cullen, His Majesty's Physician at Edinburgh by John Murray

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JOHN MURRAY

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AUTHOR'S CONDUCT

TO THE

P U B L I C.

Advertisement.

THE Case stated in the following pages is sufficient to show, that Authors are not always oppressed, or hardly treated by Booksellers; and that the former can, occasionally, behave to the Public, in a way which the latter, as exhibiting marks of too great flagrancy, 'would not dare to venture upon. If a Gentleman of Dr. Cullen's fortune and celebrity can, from motives unworthy of his character, give, by his example, a sanction to unjustifiable imposition, what may not be expected from Authors of inferior reputation and abilities!

It is with reluctance that the cause is submitted to the tribunal

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of

of the Public. But the author imagined he had no right to suppress the transaction, after having in vain tried every fair method of accommodation and compromise. Losers, it is said, have a right to complain; but setting this adage aside, the present publication, it is thought, may produce more beneficial consequences, by the example it exhibits.

L E T.

L E T T E R I.

MR. MURRAY, BOOKSELLER
IN LONDON, TO DR. WIL-
LIAM CULLEN, PHYSICIAN
AT EDINBURGH.

London, April 17, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

I Beg leave to acquaint you, that I have upon hand eighty-four volumes of your "First Lines," to the amount of sixteen pounds, as under, which you must be sensible will prove no better than waste paper, provided I am not permitted to complete them in sets; and as I understand it is not your intention to sell the two additional volumes now printing separately*,

* The edition of Dr. Cullen's "First Lines" complete, was advertised to be published in *five* volumes, although it has since been comprised in *four*. Mr. M. therefore wanted at this time the *fourth* and *fifth* volumes.

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I flatter

I flatter myself you will not permit me to suffer the loss of sixteen pounds, for keeping your works constantly in my house, in order to serve you more than myself, by their sale. If by any means my sets can be completed, I shall require no more; or if it is agreeable for you to give me the new edition in exchange for the books I have upon hand, volume for volume, I shall rest perfectly satisfied.— It may be just necessary to mention, that no Bookseller here publishes a new edition of a book, with improvements, without exchanging it for the old, if any of the latter are found to be in the trade undisposed of. But without this information, my application, I dare say, will not appear to be either improper or unreasonable; and I shall wait for your answer, in full confidence that you will think so.

I am your's, &c.

J. MURRAY.

Dr. WILLIAM CULLEN.

P. S. 84 copies "Cullen's Lines," vols. 1 and 2, and binding 16l.

L E T-

L E T T E R II.

FROM THE SAME, TO THE SAME.

London, May 21, 1784.

S I R,

I Wrote to you the 17th of April, of which you have a copy enclosed, because by my not being favoured with an answer, I am apprehensive it has miscarried. To the case stated in that letter I have little to add, save it be to observe, what you will readily admit, that no Bookseller would have kept any copies of your works by him, had he entertained the least suspicion, that after purchasing three volumes, singly or separately, as they appeared, you would have precluded him from purchasing

chasing the subsequent ones in the same manner. I have said, that I kept your volumes in my house, fully more to promote your benefit than my own. I beg leave again to repeat this, which I think I can prove *; and if I am to be left without redress, after acting in this manner, I shall think it extremely hard; and I will venture to say, that there is no example similar to it in the annals of book-felling. The purchasers of *Hume*, *Gibbon*, *Blackstone*, in separate volumes, were never precluded from completing their sets. *Whitaker* published the additions to a new edition of his *History of Manchester* sepa-

* Mr. Murray, in conjunction with the late Mr. Kincaid, of Edinburgh, bought one impression, consisting of 1000 copies, of the 1st vol. of Dr. Cullen's *First Lines*. For this they paid all expences of paper, printing, and advertising, and gave the author besides one hundred guineas. Upon a calculation it appeared, that the Bookfellers could clear but sixteen shillings by the bargain, without allowing for bad debts, interest of money, &c. This was laid before Dr. Cullen, but he turned a deaf ear to all remonstrances upon the subject, and never would refund a penny. The public is therefore left to judge, whether the assertion that his books were sold more for the benefit of the Author than his Bookfellers, is true or otherwise.

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