

**THE PRESS, OR,
LITERARY CHIT-CHAT:
A SATIRE, PP. 1-130**

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The Press, Or, Literary Chit-Chat: A Satire, pp. 1-130 by James Harley

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JAMES HARLEY

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THE PRESS,
OR 5-07-02
LITERARY CHIT-CHAT.

A Satire.

"The cry is up, and scribblers are my game."

Byron.

(By James Harley)

LONDON;
PRINTED FOR LUPTON RELFE, 13, CORNHILL.

1822.

P R E F A C E.

VERY few of the personages alluded to in the following pages are known to me otherwise than by their works. I bear them no ill-will, and trust they will peruse my rhymes with a similar freedom from malice. I have, as much as possible, avoided personalities. Books have been my game, not men—and I trust the propriety of such sporting remains unquestioned by the game-laws of public opinion.

What a man publishes becomes the property of the public. He casts his seed abroad, and is answerable for the fruit. What will be the fruit of many of the publications noticed in my poem, God alone knows. I am not wont to be timid.

or suspicious, but when we see impious ribaldry and profane obscenity openly written—openly published—and openly displayed in our libraries, what thinking mind but must tremble for the consequences?

Let it not be supposed that I am what in modern slang is called a saint; the reader of my work must be convinced of the contrary—but I have a firm love for the constitution of my country, and a sincere veneration for that religion which (setting aside all major considerations) is necessary for its support. Such being my sentiments, I am galled to the quick to view the open and covert attacks daily made upon both by a knot of book-makers, who arrogate to themselves the claim of superior liberality, knowledge, and discretion. Girded together for this object, the peer and the peasant coalesce to cater for the already vitiated taste of the public; and a Byron condescends to become a fellow-pander with a Benbow. The only difference is, that the one penetrates into the boudoir, whilst the other advances not beyond the servant's hall.

But my chief fear is not of a Byron or a Ben-

bow. These are the open attackers—we have concealed assailants perhaps more to be dreaded. A certain “rosy tinge” pervades many works unsuspected by the generality of readers, until a kindred shade imbues itself over their minds, and thus the danger increases. Morals—especially female morals—fall into the snare, and where then is our safeguard? The laxity of sentiment generally prevalent with regard to the female sex, I cannot but consider as amongst the worst “signs of the times.” The cestus of virtue is daily becoming more loose. If not speedily tightened it will fall off altogether.

Amidst the myriads of publications daily issuing from the British press, it is a difficult task for an author to acquire publicity. No work excites attention but such as is in some way or other *piquant*. Under this conviction I have resolved to lay my sentiments before the public in the shape of a Satire—otherwise it had been the last mode I should have chosen, as I almost consider the subject too serious an one for the satiric muse. But who now listens to a sermonic discourse?

I will not detain the reader with further pre-

face. I have in my poem given my undisguised opinion on many subjects. When convinced of error, I shall be most ready to recant—till then the missiles of my foes will be hurled at me in vain.

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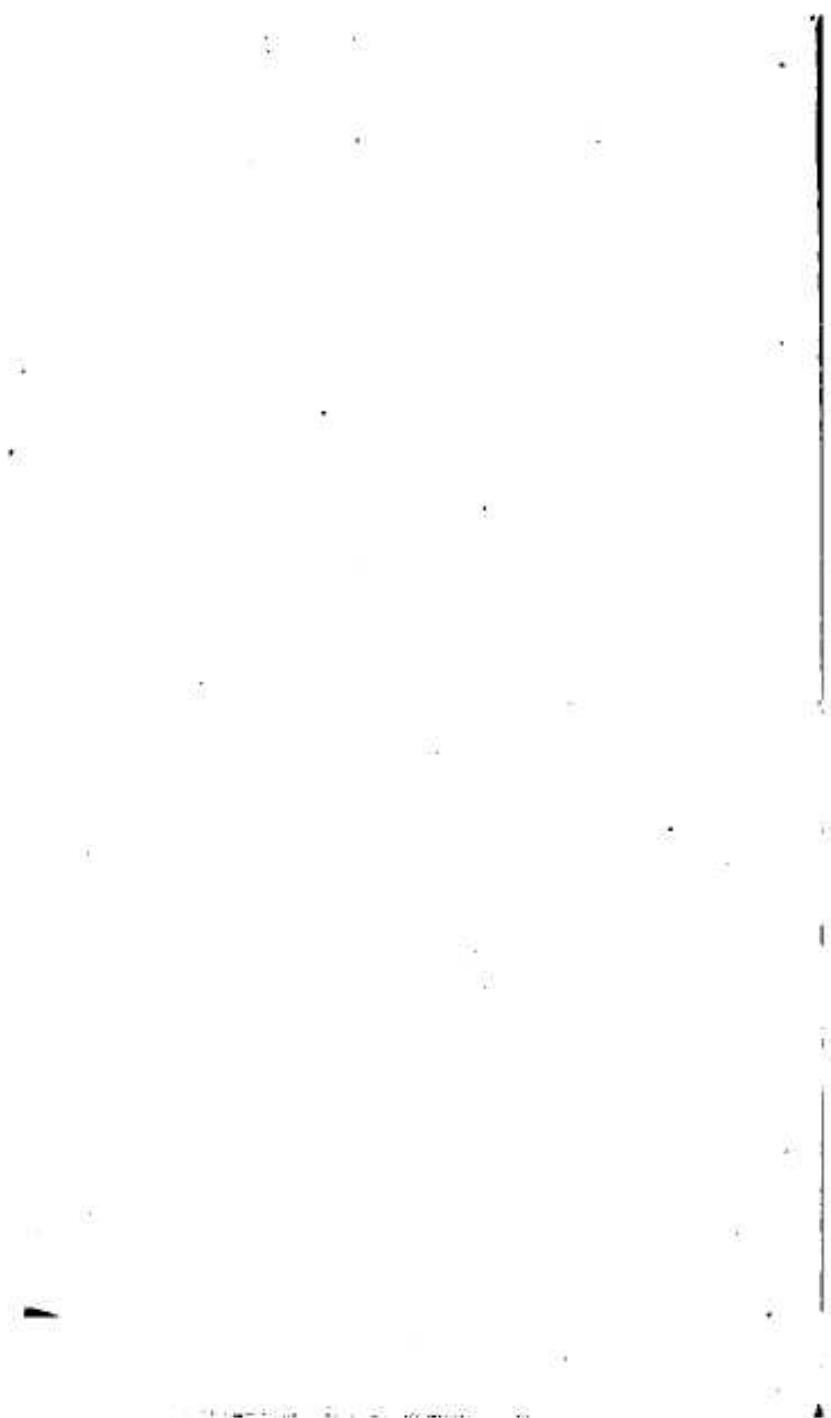


Figure 1. Map of the United States showing the locations of the numbered points and connecting lines.