

**AN ESSAY UPON THE VERSIFICATION
OF HOMER, AND HIS DIGAMMA; IN
REFERENCE CHIEFLY, BUT NOT
EXCLUSIVELY, TO THE SYSTEM OF
PROFESSOR DUNBAR**

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An Essay upon the Versification of Homer, and His Digamma; In Reference Chiefly, but Not Exclusively, to the System of Professor Dunbar by James M'Ivor

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ON THE
VERSIFICATION OF HOMER.

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UPON THE

VERSIFICATION OF HOMER,

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IN REFERENCE CHIEFLY, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, TO

THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSOR ^{Geo. C.} DUNBAR.

BY JAMES M·I·VOR,

SCHOLAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

"Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo."

^{mc}
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M.DCCC.XXXIX.

TO THE
REV. GEO. SIDNEY SMITH, A.M., M.R.I.A.,
LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,
RECTOR OF AGHALURCHER,
AND
PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
DUBLIN,
THIS ATTEMPT
TO ELUCIDATE A PERPLEXED SUBJECT
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY HIS GRATEFUL AND ATTACHED PUPIL,
THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E .



THE rules of authorship, I am told, require, that in addition to the subject matter of every book, there shall also be given to the public a title page, an epistle dedicatory, and a preface. The first, as may be perceived, I have succeeded in obtaining; Mr. Smith's kindness has enabled me to supply the second; but for a preface I am sadly at a loss. To enlarge upon the advantages accruing from an attentive study of Grecian literature; to shew that all true and enlarged views of Greek must be based upon a knowledge of the Epic language, as developed in Homer; and to prove that, before we can examine Homer's language with any degree of critical certainty, we must be acquainted with the laws of his versification; would render my preface a treatise in itself, and this would be very far from pleasing the public. To describe the nature of my subject were of no avail; he who knows so little

as to be a stranger to its difficulties, and in whose eyes, of consequence, an attempt to meet them must be superfluous, will not be persuaded of their existence by a preface; and he, whose erudition places him beyond their reach, needs neither the preface, nor the book prefaced.

Again, to beg my reader's pardon for the unprovoked audacity of this offer to instruct him, or Professor Dunbar's for thus gratuitously daring to break a lance on his invincible panoply; and to plead in extenuation, that these pages would not, now at least, have seen the light, but for the favourable opinion and advice of ONE in the foremost rank of classical scholars, and for the substantial encouragement afforded to its publication by experienced patrons of literature, whose kindness I acknowledge with gratitude, while I forbear to write their names till I can present a tribute more worthy of their acceptance—or, to apologize for the homely style of the composition, by stating to the elegant scholar or the fastidious critic, that it was hastily written amid a multiplicity of other engagements, when, in addition to my Scholarship reading, I was occupied six or seven hours daily by my pupils, would be equally useless: he who is disposed to find fault will receive no excuses, and

he who is pleased with the substance of what I advance, will, I hope, overlook the plainness, perhaps inelegance, of my diction.

In any event, to write a preface calculated to gratify the public taste, (and, to my consternation, I have been credibly informed, that many *excellent* critics frame their decisive judgment of a book upon a review of the merits of its prefatory discourse,) lies beyond the range of my abilities, and so my little tract must fall into its reader's hands unaided by the eloquence of a well-worded apology.