

# **CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE**

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Curiosities of literature by I. D'Israeli

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**I. D'ISRAELI**

**CURIOSITIES  
OF LITERATURE**



**New Curiosities of Literature.**

LONDON:  
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Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

# Curiosities of Literature.

BY

I. D'ISRAELI, ESQ.,

DOCTOR IN CIVIL LAW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AND FELLOW OF  
THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON.

## Illustrated

BY

BOLTON CORNEY, ESQ.,

HONORARY PROFESSOR OF CRITICISM IN THE *RÉPUBLIQUE DES LETTRES*,  
AND MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF ENGLISH BIBLIOPHILES.

"Popular as D'Israeli is, I do not think he has ever obtained from criticism a fair acknowledgment of the merits; suffice he is entitled to claim."—J. T. BAYMAN, Esq., M.P.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ACQUINATED.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

### **Ideas on Controversy :**

*Deduced from the practice of a Veteran; and adapted to  
the meanest capacity.*

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1838.

## P R E F A C E.

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THESE illustrations of the writings of Mr. D'Israeli, and of the school of literature to which he belongs, were privately circulated towards the close of the last year, as an experimental inquiry into the force of truth.<sup>1</sup>

On the appearance of a *ninth* edition of the *Curiosities of Literature*<sup>2</sup>—a work which had left me rather pleasurable recollections—I was induced to renew my acquaintance with it; and, at every glance, detected some misrepresentation or error.

To correct the errors of a popular work is always desirable; and it may also be expedient to unveil the deception and conceit of its author. In conformity with such principles, these critical illustrations were composed. I do not more expressly advert to

<sup>1</sup> *Curiosities of Literature*, by I. D'Israeli, Esq., Doctor in Civil Law of the University of Oxford, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Illustrated by Bolton Corney, Esq., Honorary Professor of Criticism in the *République des Lettres*, and Member of the Society of English Bibliophiles. Greenwich [London: F. Shoberl, Junior.]: printed by especial command. Sm. 8vo. pp. viii + 160. <sup>2</sup> *Curiosities of Literature*. By I. D'Israeli, Esq. D.C.L. F.S.A. Ninth edition, revised. London: Edward Moxon, 1834. Sm. 8vo. 6 vols.



motives — because I have dilated on that point, and on various important points of criticism and literature, in an *episode* which follows the series of articles.

An arid list of ERRATA would have failed to obtain the object in view. I resolved, therefore, to select from the numerous instances which I had noted, a very limited proportion; to admit no one which seemed unadapted to serve as the basis of an essay; to aim at variety of subject; and, as to form, at the attraction of novelty. Such was the plan of the work; and of its competent execution, I have received very gratifying testimonials.

It was my wish, on various accounts, to reprint the work for public use; but I chose to defer the execution of my project, in consequence of the announcement of an intended reply<sup>3</sup> — which did not appear till four months after the transmission of my volume to Bradenham House. This reply, entitled *The Illustrator Illustrated*,<sup>4</sup> would alone have led me to decide. I forbear to characterise the pamphlet. It may be sufficient to state that the author has omitted to *illustrate* the only instances of oversight which have been pointed out to me; and that his labours have not required me to suppress one line!

<sup>3</sup> Athenæum, 27 January 1838.    <sup>4</sup> *The Illustrator Illustrated*. By the author of the "Curiosities of Literature." London: Edward Moxon, 1838. 8vo. pp. iv + 81.

In this edition, some further evidence is produced on a contested point in the first article; in the second, the subject of which interests me, there are material improvements; and various additions are made to the twenty-fourth, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth articles. The others have no alterations of importance; and some are reprinted *verbatim*. I have reviewed the pamphlet in notes, which are marked thus: \* \* \*; and have attempted the portraiture of a controversialist, in the *Ideas on Controversy*.

I certainly did not *affect to spare* Mr. D'Israeli. Facts, supported by references to authorities, were the corrective instruments chiefly resorted to; but I rather freely availed myself of sarcasm and irony. The nature of his reply justifies me on every point; and proves that I had formed an accurate conception of his character.

It must be admitted that our essayist is not the *only* popular author whose writings call for critical examination; but I have vacated the chair of criticism—in opposition to very flattering solicitations. Fearless, as ever, of an encounter in vindication of truth and literature, I conceive that one enterprise of this description may be sufficient for an individual whose time is otherwise occupied; and who loves tranquillity.

I now cheerfully commit to men of letters, the appreciation of my motives and of my censures; and as my opponent has shown a disposition to leave me in possession of the last *argument*, withdraw from the controversy.

Bolton Corney.

GREENWICH,  
31 July 1838.