

Anti-Jacobin Novels

Robert Bisset, *Douglas; or, The Highlander*
(1800)

Volumes III and IV

Edited by
Richard Cronin



ANTI-JACOBIN NOVELS

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General Editor
W. M. Verhoeven

VOLUME 5

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DOUGLAS ;
OR,
THE HIGHLANDER.
A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By ROBERT BISSET, L. L. D.

AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF BURKE, &c.

V O L. III.

Detrahere et pellem, nitidus qua quisque per ora,
Cederet, introrsum turpis. HOR.

Sunt hic etiam sua præmia laudi. VIRG.

L O N D O N :
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DOUGLAS; OR, *THE HIGHLANDER.*

CHAP. I.

*Adventures at the Watering Places continued – Our Hero's generous
Conduct to a young Sailor and his Family – Dover – Face of the
Country analogous to the English Character.*

WHILE Sidney was revelling in the ruin of a young creature that loved him to distraction, Charles had an opportunity of preserving a young woman from similar destruction.

Happening to return late one evening through the village of St. Peter's, in passing a cottage on the way to Broadstairs, he thought he heard the sobbing of grief. From a humane curiosity, looking through the window, by the crevice of a torn curtain, / he perceived two women sitting with a paper before them over which they were weeping. The one was elderly, the other apparently about twenty. From the poorness of the mansion he was apprehensive that immediate distress might be the cause; he accordingly hied himself home, questioned his landlady about the inhabitants of the cottage, and learned that they consisted of a mother and daughter constantly, and occasionally that a son, who was in the navy, came to visit them. They had paid, hitherto, fairly and honourably for every thing, but from the increasing dejection of both she was afraid that their little store was nearly exhausted; yet she could not suppose them to be in immediate pecuniary distress.

Douglas the next morning directed his walk that way, and, going with an intention to knock at the door, heard a voice speaking very harshly whilst the answers were mixt with weeping: at last a man said, 'Old woman, if your daughter does / not consent to my master's proposals, your son will be detained for that note in Canterbury gaol, and a distress¹ for

the rent will be entered upon your goods, so that you will be both obliged to follow him. I shall leave you till this evening to consider of it.' – Douglas removed a little from the door, so as to appear walking on, when the man came out. He turning down towards Broadstairs, Douglas returned, and, with some of the common observations concerning the weather, they entered into discourse. The man said he was going to breakfast at the inn where Charles happened to lodge. Our hero, though he did not approve of this person, from what he had overheard, yet wishing to know the exact state of the case, proposed to breakfast in the same room.

'I suppose, Sir, you may be a stranger hereabouts as I am myself; I should think we might as well have our tea together.'

'With all my heart,' replied the other. /

After some indifferent talk, Charles asked who lived in that cottage that he had seen him come out of.

'I think I have seen,' said he, affecting to talk lightly, 'a devilish fine girl there.'

The man appeared as if he had been drinking without being since in bed, and had swallowed a large bason of rum and milk before, and another after breakfast, so that he was in a communicative disposition.

'D—n me,' said he, 'if they be not a couple of the greatest fools I ever met with. That young one might make her fortune now, if she would only hear a little reason. A man of a very great estate, and a nobleman into the bargain, about two or three months ago, happening to be down, looking at a place to buy or take for the summer, saw this girl and fell in fancy with her; so as I was an old acquaintance of his Lordship's, long before he was a Lord, and used to do little jobs for him / now-and-then, although I believe, with him, it is more shew than reality, so I enquired into their affairs, and found that they had contracted a debt on account of their son, although part of the money, I believe, was applied to the maintenance of the mother and sister. The father had been a Captain in the navy, and having been well known at Sandwich and Canterbury, the widow and son had got credit by that means. I sent a nephew of mine, a boy, well-accustomed to commissions of that sort, George Dunderhead, to pay the debts, and get the hills into my hands. George did so; he did also execute another commission, at the same time, for a particular friend of his, a bailiff's follower. The whole was fifty pounds; and George being called to Mr. Brazenface, in the west part of this county, to be his usher,² I was obliged to take the business into my own hands, and hoped to have every thing ready when my Lord came down. I took a lease of the cottage, with an

assignment³ of the rent / then due. I spoke first to the mother, then to the daughter, all in vain. I went afterwards over to Chatham where the son was; told him my demand upon him; and when he said that he could not pay immediately, I thought it was time to make proposals, and said to him, that I did not wish to urge him, if not convenient, but that favour for favour was fair and square, so I very frankly and freely told him what I wished to be done. Would you think it? The impudent varlet, instead of answering coolly, as one might expect upon a matter of business, first struck me in the face, and then, God be praised, saying I was not worth a beating, struck his foot against me here – with such force, that I declare, Sir, I can shew you the marks to this day.'

'I shall take your word for it; but proceed if you please.'

'I immediately took out a writ; not for the assault, for I was told that a jury would only give me a shilling damages, / but for the debt. Lawyer Phillips got him into *custodium safum*,⁴ as the learned in the law calls it, and he was arrested last week. I told my Lord Sneak, then, that I thought the business was pretty nearly done. I wrote a letter to the widow, yesterday, and came this morning to see what effect it had. Still they are in their own light.⁵ However, I said I should give them to this evening; they whimpered and whined so, that I did not like to be disturbed any longer with them, so I shall spend the day here, go back to them in the evening, and, if they don't agree, have an execution⁶ in the house for the rent tomorrow morning. So, in the meantime, Sir, if you have a mind to be merry, I'll spend the day with you. For it is not for want of money that I prosecute for so small a sum, but to please my Lord.'

Douglas was at his wits end what means to employ to extricate these poor people from their distress. He had not above twenty pounds by him, and knew that it / would be inconvenient, however agreeable to his mother, to advance the difference and expences, until his father's arrival in India, when liberal remittances might be expected. Sidney, he knew, was generally in an exhausted state. Dudley, who had gone to Canterbury, could not have much more than his immediate occasions would require. Still he eagerly wished to assist the distressed family. He dispatched an express to Dudley, requesting his immediate presence, and bethought himself of interesting, through Dudley, Mr. Nevil, to whom such a sum would be no object. Meanwhile, chance afforded him a longer time for deliberation. The man having taken a nap to recruit him from the want of sleep and from the effects of drinking, Douglas went out, called on the widow, told her he had learned some of the particulars, and begged to

know what the amount of the rent due was. Finding it was only a few pounds, he had the pleasure to see that he could prevent immediate distress in her / house. They were both, she said, preparing to walk to Canterbury. But Douglas ordered a chaise for them. The man awakening, asked Douglas, on his return, if ever he played at any sort of game. Douglas had not the least inclination to gaming, but knowing this fellow to be a scoundrel, and conceiving him, therefore, to be a cheat, he determined to humour him, in hopes that he would commit a fraud, which would place him in Douglas's power, and so enable our hero to compel him to give such terms as should be prescribed. Accordingly a pack of cards was ordered, and they began to play at picquet.⁷ The man being an expert gambler, bethought himself of suffering Charles to gain first, with a view to fleece him completely. Charles immediately, from his antagonist's play, comprehended this object. The first game he gained fifteen guineas, between stakes and betts. The next they doubled. Our hero seeing his own play to be sufficiently good to guard / against fraud, and determined the least was attempted, to threaten to commit him to a constable he appeared flushed with success. The other trusting to an advanced stake the next game, suffered him to gain the second, so that his clear profits and betts made him, in all, forty-five guineas in pocket. The gambler said, he must send to Margate bank for a fresh recruit of cash; but, in the mean time, as he had not above twenty guineas in his pocket, offered to leave Fearnought's draft as a security, but said that he would play him for an hundred guineas. Douglas, without either expressing his acceptance or rejection of the proposals of farther play, desired him to indorse the note, which he did, and received the difference. Douglas then told him that he was authorized to pay the rent of Mrs. Fearnought, 'which I now offer you, Sir.'

'O God! my dear boy,' said he, 'I don't want the rent. I want that to be settled with my good friend, Lord Sneak.' /

'I insist on an immediate receipt, which (ringing the bell) I shall proffer you the amount for before the landlord; and, as I understand that the draft, now mine, was for the whole, I advise you to have young Fearnought immediately liberated.'

A waiter now coming, Mr. Cog begged Douglas to have a moment's patience before he sent for the landlord; the waiter was accordingly dismissed. Cog again entreated Douglas not to interfere; but he declared he should procure immediate bail for Fearnought, 'And more than that, Sir, I shall get him supported in an action against you, for false imprisonment.'

‘False imprisonment!’ says Mr. Cog, ‘Have not I his draught?’

‘No, I have his draught, unless you have palmed upon me a forgery; but come, give an immediate direction for his release; pay the charges, or I shall expose the whole of the nefarious plan which you opened to me in your cups.’ /

‘That is taking a very unfair advantage, Sir.’

‘I can see no unfairness in exposing villainy. I should not have sitten⁸ in your company if I had not in the morning overheard your harshness to defenceless women, and from your threats, with the accompanying proposals, conceiving you to be a scoundrel, I wished to detect your artifices, and prevent them from success. I shall, to-morrow, call upon Sneak, and represent to him the distress which you impute to his intention, and the disgrace he will incur when the whole is laid open, if what you have said of him be actually true, and he is so thorough a rogue to plot such rascality, and so thorough a fool as to employ so babbling an agent. So now, Sir, I’ll leave you to your meditations; but unless Fearnought be released from prison tomorrow morning, I shall publicly expose both the contemptible Sneak, and his contemptible tools, to the deserved scorn and detestation, and shall procure for the young / officer such support as will render your profligate worthlessness totally impotent.’

Mr. Cog finding that there was no alternative between dereliction⁹ of villainy and public disgrace, at last declared that, to-morrow morning Fearnought should have a full and ample discharge.

Dudley had been at Dover when Douglas’s express was sent, and did not receive it till early the next morning. Posting to Broadstairs, he found our hero and was told by him the reason of the express. While he was making, on the conduct of the principal and auxiliary rascals, his comments, which such acts must always draw from men of honour and integrity, a waiter entering, told him that a young man, in trowsers, with two women, requested admittance to him. This being granted, the two cottagers entered with, as Douglas justly concluded, the young Lieutenant. The widow and daughter threw themselves prostrate at Douglas’s feet, and when he had raised them, the old woman invoked / every blessing on the head of the youth, who, as she said, in the form of an angel, had done an angelic act of goodness. ‘You have,’ she said, ‘noble Sir, prevented from destruction three fellow-creatures, the widow and children of as brave an officer as ever fought for his King and country.’

The son expressed his gratitude in equally strong terms, and the daughter looked as much as either. After Douglas had indulged his visitants by

suffering them to pour out the ebullitions of their gratitude, and they were proposing to depart, Douglas requested the Lieutenant to spend the day with him. Fearnought replied, that he wished to return immediately to Chatham, to enquire whether, in consequence of his absence, he had not been superseded; that he was afraid his oppressor might have bribed the turnkey to intercept his letters, as he had received no answer to any he wrote to his ship since his confinement. Douglas and Dudley offered to / accompany him, to explain to his Captain, if ignorant of it, the causes of his absence. Arriving at Rochester, they left the Lieutenant at the inn, and proceeded to Chatham. Douglas enquiring for the ship, was informed that she was gone to Sheerness,¹⁰ but learned that the Captain was still at his lodgings, near the Dock Yard. He luckily found him at home, and told him that he had come on the part of Mr. Fearnought.

‘D—n that young fellow,’ replied the Captain, ‘he has turned out quite a different man from what I always thought him. I reckoned him as trusty an officer as any that ever stepped between stem and stern; but here has he been away in London with some cursed girl for this month, without leave.’

‘I find, Captain,’ said Douglas, ‘that the letters which Fearnought wrote you have never come to hand. He has been unfortunate, but not guilty.’ Douglas then told him the whole truth. /

The Captain expressed his joy, and said he had just come in time to save his commission, as he should have been obliged, in a few days, to have made such a report to the Admiralty as would have subjected him to the broad — R.¹¹ ‘As for that Cog, and Sneak, though he be a Lord, I wish I had the doing them justice. I should have them keelhawled,¹² and anointed with a cat-o’-nine-tails.’ Fearnought was sent for, all matters settled by the Captain, and leave given him to join the ship at Deal.

Our hero having remained in the Isle of Thanet for about a fortnight longer, made an excursion to Dover, and with delight and admiration contemplated on the proud cliffs, viewed the castle, and ascended the opposite eminence, rendered classic ground by the magic pen of our dramatic bard.¹³ He returned to London the direct road. Having passed the high and rugged hills, near the coast, and come in to the rich and beautiful plains surrounding the ancient metropolis of christian England, an / analogy struck him between the appearance which English landscapes and English manners would wear to a continental visitor, according to the different stages of his acquaintance.

At Dover the country, though bold, was rude and uncouth; as you advanced into the country it became beautiful and rich, though still preserving the grand aspect which first struck your eyes; so is it, said Douglas, with the English character. To a stranger it may, at first, appear repulsive, but on being better known is found to abound in pleasing, useful, and great qualities.

Arriving in London, he found that his mother and sister were gone with Mrs. Goodwill to Hendon. He enquired after Wilson, who was now come to town to employ himself in literary efforts. He had the satisfaction to find, that as the features of the new philosophy became more prominent, Wilson became much cooler in his approbation of the French revolution; / that he had more narrowly investigated its individual character, and more carefully separated it from ideas of general liberty, under the semblance of which it had first been viewed by him with a favourable eye. Douglas asked him if he had met with Sidney lately about town, as he had eloped, some weeks before, from Margate, with a girl, and he had not heard of him since. Wilson replying in the negative, Douglas continued: 'I am afraid that the same unsteadiness of mind which produces extravagant theory, instead of experimental and just deduction from Sidney in various departments, and especially in politics, affects his moral principles. He has many good qualities, both of head and heart, yet neither of them are unalloyed by great defects.'

'Has he seduced the girl?' said Wilson.

'As far as I can judge, from her former appearance, he has; and though I respect many parts of Sidney's character, I cannot allow him the praise of sound moral principles, / if he practises so pernicious an art.'

'Why,' said Wilson, 'I cannot accuse myself in that way; it may have been for want of opportunity, but much allowance is to be made for youthful passion and situation.'

Douglas and Wilson next morning set off for Hendon, and had the pleasure to find their friends in perfect health. Mrs. Douglas was in good spirits, having the day before received a packet from her husband from the Cape of Good Hope; in which he had mentioned his health and spirits to be as good as his friends could wish. In the letter he expressed himself under great obligations to a mate of an Indiaman, who had, at great risque to himself, saved the life of one of his fellow-passengers, with whom he had become extremely intimate, although their situations were very different.

Isabella was not the least affected by the arrival of Douglas, and her delight so / flushed her cheek, beamed in her eyes, and dimpled her mouth, that Douglas thought her more exquisitely charming than ever. His situation, however, as it forbade any thoughts of an engagement, determined his well-principled and resolute mind to persevere in refraining from a declaration of affection, and, as far as he could, from what his integrity conceived to be equivalent, a tacit expression of love; he, therefore, rigorously exerted that *self-command* which, though troublesome, is a sure guard of moral rectitude, by confining his attention to general politeness. While his heart was melting in tenderness, the strength of his integrity assumed the appearance of indifference. Isabella, for some time, felt mortification at what she conceived his indifference, but flattered herself that there was no room for jealousy.

One morning, as Miss Douglas and she were walking, a lady met them, who asked if Mr. Douglas did not live in that house before which they were. /

Isabella made no answer, but was evidently greatly agitated by the question.

Louisa asked, what Mr. Douglas she meant? – ‘Mr. Charles Douglas, that lived with Dr. Vampus.’

‘Yes, he does,’ said she.

‘But,’ said Isabella eagerly, ‘he is not at home; my brother and he are gone out a shooting.’

The lady accordingly returned towards the village, and Isabella, finding herself seized with a tremor, proposed to return home. She had not reached the door when the two young gentlemen made their appearance, and she hurried to her room, not without the assistance of the balustrades. Louisa soon followed her, and found her dissolved in tears. It required much less penetration than Louisa possessed to know the general sentiments of Isabella, and what had particularly affected her that day. At the same time, as this was a subject on which no confidence had ever been reposed in her, she carefully / avoided appearing to comprehend the cause of her present emotion. Mrs. Douglas and Mrs. Goodwill had gone out together, on a morning visit, so that Louisa had time to devote her attention to her companion, without any enquiry into the cause, which rendered any particular attention then necessary.

A note arrived for Charles about a quarter of an hour after his return, in consequence of which he set off immediately for the village. Betaking himself to the inn, for such they called it, kept by his old acquaintance the

barber, he there was received by the writer of the note in the person of his old friend Miss Bouncer. She reproached him, at first, with his long absence from Heath House, and declared herself much enraged at his neglect. He having made the best apology he could, she at last graciously condescended to forgive him, only insisting on his company during the rest of the day. Charles was prevailed upon, and sent to his sister to / desire she would not wait dinner for him. Their own repast was ordered up. The political barber carried it in himself, and, when the cloth was withdrawn, repeated an order respecting the apartment of the present couple, perfectly consistent with the general plan of his house, of which an established rule was, that no servants should ever enter a room in which there were two persons of different sexes, unless their attendance was required. Having, during dinner, decanted two bottles of wine for them, left filberts,¹⁴ grapes, and other articles which the autumnal season afforded, as he went out of the room he begged them to ring hard if they wanted any thing else, *the room* they were in, he said, *being distant from the kitchen*. Saying this, he left them to their grapes, wine, and conversation.

It would be to no purpose to detail the particulars of their conversation; it is probable it was conciliatory, as, when the barber attended at tea, as he afterwards declared, the lady was in most excellent humour, / as is generally the case after an abundance of good cheer.

Miss Bouncer procured the promise of Charles to renew his visits to Heath House, and, being obliged to be at home that evening, resolutely set off at eight at night, and, without fear of robbers or ravishers, drove into town. Arriving at one inn, she took a hackney coach to another, and from the second a fresh chaise and horses for her own house. She slept sound after the exercise of her journey, and rose betimes the next morning to continue her instructions to the young ladies of the boarding-school.

Charles returned to the ladies, and found that his friend Wilson, having conjectured the truth, had told them a different story. That Charles had been sent for by an old school-fellow at Dr. Vampus's, who, though urged to dine with him at the cottage, would not agree, but would talk over their old frolics with Charles alone. Mrs. Goodwill asked him why he had not brought his companion with him to the cottage, as / it was too late to return to town; it would have been better, as we have no spare bed, to have had his share of yours, than to have gone away so late. Wilson, who made no doubt that this arrangement might have been agreeable to the companion, could not avoid smiling. His sister perceiving this, suspected the truth; first turned red, then very pale, and, finally, swooned away.

Mrs. Goodwill and Mrs. Douglas, who each loved Isabella as if she had been their own child, were in great commotion, especially when, after a long insensibility, they began to apprehend danger. Douglas, perceiving their fears, was himself alarmed, and, finding no signs of life beginning to appear, manifested his hitherto well-concealed love. Embracing her with the most frantic distress, he called on her, his lovely, beloved Isabella; kissed her cold lips, and swearing he would never survive her. Whether it was that in the warmth of our hero there was more efficacy than in smelling bottles, or that the swoon was of itself / arrived at a conclusion, we cannot with certainty determine; but she recovered, and, as her eyes opened, finding herself in the arms of Douglas, was almost in danger of a relapse. She soon after was led out of the room by Louisa, followed by the other ladies, while Wilson, being left alone with Douglas, said to him, very coolly, 'Mr. Douglas, you have shewn yourself very much affected by the illness of my sister; from the strength of your expressions on the subject, and your evident emotion, I, as her brother, wish an explanation on that point.'

'Wilson' answered Douglas, with great warmth; 'I love your sister to distraction, but, upon my soul, never told herself, or any other person, my sentiments.'

Wilson for the present was satisfied, and the ladies soon after returned down stairs.

Mrs. Douglas was very pensive all the evening, not the less so as she observed uneasiness and anxiety strongly impressed / in the face of her son. The next day she desired to speak with him privately; and, begging him to excuse the anxiety of a mother, requested him to explain to her the causes that made him so affected the preceding evening.

'I have no doubt, my dear Charles,' said she, 'of the situation of your heart, as nothing but the most sincere and strong affection could produce the disquiet that the illness of Isabella caused to you last night. But, my dear son, you know you are a very young man; you know you are not yet, in other respects, so independent as to settle for life; such a scheme would be most imprudent, most distressing to me, distressing and displeasing to your father. I have that confidence in your good sense, your prudence, and your filial duty, that I am persuaded you will not admit such an idea.'

Charles assured her, most solemnly, that although, were he so situated as to have it in his power, with prudence and propriety, / to think of fixing his fate for life, he should prefer Isabella to any woman in the world; yet that such a notion, at present, he would think to be madness.

‘Then,’ said his mother, ‘I have equal confidence in your honour and integrity, as in your other qualities. I know you are above the silly vanity that would receive gratification from enjoying the affections of any innocent and amiable girl. Whatever sentiments you may entertain, therefore, respecting this young lady, I am convinced you have never made any declaration to her, or any advances; as from such a youth as you they could not be received with an indifference by any young woman whose heart was unengaged.’

Douglas protested that he never had endeavoured to convey, either to Isabella, or to any other person, the state of his affections.

‘I think, then,’ said Mrs. Douglas, ‘that as she is a very lovely young woman, and you, Charles, I must say, a very / fine young man, and, as I rather suspect, that you are not mutually indifferent, I think, before the heart of either is irrevocably engaged, absence will be a very useful prescription for both. It is my request, therefore, that you will go to-morrow to your apartments in the Temple; Louisa and I shall see you as often as we can, and Miss Wilson and you need see each other but seldom.’

Charles, although his heart revolted at this proposition, yet, habituated to command his affections, when any great duty interfered with their gratification, resolved to comply with the entreaties of his mother. Isabella, pretending a continuance of indisposition, which the state of her mind almost rendered real, kept her apartment the whole of that day. Wilson, having conversed with her, found, to his great uneasiness, the state of her affections, for she could not elude his penetrating enquiries; but, not being able to discover what her hopes of a return were, and, well acquainted / with the moral principles of Douglas, he was without apprehensions of improper, or even insinuating, advances from him. Still he was very well pleased to hear that Douglas was for the Temple forthwith, so that the lovers would not be for a longer time under the same roof. – Charles left Hendon without having seen Isabella, and, indeed, without her knowing that he was gone, not to return to it as a place of permanent abode. /

CHAP. II.

Charles's Studies in the Temple – Receives a Visit from the
 Democratical Barber – His Praises of Tom Croft – Story Books against
 Lords, Bishops, and Universities – Charles meets with Isabella.

CHARLES, having now taken up his headquarters, applied himself, with great vigour, to general jurisprudence, that he might prepare for legal history, and the details of municipal law.¹⁵ He made himself master of the laws of the different republics of Greece, especially Athens and Sparta, which are better known to moderns than those of other republics; of the Roman code, from the twelve tables to Justinian;¹⁶ examined, by the general rules of jurisprudence, the various codes which he studied, and found that to none were they so completely applicable as to the laws of England. He made himself fully acquainted with the constitutional / history and principles of this country, and was the more rivetted in his attachment to the laws, liberties, and polity under which he lived, from the attempts now becoming so prevalent to subvert them. The more he advanced in political philosophy in general, in the knowledge of British affairs, civil and political in particular, the more he was convinced that the desire of changing such a system must arise from superficial reasoning, or corrupt motives. Conceiving this opinion of British innovators from the pernicious end which such, from ignorance, misapprehension, or weakness, on the one hand, or from wickedness on the other, sought, he was farther confirmed in it by investigating the various means. He attended chiefly to the literary engines of Anti-constitutional operation. Here he found the striking value of analysis and induction. Investigating Priestley, Paine, Joel Barlow,¹⁷ the most strenuous and direct supporters of levelling principles, he with ease detected their assumptions of / general laws, which induction not only did not confirm but controverted. The more indirect and desultory abettors, the metaphysical jargonists, the romance-mongers, the promoters of moral and political doctrines which would overturn free agency, the belief of a divine Providence, of a future state; who would suppress all kind affections, all regard to the most endearing relations of civil and social life; who would destroy institutions that preserve rational creatures from the indiscriminate sensuality of beasts; who would annihilate

government, order, property, and morals,¹⁸ either weakly or wickedly erred from not bringing their doctrines to the TEST OF INDUCTION. The parrots of the metaphysical jargonists, who endeavour to explain and familiarize their doctrines in novels and plays, and declamatory pamphlets, he perceived to be equally deficient in accurate observation, just and comprehensive reasoning. If a metaphysical jargonist had, instead of spinning theories from his own imagination, accurately / examined facts, studied history and human nature, and enquired whether or not, in the greatest number of cases, religious or irreligious men; whether men actuated by what is called private affections, good friends, good children, good parents, good wives, good husbands, good subjects, good sovereigns; that is, persons actuated by affections to certain individuals or classes whose welfare was affected by their actions, or men destitute of these affections, and negligent of the conduct which they produce, are in the majority of cases, the most conducive to happiness; whether to the aggregate of good, *of the whole*: (to use a cant term, of the said jargonists,) if, in fact, they had employed induction, they would have found out the falsity of their own systems. If the parrots of metaphysical jargon, the romance-mongers, &c. had formed habits of induction, none of them would have been guilty of so gross an absurdity as to represent all diversity of rank as unproductive of advantage and productive / of mischief, because an instance might exist of the son of a low and worthless father being good, and the son of a high and worthy parent being wicked.* On these subjects he had often disquisitions with Wilson, and disputes with Sidney. Wilson was, indeed, become now very averse to the new theories, of which his vigorous understanding, accustoming itself to induction, discovered the fallacy. Sidney was becoming more attached to the new theories, not only from his habits of exercising his fancy more than his reason, but from other circumstances that rendered a practical application not disagreeable. His fortune was originally not great; he was dissipated, and had, of late, got into companies that taught him gaming, as well as increased his other evil propensities. The brilliancy of his genius rendered his associates the more hurtful. Of them, some were distinguished for talents equal to the first men in the kingdom, and to ability, joined to the most unassuming, engaging, / and seductive manners. These gave them, in Sidney's eye, a value, which, in that of a man of no genius, they would not have possessed; and in that of investigation, genius would not have given sanction to any opinion, doctrine, habit, or practice, which reason and virtue did not

* See Anna St. Ives.¹⁹

justify. The ablest of that set was himself, a man of benevolent impulse, but totally void of that self-restraint, without which there is no reliance on conduct. The second was distinguished for brilliancy of wit, but without fixed principles, either of thought or action.²⁰ Men of inferior talents to these, but much above the common run of mankind, were frequently of their parties, and were either gamblers with the first, or debauchees and spend thrifts with the second. Some, also, resembled the more general powers of invention and plausible argument possessed by the one; others, the most specific powers of the other. Sidney was delighted with the classes, and their respective heads, and / though he himself was able to penetrate deeply into a subject, if he chose to exert himself, yet would repeat the brilliant wit of the one, or the inventive sophistry of the other, not as mere wit or ingenuity, but as conclusive arguments. One day, Sidney told Douglas, 'You reason, Charles, 'too much from precedent and authority: however, that is not peculiar to you, for all the supporters of the old governments do the same.'

'As to my reasoning individually,' said Douglas, 'I shall say nothing; but I think the supporters of new governments, or rather no governments at all, are much more *parrots of argument* than those of the old. When Tom Croft writes a novel to shew that all property is an encroachment and usurpation, that thieves, highwaymen, housebreakers, and murderers ought not to be punished, he argues from *authority*.'²¹

'What authority?' said Sidney.

'Of William Subtlewould,' replied Douglas, 'who tells us, in his last treatise / on metaphysical jargon, that there ought to be no property, therefore, there can be no harm in thieves, &c. because they take only what belongs as much to themselves as to any other person. When Charlotte Self-praise gives us, in her novels, the badness of Kings, Priests, Nobles, and Gentry, she repeats what she has heard from Voltaire, Rousseau, or, without going so far away, from Tom Paine, or Tom Croft.'²² Charlotte, therefore, is, in her politics, a mere follower of authority. When Laura Maria proclaims that every virtue is excluded from the habitations of the exalted, she goes merely on the authority of Tom Croft.²³ When she endeavours to shew that all vice is owing to the distinction between rich and poor, she borrows from the said Tom Croft, and also the paragraphs of Cachagee's newspaper.²⁴ In the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies,²⁵ I am told, that the authority of Tom Paine is as much regarded as ever the authority of Pope, or Cardinal, was by the most bigoted / Catholic, and that the fulminations of Priestley, among the Socinian

Dissenters,²⁶ are received as conclusive argument, as much as those of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine,²⁷ among the Scotch seceders.’

‘You will allow,’ said Sidney, ‘that one work in favour of the French Revolution is written by a man of original genius, who thinks for himself, and does not argue from authority.’

‘I do admit one, and one only, to be of the description which you mention. You must mean that – ‘

‘I certainly mean,’ said Sidney, ‘as you suppose, *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*.’²⁸

‘That,’ said Douglas, ‘is a work of very uncommon genius, and very uncommon learning, and very uncommon depth of philosophy. At the same time, I think, he errs, though from a different cause from your Crofts and Subtlewouds, and that gang of apes of metaphysics. He is like our friend Wilson; he admires a just and well regulated liberty, but has fallen into / two mistakes, one of misinformation, and another of sentiment. Admiring liberty as an essential ingredient of happiness, he has not considered the fact as to what is called liberty in France; his general principles are sound and excellent, but he mistakes the case. Sentiment, I believe, had led, in some degree, to the error of an understanding of the highest cast. The old government of France he and every impartial man saw to be execrable; but the feeling of detestation against the old, influenced his judgement respecting the new: he too hastily concluded that a deviation from what was very bad must be good.’

One morning, while Douglas was sitting perusing Grotius,²⁹ the servant told him that a man, calling himself Mr. Poll, desired to be admitted: being accordingly ushered in, Douglas found him to be his Hendon acquaintance and host, the political barber. The servant withdrawing, Poll began – ‘I hope, Sir, as how you won’t take it amiss, but my friend Tom Croft, the shoemaker, / owes me a score, and so he has sent me a new story-book to sell some of them for him, and to pay myself; so if, Sir, you would get off some, I would be very much obligated to you. I should like, besides paying myself, to do Tom a kindness, for he has done me a great honour.

‘What honour has he done you, my friend Poll?’

‘He has made me one of the correspondums.’³⁰

‘Who are the correspondums?’

‘Why, those that is to set all to rights in old England. I am one of the Middlesex apartments; but we shall change the names of the Shires, when we have it all our own way.’

‘Well,’ said Douglas, ‘first tell me what the book is that you recommend.’

'Aye; 'tis a fine book, Sir: I don't remember it all through, but one thing he makes as plain as the nose in one's face; that all your Lords, and all your Bishops, and your varsity learning, is all fools.'³¹ /

'How does he make that out?'

'Lord! Sir, he puts in the story-book, as how a bishop wanted a young man to marry his girl, as how the Lord was a willain, and the varsity larning a nincompoop; and he makes it out that all is so. Gad, when we gets them into our correspondums, we will work them. He has only made three about that yet, but he promises as how he'll make three more.'³²

'And when your correspondums, as as you call them, have carried their object, what are you to gain?'

'Gain, d—n me, I shall gain enough. I gets rid of my wife then.'

'Your wife appears to be a well behaved, good sort of woman.'

'Yes, yes, but I likes three or four much better; and Tom Croft tells me as how, that any two that has mind to one another is to have one another, and change as often as they list. Thinks I at first, but I were a fool then, that's like the beasteses, but now I's enlightened, I knows as how / we be all alike for that, we has no souls more than they has. Tom Croft told us that Mr. Subtlewould had written a book against souls, and all that there d—d nonsense, and against any man having a wife, and marriage, and so on. To be sure, Mr. Subtlewould is one of the cleverest men in the world, and I love him from my very soul, ever since he went to Newgate, to comfit neighbour Snatchum, who they put in prison for stealing cows. Says Mr. Subtlewould, 'My good friend, Snatchum, what made you take the cows?' – 'Why, an't please your honour, Sir, 'says Snatchum, 'I'd run out of money, by having to pay an hundred pounds damages to a friend of mine for his wife,³³ besides fifteen pounds a-piece for three bastards.' – 'Had the wife and you an inclination for one another?' says Subtlewould. – 'That we had,' says Snatchum. – 'Then you had a right to gratify it.' For as he used hard words that I could not remember, he has wrote them down for us, and here they are: / – 'That,' said Mr. Subtlewould, 'is the tyranny of the institution of marriage. And so, friend, you took the cows because you wanted them?' – 'Yes, Sir.' – 'You had a right to do so.' – 'But, egad, the old cull of a justice did not think so, for he sent me to *quod*³⁴ for it.' – 'That arises from the horrid tyranny of property.' You see here the very words, Sir – *Marriage and property are the sources of all evil.* – So, Sir, I hope you will buy Tom Croft's books, for he says he learns them all from that wise Mr. Subtlewould.'

‘No,’ said Douglas, ‘I don’t agree either with Tom Croft, or Bill Subtlewould; besides, if I wanted the books, I should have a right to them without buying, according to his doctrines. Did not he say you might give them away?’

‘No, no, I put that to him, and he said, that in case of *his* books, that was a different affair; but come, Sir, if ever you have a mind to amuse yourself again at my house with that nice lady, I’m not the man / to baulk you, and if you want a fresh tit bit I knows where to find them. Egad, I wishes the old Duke of Quondam would apply to me now – what a fool I were once.’

‘How so?’ said Douglas.

‘Oh, he was after my wife, when she was a very likely woman, and I was then an ignoramus, I was not enlightened. He sent Captain Lickplate, for he did not then employ Jacky, to offer me money for our Margery, but by G—d I gave the Captain a good threshing. I told the story since to Tom Croft and Mr. Subtlewould; they both told me as how I was a great fool, for that marriage was a bug-bear, and I might have had many women for the same money the Duke would have given me.’

‘Who is this Jacky that has succeeded the Captain in his honourable office?’

‘Jacky Gossip; don’t you know him? He gets him his ladies, and the Duke buys Jacky horses, and so they are both pleased.’ /

Poll finding his recommendation of Tom Croft’s book not effectual, and his other proffered services not wanted, withdrew; leaving Charles to reflect on the morality that uninformed people learn from Tom Croft, the shoemaker, and Mr. Subtlewould, the philosopher.

Meanwhile Douglas saw Isabella but seldom, although, from their relative domestic situation, it was impossible to avoid seeing each other sometimes. Isabella was convinced she was not indifferent to Douglas; his looks, his half-stifled sighs, every movement, betrayed his affections. She observed, that when she was apparently in good health, his enquiries were such as might have proceeded from an acquaintance of common politeness; but that if she was ill, there was a tenderness in his manner, notwithstanding evident efforts to conceal it, that manifested the most anxious concern. She could not help conceiving herself loved by him, although she was convinced he wished to hide his passion / from her observation. Reflecting on the cause of this, as she did almost always, she imputed his backwardness to declare himself to a consciousness of both their situations. That she herself had, in fact, no fortune; that he was

wholly dependent on his father. She pitied his sufferings, esteemed his self-command, and his integrity, which precluded their declaration, was tenderly grateful for his services, and felt for his accomplishments and virtues, a still softer sentiment than either pity, esteem, or gratitude.

Mrs. Goodwill and Mrs. Douglas, at the commencement of that summer, had, instead of returning to their cottage at Hendon, taken a small house near town, but in a rural retired situation beyond Bayswater. Isabella frequently walked out alone with a book in her hand, which she could read with less disturbance than when in company with the elderly ladies, or surrounded by her pupils. One evening she had strolled into the gardens and walked as far as the alcove at the end / of the bason, fronting the palace;³⁵ and was indulging herself in reading *Tom Jones*, which, having always liked, she now prized beyond all books of the kind, because the favourite of Douglas. She had come to that scene in which Jones and Sophia met at the canal,³⁶ in that pathetic passage she was reading with the greatest eagerness, the tears trickling down her lovely cheeks, from sympathy with the charming Sophia, when, hearing a foot by her, she looked round with some alarm and beheld Douglas.

Coming from Piccadilly, he had entered the gardens at the Mount Gate, and was crossing towards that by the Gravel Pits, but, passing the alcove, he beheld Isabella. To describe the emotions of this young couple, at this unexpected interview, would be unnecessary to attempt – few would understand the description, and such as could, would require none. But, whatever were their feelings, and however visible they might be to a bye-stander, they were themselves each too much engaged to attend / to those of the other. After some minutes, Charles, in a voice of the most tender melody, and with an expression of countenance that shewed his whole soul to be dissolved in love, said, ‘Isabella, to what fortunate accident do I owe meeting you thus alone?’ He seized her hand, and, with an emotion that he found impossible to resist, carressed her. She, with an agitation that she could not repress, said, ‘I beseech you, my dear – I – I – I mean Mr. Douglas, leave me.’

‘Leave you! – Ah, sweetest Bella, never; – honour, and regard to our mutual situation, have compelled me to dissemble a passion that preys on my vitals, but I’ll never leave you.’

She, looking softly for a minute in his face, sighed out, ‘Indeed you must;’ the last word dying with the reluctance with which it was spoken. Douglas having repeatedly, with great emphasis, spoken the words – ‘I will never leave thee,’ at last sung from the Gentle Shepherd,³⁷ in a / voice