



The TRIAL of SELIM the PERSIAN.

For divers High Crimes and Misdemeanours.

**T**HE court was met ; the pris'ner brought ;  
 The council with instruction fraught ;  
 And evidence prepar'd at large,  
 On oath, to vindicate the charge.

But first 'tis meet, where form denies  
 Poetick helps of fancy'd lies,  
 Gay metaphors, and figures fine,  
 And similes to deck the line ;  
 'Tis meet (as we before have said)  
 To call description to our aid.

Begin we then (as first 'tis fitting)  
 With the three CHIEFS in judgment fitting.  
 Above the rest, and in the chair,  
 Sat FACTION with dissembled air ;  
 Her tongue was skill'd in specious lyes,  
 And murmurs, whence dissentions rise :  
 A smiling mask her features veil'd  
 Her form the patriot's robe conceal'd ;

-With

With study'd blandishments she bow'd,  
 And drew the captivated crowd.  
 'The next in place, and on the right,  
 Sat ENVY, hideous to the sight ;  
 Her snaky locks, her hollow eyes,  
 And haggard form forbad disguise ;  
 Pale discontent, and fullen hate  
 Upon her wrinkled forehead fate :  
 Her left-hand clench'd, her cheek sustain'd,  
 Her right (with many a murder stain'd)  
 A dagger clutch'd, in act to strike,  
 With starts of rage, and aim oblique.  
 Last on the left was CLAMOUR seen,  
 Of stature vast, and horrid mien ;  
 With bloated cheeks, and frantick eyes,  
 She sent her yellings to the skies ;  
 Prepar'd with trumpet in her hand,  
 To blow sedition o'er the land.  
 With these, four more of lesser fame,  
 And humbler rank, attendant came :  
 HYPOCRISY with smiling grace,  
 And IMPUDENCE with brazen face,  
 CONTENTION bold, with iron lungs,  
 And SLANDER with her hundred tongues.

The walls in sculptur'd tale were rich,  
 And statues proud (in many a nich)  
 Of chiefs, who fought in FACTION's cause,  
 And perish'd for contempt of laws.

The roof in vary'd light and shade,  
 The feat of ANARCHY display'd.  
 Triumphant o'er a falling throne  
 (By emblematick figure known)  
 CONFUSION rag'd, and LUST obscene,  
 And RIOT with distemper'd mien,  
 And OUTRAGE bold, and MISCHIEF dire,  
 And DEVASTATION clad in fire.  
 Prone on the ground, a martial maid  
 Expiring lay, and groan'd for aid ;  
 Her shield with many a stab was pierc'd,  
 Her laurels torn, her spear revers'd ;  
 And near her crouch'd, amidst the spoils,  
 A lion painted in the toils.

With look compos'd the pris'ner stood,  
 And modest pride. By turns he view'd  
 The court, the council, and the crowd,  
 And with submissive rev'rence bow'd.

Proceed we now, in humbler strains,  
 And lighter rhymes, with what remains.

Th' indictment grievously set forth,  
 That SELIM, lost to truth and worth,  
 (In company with one WILL P—T  
 And many more, not taken yet)  
 In FORTY-FIVE, the royal palace  
 Did enter, and to shame grown callous,  
 Did then and there his faith forsake,  
 And did accept, receive and take,

With

With mischievous intent and base,  
Value unknown, a certain place.

He was a second time indicted,  
For that, by evil zeal excited,  
With learning more than layman's share,  
(Which parsons want, and he might spare)  
In letter to one GILBERT WEST,  
He, the said SELIM, did attest,  
Maintain, support, and make assertion  
Of certain points, from PAUL's conversion :  
By means whereof the said apostle  
Did many an unbeliever jostle,  
Starting unfashionable fancies,  
And building truths on known romances.

A third charge run, that knowing well  
Wits only eat, as pamphlets sell,  
He, the said SELIM, notwithstanding  
Did fall to answ'ring, shaming, branding  
Three curious Letters to the Whigs ;  
Making no reader care three figs  
For any facts contain'd therein ;  
By which uncharitable sin,  
An author, modest and deserving,  
Was destin'd to contempt and starving ;  
Against the king, his crown and peace,  
And all the statutes in that case.

The pleader rose with brief full charg'd,  
And on the pris'ner's crimes enlarg'd—

But not to damp the Muse's fire  
 With rhet'rick such as courts require,  
 We'll try to keep the reader warm,  
 And sift the matter from the form.  
 Virtue and social love, he said,  
 And honour from the land were fled ;  
 That PATRIOTS now, like other folks,  
 Were made the butt of vulgar jokes ;  
 While OPPOSITION dropp'd her crest,  
 And courted pow'r for wealth and rest.  
 Why some folks laugh'd, and some folks rail'd,  
 Why some submitted, some assail'd,  
 Angry or pleas'd——all solv'd the doubt  
 With who were in, and who were out.  
 The sons of CLAMOUR grew so sickly,  
 They look'd for dissolution quickly ;  
 Their weekly Journals finely written,  
 Were sunk in privies all bestr—n ;  
 Old-England and the London-Evening,  
 Hardly a soul was found believing in,  
 And Caleb, once so bold and strong,  
 Was stupid now, and always wrong,  
     Ask ye whence rose this foul disgrace ?  
 Why SELIM has receiv'd a place,  
 And thereby brought the cause to shame ;  
 Proving that people, void of blame,  
 Might serve their country and their king,  
 By making both the self-same thing.

By

By which the credulous believ'd,  
 And others (by strange arts deceiv'd)  
 That Ministers were sometimes right,  
 And meant not to destroy us quite.

That bart'ring thus in state affairs,  
 He next must deal in sacred wares.  
 The clergy's rights divine invade,  
 And smuggle in the gospel-trade.  
 And all this zeal to re-instate  
 Exploded notions, out of date;  
 Sending old rakes to church in shoals,  
 Like children sniv'ling for their souls,  
 And ladies gay, from smut and libels,  
 To learn beliefs, and read their Bibles;  
 Erecting conscience for a tutor,  
 To damn the present by the future.  
 As if to evils known and real  
 'Twas needful to annex ideal;  
 When all of human life we know  
 Is care, and bitterness, and woe,  
 With short transitions of delight,  
 To set the shatter'd spirits right.  
 Then why such mighty pains and care,  
 To make us humbler than we are?  
 Forbidding short liv'd mirth and laughter  
 By fears of what may come hereafter?  
 Better in ignorance to dwell;  
 None fear, but who believe an hell:

And if there should be one, no doubt  
Men of themselves would find it out.

But SELIM's crimes, he said, went further,  
And barely stopp'd on this side murther ;  
One yet remain'd to close the charge,  
To which (with leave) he'd speak at large.  
And first 'twas needful to premise,  
That tho' so long (for reasons wise)  
The press inviolate had stood,  
Productive of the publick good ;  
Yet still, too modest to abuse,  
It rail'd at vice, but told not whose.  
That great improvements, of late days  
Were made, to many an author's praise,  
Who, not so scrupulously nice,  
Proclaim'd the person with the vice,  
Or gave, where vices might be wanted,  
The name, and took the rest for granted.  
Upon this plan, a Champion <sup>b</sup> rose,  
Unrighteous greatness to oppose,  
Proving the man *inventus non est*,  
Who trades in pow'r, and still is honest ;  
And (God be prais'd) he did it roundly,  
Flogging a certain junto soundly ;  
But chief his anger was directed  
Where people least of all suspected ;

<sup>b</sup> *Author of the Letters to the Whigs.*

And SELIM, not so strong as tall,  
 Beneath his grasp appear'd to fall.  
 But INNOCENCE (as people say)  
 Stood by, and sav'd him in the fray.  
 By her assisted, and one TRUTH,  
 A busy, prating, forward youth,  
 He rally'd all his strength anew,  
 And at the foe a letter threw,  
 His weakest part the weapon found,  
 And brought him senseless to the ground.  
 Hence OPPOSITION fled the field,  
 And IGN'RANCE with her sev'n-fold shield;  
 And well they might, for (things weigh'd fully)  
 The pris'ner, with his Whore and Bully,  
 Must prove for ev'ry foe too hard,  
 Who never fought with such a guard.  
 But TRUTH and INNOCENCE, he said,  
 Would stand him here in little stead,  
 For they had evidence on oath,  
 That would appear too hard for both.

Of witnesses a fearful train  
 Came next th' indictments to sustain;  
 DETRACTION, HATRED, and DISTRUST,  
 And PARTY, of all foes the worst,  
 MALICE, REVENGE, and UNBELIEF,  
 And DISAPPOINTMENT, worn with grief,  
 DISHONOUR foul, unaw'd by shame,  
 And every fiend that vice can name.



All these in ample form depos'd  
 Each fact the triple charge disclos'd,  
 With taunts and gibes of bitter sort,  
 And asking vengeance from the court.

The pris'ner said in his defence,  
 That he indeed had small pretence  
 To soften facts so deeply sworn,  
 But would for his offences mourn ;  
 Yet more he hop'd than bare repentance  
 Might still be urg'd to ward the sentence ;  
 That he had held a place some years,  
 He own'd with penitence and tears,  
 But took it not from motives base,  
 Th' indictment there mistook the case ;  
 And tho' he had betray'd his trust,  
 In being to his country just,  
 Neglecting FACTION and her friends,  
 He did it not for wicked ends,  
 But that complaints and feuds might cease,  
 And jarring parties mix in peace.

That what he wrote to GILBERT WEST  
 Bore hard against him, he confess'd ;  
 Yet there they wrong'd him ; for the fact is,  
 He reason'd for Belief, not Practice ;  
 And people might believe, he thought,  
 Tho' Practice might be deem'd a fault.  
 He either dreamt it, or was told,  
 Religion was rever'd of old,

That

That it gave breeding no offence,  
 And was no foe to wit and sense;  
 But whether this was truth or whim,  
 He would not say; the doubt with him  
 (And no great harm he hop'd) was how  
 Th' enlighten'd world would take it now;  
 If they admitted it, 'twas well,  
 If not, he never talk'd of hell,  
 Nor even hop'd to change men's measures,  
 Or frighten ladies from their pleasures.

One accusation, he confess'd,  
 Had touch'd him more than all the rest;  
 Three Patriot-Letters, high in fame,  
 By him o'erthrown, and brought to shame.  
 And though it was a rule in vogue,  
 If one man call'd another rogue,  
 The party injur'd might reply,  
 And on his foe retort the lye;  
 Yet what accru'd from all his labour,  
 But foul dishonour to his neighbour?  
 And he's a most unchristian elf,  
 Who others damns to save himself.  
 Besides, as all men knew, he said,  
 These Letters only rail'd for bread;  
 And hunger was a known excuse  
 For prostitution and abuse;  
 A guinea, properly apply'd,  
 Had made the writer change his side;

He

He wish'd he had not cut and carv'd him,  
 And own'd, he should have bought, not starv'd him.

The court, he said, knew all the rest,  
 And must proceed as they thought best ;  
 Only he hop'd such resignation  
 Would plead some little mitigation ;  
 And if his character was clear  
 From other faults (and friends were near,  
 Who would, when call'd upon, attest it)  
 He did in humblest form request it,  
 To be from punishment exempt,  
 And only suffer their contempt.

The pris'ner's friends their claim preferr'd,  
 In turn demanding to be heard.  
 INTEGRITY and HONOUR swore,  
 BENEVOLENCE and twenty more,  
 That he was always of their party,  
 And that they knew him firm and hearty.  
 RELIGION, sober dame, attended,  
 And, as she could, his cause befriended ;  
 She said, 'twas since she came from college  
 She knew him introduc'd by KNOWLEDGE ;  
 The man was modest and sincere,  
 Nor farther could she interfere.  
 The MUSES begg'd to interpose,  
 But ENVY with loud hissings rose,  
 And call'd them women of ill fame ;  
 Liars, and prostitutes to shame ;

And

And said, to all the world 'twas known,  
 SELIM had had them ev'ry one.  
 The pris'ner blush'd, the MUSES frown'd,  
 When silence was proclaim'd around,  
 And FACTION, rising with the rest,  
 In form the pris'ner thus address'd.

You, SELIM, thrice have been indicted,  
 First, that by wicked pride excited,  
 And bent your country to disgrace,  
 You have receiv'd, and held a PLACE.  
 Next, INFIDELITY to wound,  
 You've dar'd, with arguments profound,  
 To drive FREETHINKING to a stand,  
 And with RELIGION vex the land.  
 And lastly, in contempt of right,  
 With horrid and unnat'ral spite,  
 You have an AUTHOR's fame o'erthrown,  
 Thereby to build and fence your own.

These crimes successive, on your trial,  
 Have met with proofs beyond denial;  
 To which yourself, with shame, conceded,  
 And but in mitigation pleaded.  
 Yet that the justice of the court  
 May suffer not in men's report,  
 Judgment a moment I suspend,  
 To reason as from friend to friend.

And first, that you, of all mankind,  
 With KINGS and COURTS should stain your mind!

You!

You! who were OPPOSITION's lord!  
 Her nerves, her sinews, and her sword!  
 That you at last, for servile ends,  
 Should wound the bowels of her friends! —  
 Is aggravation of offence,  
 That leaves for mercy no pretence.  
 Yet more—for you to urge your hate,  
 And back the church to aid the state!  
 For you to publish such a letter!  
 You! who have known RELIGION better!  
 For you, I say, to introduce  
 The fraud again!—There's no excuse.  
 And last of all, to crown your shame,  
 Was it for you to load with blame  
 The writings of a Patriot-Youth,  
 And summon INNOCENCE and TRUTH  
 To prop your cause?—Was this for you?—  
 But justice does your crimes pursue;  
 And sentence now alone remains,  
 Which thus, by me, the court ordains.

“ That you return from whence you came,  
 “ There to be stripp'd of all your fame  
 “ By vulgar hands, that once a week  
 “ Old-England pinch you till you squeak;  
 “ That ribbald pamphlets do pursue you,  
 “ And lyes, and murmurs, to undo you,  
 “ With ev'ry foe that WORTH procures,  
 “ And only VIRTUE's friends be YOURS.”

The