

and seldom fail to please. *Misum pauper in Ere* was the boast of an old author. A man usually appears to much better advantage in a plain dress of his own, than in more gaudy apparel that has been made to fit another.

To the Reader.

At the close of this volume, it would be unbecoming in the editor not to express the just sense he entertains of the favour with which an indulgent public hath honoured this performance. So conscious, indeed, is he of the little merit of what is already done, that he finds himself much at a loss for words to express the grateful sense he entertains of the uncommon encouragement he has received. Since the commencement of this work, his attention has been too much occupied by the arrangements, respecting the mechanical execution of it, to allow him to bestow that attention he wished to the literary part. These embarrassments are now, however, in part abated, and he trusts that every day will diminish them more and more. But, upon reviewing this volume, he is persuaded that few of his readers will feel so sensibly its imperfections, as he does himself. Relying upon the indulgence of the public, he judged it more advisable to delay several articles that came within the limits of his plan, than to attempt them at a time when it would have been quite impracticable for him to have done them, what he would have thought justice in the execution.

He has received several communications from unknown correspondents, expressive of much approbation; from others, he has received letters in such a strain, as could not have failed to excite his risible faculties, had his mind been in a proper frame for it. Persons who can scarcely spell three words on end, and who cannot write a sentence, without committing the strangest grammatical blunders, assume the place of judges, and, without hesitation, have criticized every piece that has appeared in this collection, and pronounced the whole, without one single exception, "Most execrable stuff." (pardon the vulgarity of the phrase). Persons, whose reading has scarcely extended to a common newspaper, pronounced *the whole* to be borrowed from other performances, and have condescended on particular pieces by name, as entirely transcribed from other works, of which the editor well knew, that not a line or a sentence had ever been seen elsewhere. These performances he has allowed to slide into oblivion, without so much as a note of remembrance upon the blue cover. To some others, he has been indebted for some just reprehensions and useful hints, of which he will avail himself.

One general theme on which these unskilful critics have uniformly dwelt, is want of originality in the pieces that have been offered in this miscellany; a circumstance that strongly betrayed their want of reading, for in respect of the proportional number of original pieces, this miscellany as far as it has gone, may stand a fair comparison with any other that is