

country, of which you are the legal representatives, for the truth of my plea ; and now, under leave from this honourable court, I stand before you, in person, to assert my innocence, and to speak in its defence.

“This is to me an awful moment—full of uncertainty, apprehension, and peril. I am oppressed with sensations and feelings never known before. I am conscious that I am travelling a new and unknown path, where unexpected difficulties attend every step,—whose end is enveloped in obscurity and darkness. It is not from the impulse of vanity or conceit that I have assumed the responsibility of any part of this defence. No foolish desire to exhibit myself in a novel character, in which success could bring me no reputation, & in which defeat must inevitably be attended with disgrace, has induced me to adopt this course : I have been urged to it by other reasons, not necessary for you to know, and which it would be painful for me to disclose.”

In soliciting the indulgence of the Court and Jury, Mr. Buckingham added :

“I am unlearned in the law, having never attempted to explore its uncertainties and secrets, or to unravel its dark, though interesting, mysteries. I am also unused to public declamation. My profession, and my labours, from my childhood, have been mechanical. No academic halls, devoted to letters, to eloquence, and philosophy, have ever resounded with my voice. No groves, sacred to the muses, have ever whispered their airy responses to any poetical breathings of mine. The flowers of rhetoric never bloomed for me ; and I have never been admitted to pass even the vestibule of the temple of science.

“How then can I hope to win your favour ? How expect to disengage myself from the net in which I have been taken ? How escape from the dangers of the thick and thorny wood in which I am entangled, where every step is pregnant with fear, and a single false one may plunge me into irrevocable misfortune ?

“I depend for victory, gentlemen, on a single weapon which the ignorant may wield as safely as the learned. This honourable court has placed in my hand that two-edged sword, which, I trust, will clear my way before me. This weapon is TRUTH ; before which the impostor and the hypocrite, shrink and disappear like shadows beneath a vertical sun. Aided by this, and the justice of my cause, I rely, gentlemen, on your intelligence, your magnanimity, your love of virtue, your scorn of hypocrisy, your aversion to mean-