

them equally in late hours, and in the strange precipitation with which we hurry from one place to another, in search of the society which we never sit still to enjoy, yet still people may manage their own parties and motions their own way. But all this is limited to my own particular circumstances, — for in a city like London, the constant resident has beyond all other places the power of conducting himself exactly as he likes. Whether this is entirely to be wished or not, may indeed be doubted. I have seldom felt myself so fastidious about books as in the midst of a large library, where one is naturally tempted to imitate the egregious epicure who condescended to take only one hite out of the sunny side of a peach. I suspect something of scarcity is necessary to make you devour the intellectual banquet with a good relish and digestion, as we know to be the case with respect to corporeal sustenance. But to quit all this egotism, which is as little as possible to the purpose, you must be informed that Erskine has enshrined your letter among his household papers of the most precious kind. Among your thousand admirers you have not a warmer or more kindly heart; he tells me Jeffrey talks very favorably of this volume. I should be glad, for his own sake, that he took some opportunity to retrace the paths of his criticism; but after pledging himself so deeply as he has done, I doubt much his giving way even unto conviction. As to my own share, I am laboring sure enough, but I have not yet got on the right path where I can satisfy myself I shall go on with courage, for diffidence does not easily beset me — and the public, still more than the ladies, “stoop to the forward and the bold;” but then in either case, I fancy, the suitor for favor must be buoyed up by some sense of deserving it, whether real or supposed. The celebrated apology of Dryden for a passage which he could not defend, “that he knew when he wrote it, it was bad enough to succeed,” was, with all deference to his memory, certainly invented to justify the fact after it was committed.