

NEW YEAR'S VERSES
OF THE PRINTER'S BOY THAT CARRIES
THE QUEBEC MERCURY,

Most respectfully addressed to the Subscribers.

QUEBEC, 1st January, 1811.

Hail, Janus, with the double face,
Thy backward view help me to trace,
From past events, that I may chuse
Fit subjects for an humble Muse,
Whose duty 'tis news to expand
'Mongst such as read and understand;
Who true from false know to distinguish,
And doctrines vicious to relinquish:
Who, if the demagogue hold out
His tinsel to the assembled rout,
Howe'er his country's love he boast,
See clearly, self is uppermost:
Who keep, whate'er party may say,
The even tenor of their way;
And faction's sophistry eschew,
To king and country ever true.
Such fitted are to learn Fate's turns,
Their own, and the wide world's concerns;

Does it hence follow that the blind,
Unletter'd, uninform'd of mind,
Have faculties for catoptics,
Or what far worse is, politics?
Can their blank intellects be bent
Lectures to learn on government?
Would it not more with sense agree,
To learn them first their A, B, C,
Than to begin at the wrong end,
And make to cakes, order bend?
Is this not nature to distort,
And with mere matter mind assort?
Of things their fitness to confound,
Giving to blocks reason profound;
And thus, by one fatal mistake,
The demon Anarchy awake?

Thus late philosophers of France,
Too early led round Holbein's dance;
And the dire circle heedless drew in,
Myriads to follow their undoing.
And why? because they wildly hit
On any thing but systems fit—
Not for the many what would do
They chose—but what would please the few,

A grand monarch to love and fear,
His very errors to repeat;
By habit, custom, taste, fashion,
Deep-rooted prejudice and passion;
By every bias that could bend,
And make man's nature one way tend;
By all of these, a Frenchman's soul
Was moulded to the crown's controul,

Yet this, philosophers suppos'd
Was of that ductile stuff compos'd,
To take of any cast the shape,
Bear, badger, mastiff, cur or ape;
Or if they must retain the man,
To take the form republican.

True 'tis that force may sometimes bend
The stiffest bow, and make it tend
From one strait line to a small curve,
And from its nature somewhat swerve;
But let that force its pow'r decline,
The bow resumes its pristing line:
So man, by an impulsive thrust,
May ev'ry tie of nature burst;
But take th' impelling pow'r away,
Habit recovers its full sway.
Thus Frenchmen's lips, by force might squeak,]
Like parrots, *Vive la Republique*;
But then the heart—what says it? hark!
Its cry is *Vive le grand monarque*.

Had Revolutionists been wise,
And the heart's bias known to prize,
And taken, when for charge full ripe,
Great Britain for a prototype;
What crimes, which Frenchmen now disgrace,
Might thus have never taken place:
Nay more, of happiness what store
On France might providence then show'r;
For arts renown'd and liberty,
The suffering world she might set free;
Such an example could not fail,
O'er sway tyrannic, to prevail.

Now, sad reverse! power's iron reign
Europe has link'd in one vast chain;
Whilst, with Astrea, Freedom flies
To seek a shelter in the skies.

But, heav'n be prais'd, Napoleon's sway,
Britannia's thunders keep at bay;
Hence, security is ours,
Where-ever else the tempest lowers.

Enough—except one short word more
From him who, weekly, to your door,
In sleet, in snow, in rain, in hail,
Has never yet been known to fail
To bring the news, be't good or bad,
Pleas'd when the best is to be had.
Need I add more?—a word to the wise
And generous, will here suffice;
'Twere sin to doubt such can be civil,
When in rhyme tempted by—*THE DEVIL*.