

'Very probably,' said Lord Chief Justice Whiteside, 'while Blackstone was deep in the mysteries of the Feudal system, his investigations were interrupted by the merry companions of Goldsmith singing lustily "The Three Jolly Pigeons." These overhead revels naturally did not assist the progress of the great work, and were the subject of frequent complaint on the part of the Doctor of Laws against the Doctor of Physic.' But we may well overlook the eccentricities and faults of Ireland's sweetest poet when we remember the splendour of his genius. We may say with Dr. Johnson, who, when he first learned that Goldsmith was dead, sadly remarked: 'Poor Goldy was wild—very wild—but he is so no more.'

"Another interesting circumstance is related by Dr. Scott. 'Blackstone,' he says, 'a sober man, composed his Commentaries with a bottle of port before him, and found his mind invigorated and supported in the fatigue of his great work by a temperate use of it.'

"With his return to practice in London, Blackstone entered Parliament as a member for Westbury. Wilkes, the notorious agitator, had just then set the country in a blaze with an obscene and impious libel, and in consequence had been expelled from the House of Commons, and Luttrell elected in his place. This election of Luttrell, known as the Middlesex election, was challenged by the Whigs as unconstitutional on the ground that Wilkes' expulsion did not create in him an incapacity of being re-elected. The Tories brought on a motion to declare Luttrell duly elected, and Blackstone, being put forward to support it, gave it as his opinion that Wilkes was by the common law disqualified from sitting in the House. Grenville, on behalf of the Whigs, retorted by reading a passage from the Commentaries (p. 162) stating the causes of disqualification, none of which applied to Wilkes. Instead of defending himself, Blackstone, according to Philo-Junius, 'sunk under the charge in an agony of confusion and despair.' 'It is well known,' says the same writer, describing the scene, 'that there was a pause of some minutes in the House, from a general expectation that the doctor would say