

by a liberal patronage, that failed to receive the encouragement which he deserved. And we find Southey laying down very admirably, in combating a remark of the elder Sheridan,—whom he terms an ill-natured, perverse man,—the generous principle on which this had been done. “Wonder,” says the author of the first “Pronouncing Dictionary,”—a man whom the greater lexicographer, Johnson, described as not only naturally dull, but as also rendered, through dint of immense effort on his own part, vastly duller than nature had made him,—“wonder, usually accompanied by a bad taste, looks only for what is uncommon; and if a work comes out under the name of a thresher, a bricklayer, a milkwoman, or a lord, it is sure to be eagerly sought after by the million.” “Persons of quality,” remarks the poet-laureate, “require no defence when they appear as authors in these days; and, indeed, as mean a spirit may be shown in traducing a book because it is written by a lord, as in extolling it beyond its deserts for the same reason. But when we are told that the thresher, the milkwoman, and the tobacco-pipe-maker, did not deserve the patronage they found,—when it is laid down as a maxim of philosophical criticism, that poetry ought never to be encouraged unless it is excellent in its kind,—that it is an art in which inferior execution is not to be tolerated,—a luxury, and must therefore be rejected unless it is of the very best,—such reasoning may be addressed with success to cockered and sickly intellects, but it will never impose upon a healthy understanding, a generous spirit, or a good man. . . . If the poet be a good and amiable man,” continues Southey, “he will be both the better and the happier for writing verses. ‘Poetry,’ says Landon, ‘opens many sources of tenderness that lie for ever in the rock without it. . . . The benevolent persons who patronized Stephen Duck did it, not with the hope of rearing a great poet, but for the sake of placing a worthy man in a station