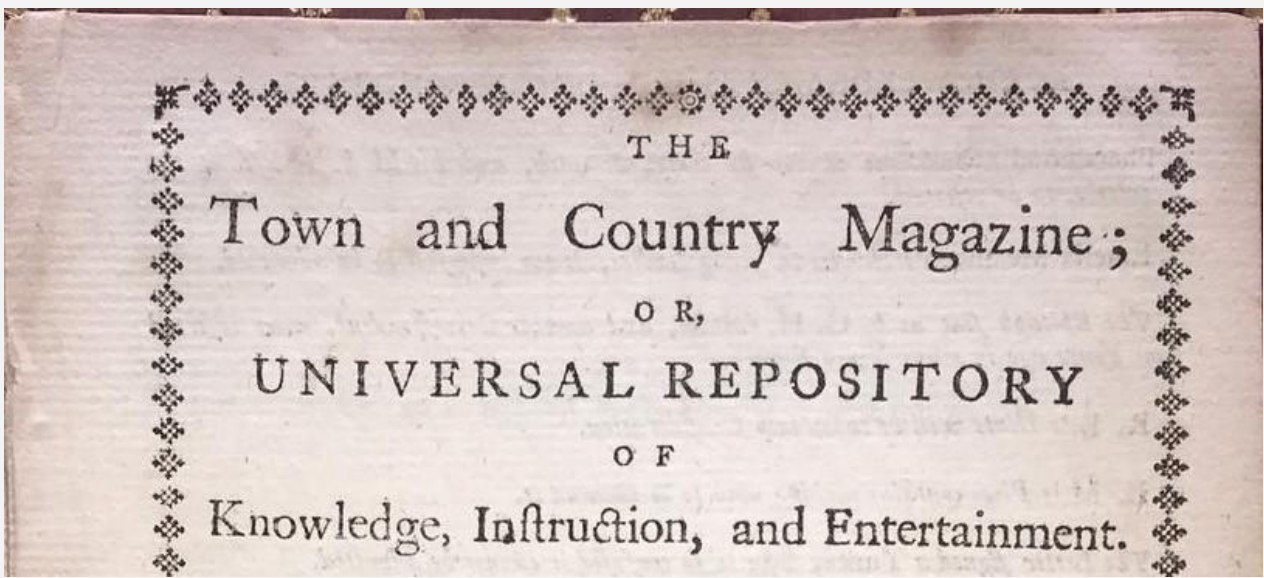


Memoirs of a Sad Dog by Harry Wildfire

(This piece is signed ‘Harry Wildfire,’ a Chatterton pen name).

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Original Manuscript : Missing presumed Lost

First Printing :

Town and Country Magazine (in two parts).

- ★ First part : July, 1770, p. 374 : [View online](#) or Scroll to Panel 1 below.
- ★ Second part : August, 1770, p. 431 : [View online](#) or Scroll to Panel 2 below.

Second Printing :

- ★ Miscellanies 1778, p.184 : [View online](#)

Note:

Also in 1803, but rejected 34 years later by Joseph Cottle in his *Early Recollections*, however, Taylor and Meyerstein are sure it is by Chatterton.

Analysis of the above :

- Taylor, p.1108 : four pages dedicated to this piece : [View panel 3 below](#)

Panel 1 :

MEMOIRS of a SAD-DOG.

To the Editor of the Town and Country
MAGAZINE.

S I R,

THE man who sits down to write his own history, has no very agreeable task to execute. The chevalier Taylor is the only egotist since Julius Cæsar, who has made tolerable work in drawing the picture of himself. Julius had but two colours to paint with, truth and classic elegance: here the chevalier had the advantage, for he was too great to be confined within the bounds of the first qualification, and has daubed with a thousand materials. The sentimental John Bunce should not be forgotten; the man who admires the mountains of the north in his description, will lose all his admiration in the real prospect. But to proceed to my own affairs. I am, Mr. Printer, a sad dog, a very sad dog; have run through many sad adventures, had many sad escapes from the clutches of bailiffs, and at the time of writing this sad relation, am throned in a broken chair within an inch of a thunder-cloud. I set out in life with a fortune of five thousand pounds, which the old prig, my father, left me with this memorable piece of advice: "Item, I leave to my youngest son Henry, five thousand pounds, with an old book, formerly his grandmother Bridger's, called, *The Way to save Wealth*; containing a thousand choice Receipts in Cookery, &c. and I advise that he read two pages of the said book every day before he dines." Very pretty advice! but I had not veneration enough for the parental character to follow it. When the legacy was paid me, I bid my brother

adieu, drank three bottles of claret with Sir Stentor Ranger, who had married my sister, and drove furiously to the metropolis in my own phaeton and four. Hoyle was the only book which I ever honoured with a perusal; and being pretty well dipped in the theory of gambling, I ventured to engage with some knights of the post, who were a little better versed in the practical part, and at one sitting lost one fifth of my fortune. This was a terrible stroke to me, and I began, for the first time in my life, to reflect; but a bottle of champagne, and a night at the hotel, drove every troublesome idea out of my head. Miss Fanny H——t, who by a natural transmigration is transmigrated from a whore into a bagnio-keeper, was then in the bloom of her charms; she was never a first-rate beauty, but always a very favourite toast among the bucks and pretty fellows of the city. I was one evening strolling the Park, when Miss Fanny had experience enough to perceive that she had nailed my attention. As I was neither acquainted with her character, or situation, I was not a little elated with the condescending glances she honoured me with. Presuming on my conquest, I made her a few compliments, squirmed her out of the Park, and thought myself blest in being permitted to accompany her to her lodgings. I had not enjoyed my tête-à-tête five minutes, before I was astonished at hearing the well-known thunder of the voice of Jack N——t. "Sblood and 'oons, you old harridan, she is mine for a month; and I would rather lose fifty per cent. than lend her for a single night to the dearest friend upon earth." To this vociferous exclamation the venerable matron replied: "Won't Miss Kitty do for once, or Polly, or Miss Nancy?" "I'll have no Miss, but Fanny, by G—," replied Jack, bursting into the parlour upon us. I was now sufficiently in the secret, and not displeased at finding my charmer no vestal. Jack, who had paid fifty pounds for his month, insisted on his right of purchase; but Miss Fanny thinking me a better paymaster, heroically turned him out of the parlour; telling him, for his comfort, that he should have his month another time. Miss Fanny pleased me so well, that before I was weary of her I had sunk another thousand; when, in a fit of reflexion, I bid her adieu, and left her to Jack, and the rest of her monthly keepers.

To make a little digression, I think this method of hiring for a month preferable to the wholesale bargains for life, and of mutual advantage to the keeper and kept, if that

that term will stand good in law, for a man may find it all rapture and love, without satiety; and in a few months play the same tune over again, with no decay of vigour. Jack N——— is now a principal merchant, and rolls about in his coach and four to every public dinner; where his appetite and solidity of judgment, in the edible way, does honour to the city. It is notorious that he is a cuckold, and by more than one method free of his company; but that is no detriment to him in the scale of mercantile merit. The extraordinary bustle he has made in a late political affair, is very little to his advantage; but it must be observed in his defence, that the Earl of H——— did him the greatest act of friendship mortal man could do him, viz. invited him to a turtle-feast, and revealed to him a secret in the culinary art, till then utterly unknown to all the world but his lordship and his cook. Some indeed pretend to say, that this secret is nothing more than giving venison an additional flavour, by basting it with a preparation of French cheese and rancid butter; but as I would not presume to give my opinion in a matter of such importance, I shall leave Jack to the pleasures of the table, and proceed in my relation. On this considerable decay of my fortune, I began to consider seriously of my departed father's curious advice; and in consequence of this consideration, resolved to set up for a fortune hunter, and retrieve my affairs in the sober track of matrimony. A Miss L——— was the girl I had fixed upon, and accordingly dressed at. She raised my hopes, and gratified my vanity by several significant glances; and I was so certain of carrying her off in the end, that I cheerfully launched out five hundred pounds in dress and equipage; which had such an amazing effect, that in three weeks time I had three kisses of her hand, and in the fourth week she took a trip to Scotland with her father's footman. This unexpected stroke created in me an absolute aversion to matrimony, and a resolution not to endeavour to better myself by the hymenial knot. Soon after this affair I made an acquaintance with the wife of an alderman: I shall conceal his name, as his patriotic behaviour has rendered him respectable in the city. Mrs. ——— was of an amorous complexion: her husband had too much of the citizen to be like her: turtle, venison, and popularity, were the only objects of his attention, out of the counting-house. Though he has never repeated three periods with propriety, except when assisted by the ingenious device of placing the ready-made speech

in the crown of his hat; yet his mercantile genius has often struck upon very lucky hits. He is unrivalled in reckoning the amount of rate per cent. and no stock-broker at Jonathan's can whisper a piece of secret intelligence with half his dexterity. Between you and I and the post, Mr. Printer, the stopping the circulation of bad halfpence, inconsiderable as the coin may appear to some, has brought him in no less than seven thousand pounds, and increased the trade of him and his partners amazingly. Mrs. ——— had penetration enough to find out my good qualities; and you will suppose, that I was not wanting in acknowledging her partiality. We had frequent interviews at the house of a capital millener in the Strand, and the amour for some time went swimmingly on. Mrs. ——— was under no apprehensions of my being satiated with enjoyment; for generously considering I was but a younger brother, I never sacrificed on the altar of the Cyprean goddess, without receiving a bank-bill worth my acceptance. But, alas! happiness is of short duration; or, to speak in the language of the high-sounding Ossian, "Behold! thou art happy; but soon, ah! soon, wilt thou be miserable. Thou art as easy and tranquil as the face of the green-mantled puddle; but soon, ah! soon, wilt thou be tumbled and tossed by misfortunes, like the stream of the water-mill. Thou art beautiful as the cathedral of Canterbury; but soon wilt thou be deformed like Chinese palace-paling. So the sun rising in the east gilds the borders of the black mountains, and laces with his golden rays the dark-brown heath. The hind leaps over the flowery lawn, and the reeky bull rolls in the bubbling brook. The wild boar makes ready his armour of defence. The inhabitants of the rocks dance, and all nature joins in the song. But see! riding on the wings of the wind, the black clouds fly. The noisy thunders roar; the rapid lightnings gleam; the rainy torrents pour, and the dropping swain flies over the mountain: swift as Bickerstaff, the son of song, when the monster Bumbailiano, keeper of the dark and black cave, pursued him over the hills of death, and the green meadows of dark men." O Ossian! immortal genius! what an invocation could I make now! but I shall leave it to the abler pen of Mr. Duff, and spin out the thread of my own adventures.

Mrs. ——— having dispatched a billet to me, I flew to her in her own house. The knight, as she thought, was fixed to the table of Sir Tumbelly Grains, knight,

citizen, and alderman, who had invited him to dinner on a delicious turtle: a blessing not to be neglected. But, oh! grief of griefs! the knight having forgot his favourite tobacco-box, popped in upon us unexpectedly, and found us too familiarly engaged. Instead of bursting into the rage which might have animated an Italian or Spaniard on the occasion, he shook his head, and pronouncing coolly, "Very fine, all very fine!" he left us, and returned to Sir Tunbely to finish the turtle. As by his hasty throwing open the door he had exposed us to the view of two of his servants, I was terribly afraid of a prosecution for crim. con. for though it was as fashionable then as it is now, I was not very eager to lose the remainder of my fortune fashionably. But the knight considering his reputation would receive a severe stroke, should the affair be made public, contented himself with demanding two thousand pounds for the injury I had done him. As he threatened to prosecute for larger damages, unless I complied, I was obliged to refund more than Mrs. —'s bounty had bestowed upon me. The old curmudgeon had heartily provoked me, and I resolved, though at the expence of every shilling I had, to be revenged on him. For this purpose I published the whole affair, and the devil assisting my invention, I struck upon another expedient to gratify my vengeance. The knight's eldest daughter, Sabina, whom he had by a former wife, was a fine sprightly girl, and wanted nothing but the *bon ton* to render her perfectly accomplished; about eighteen, a remarkable fine complexion, and expressive blue eyes. She was at the time of the unlucky discovery with a relation in Essex: as I had formerly paid a few compliments to her beauty, which I had reason to say, without vanity, were not ill received, I instantly dispatched an epistle to her, the most tender my imagination could dictate. It wrought the effect I designed, and she returned an answer. After a long farce of lying and intriguing on my part, and credulity on her's, I accomplished the grand end—you will guess what I mean. We lived in love and rapture about a month, when her father bid her prepare to marry Mr. Lutestring, the mercer, by the next week. She flew to the usual place of assignation, bathed in tears, with a face expressive of the most violent grief. I was now almost persuaded to love her in earnest; but I was a sad dog to suffer revenge (and when I seriously reflect, a revenge which had no foundation in reason) to get the better of every nobler passion.

"O! my dear Harry," exclaimed the beautiful unfortunate, "let us fly instantly to Scotland, otherwise my father, inhuman man, will oblige me to marry Bob Lutestring next week."

"Bob Lutestring, my dear," replied I, indifferently, "is a substantial man, and I would not have you disoblige your father on my account."

"And is this your advice!" returned the heroine, assuming a dignified air: "be assured, Sir, I shall follow it." Saying this, she flung from me; her ideas, I suppose, a little different from those she brought with her. But I had not yet accomplished my revenge. Steeled in impudence as I am, I blush to write the rest; but it shall be out. I informed Mr. Lutestring of my intimacy with his future spouse, and advised him not to unite himself to a woman of such principles. I made certain of receiving a challenge, and a string of curses for my information; but, alas! I knew not the city. "Sir," replied the mercer, "I thank you for your intelligence, this day received: but your advice is not worth a yard of tape; you say Sabina has been faulty, allow it: but will her father give me any thing the less for her fortune on that account; on the contrary, were not my notions of *honour* very refined, I might make it a means of raising my price." I flunk away, astonished at this reply, reflecting how various are the species and refinements of *honour*.

[To be continued.]

While the three ladies (for Harriot very discreetly opened not her lips) were loudly loquacious in the irritating strain, they were alarmed by the appearance of one of the servants, who informed them that passing by the room in which they had dined, he heard the clashing of swords; but he could not get in as the door was locked.

"Break it open immediately," said lady Dawkins, hurrying after him. Miss Melfon and Miss Cooper followed her with precipitation. Harriot was terrified in so different a manner, that she could hardly set one foot before the other.

As soon as the door was forced open, lady Dawkins rushed in. How was she astonished to see the doctor lying upon the floor, bleeding! The colonel hung over him in the most affectionate manner, and loaded himself with the severest reproaches, for having provoked him to fight by his galling behaviour to him with regard to the woman whom he adored.

The doctor, slowly raising his head, had just strength enough to say, pressing his hand, "Do not reproach yourself, my dear friend; I deserved the fatal thrust; I only was to blame." Those words were his last.

At that instant Sir Francis, waking from his doze, cried out, "What are you all doing?" His eyes were soon acquainted with the tragic scene which had been transacted during his slumbers.

It may easily be imagined with what minds the poor doctor's survivors returned to London in their barge; they could not but feel, it may be supposed, some painful sensations when they reflected upon their party of pleasure.

MEMOIRS of a SAD-DOG, concluded.

I WAS now just on the brink of poverty: I had made a considerable breach in my last five hundred; and began to shudder at the contempt with which the decay of my fortune threatened me. Relying on his former professions of friendship, I posted down to Sir Stentor Ranger, in hopes he would have assisted me. I found the knight very busy, with Sir Charles Banbury, in tracing the honourable pedigree of an Arabian barb. "Hay, Hall," exclaimed the knight, with a voice which would have drowned the full chorus of a fox-chace; "what the devil brought thee here? I thought thou wert grown a gentleman, and hadst forgotten us all." He received me with as much kindness and civility, as his rustic breeding would per-

mit, and invited me to his antiquated hall. After a noble dinner of venison, when Sir Charles had retired, on cracking the nineteenth bottle, I ventured to open the business. Nothing can express the surprize which distended the knight's ample countenance. I made no very agreeable comments on his astonishment; but, thank Heaven! those comments were as groundless as the Rev. Mr. Bentinck's on the Bible. "Zounds," thundered the knight, "five thousand pounds gone already: you have been a sad dog, Hall, that I'll say for thee. But, *howsoever*, as thou beest my *now* flesh and blood, d'ye see, I'll do something for thee. Let me see, let me see: dost understand horse-flesh." "I answered, that I was not very deep in the mystery; but I hoped, with a little of his instructions, to be serviceable to him." "Adad, thou art in the right, Hall, nobody knows these things better than me. There's my lord Grosvenor's filly, Long Dick; he would have it, that he was got by his own horse, Thunder, when I, by the mere make of his pastern, found 'um out, to be got by Sir George Blunt's white horse, Duke. Dost know any thing of dogs? Canst train a pointer, or a hawk, or such like things?" "This," I replied, "I could with safety undertake." "Well then, zay no more; no more words to the matter: I'll do for thee; thou shalt have one hundred and fifty pounds a year, and so ge'es thy hand, Hall. A bargain's a bargain; I scorn to flinch from my word: thou shalt ha'it, od-zookers, thou shalt ha'it." In consequence of this bargain I commenced superintendent of his stables and kennels. I discharged my office much to his satisfaction; and by dint of application acquiring some knowledge in the mysteries of the turf, I began to be of consequence in the racing world. Sir Stentor's hall was very ancient, and had been in days of yore a family-seat of the Mowbrays. It had not undergone any considerable reparation since the reformation; when an ancestor of Sir Stentor's, having often had quarrels with a neighbouring abbot, in the sacrilegious pillage, purchased his abbey for less than the one-twentieth of its value; and robbing it of all its ornaments and painted glass, made the abbey a stable, and turned his dogs into the chapel. Sir Stentor had many curious visitors, on account of his antient painted glass-windows; among the rest was there doubted baron Ouranto, (*see p. 617.*) who has spent his whole life in conjectures. This most ingenious gentleman, as a certain advertiser styles him, is certainly a good judge of

of paintings, and has an original, easy manner of writing. That his knowledge in antiquity equals his other accomplishments may be disputed. As Sir Stentor had ever been politically attached to his family, he welcomed the baron with every demonstration of joy, and ordered the bells of the parish church to be rung. As a further testimony of his joy, he sent for a blind fiddler, the Barthelemon of the village, to entertain the baron with a solo during dinner; and after the desert, Robin Hood's Ramble was melodiously chaunted by the knight's groom and dairy-maid, to the excellent music of a two-stringed violin, and a bagpipe. A concert by the first masters in Europe could not have pleased the baron so well: he imagined himself carried back to the age of his favourite hero, Richard the Third. Should any critic assert, that it is impossible such an imagination could enter the cerebellum of the baron, who confines all his ideas within the narrow limits of propriety (for the songs of Robin Hood were not in being till the reign of queen Elizabeth) his assertion shall stand uncontradicted by me, as I know, by woeful experience, that when an author resolves to think himself in the right, it is more than human argument can do to convince him he is in the wrong.

The baron, after dinner, asked the knight if he had ever discovered in any place about his house an escutcheon argent, on a fess-gules; three garbs, or; between as many shields, sable, cheveronny of the first. To this learned interrogatory the knight answered with a stare of astonishment, and "Anon, Sir, what d'ye talk of? I don't understand such out-landish lingo, not I, for my part." Otranto finding it impossible to enter into a conversation suitable to his hobby-horse, begged leave to visit the kennel, desiring the knight to permit the huntsman to go with him, lest the dogs might not be over civil to a stranger. "Odzookers," cried Sir Stentor, "are you afraid of the dogs? I'll go with you myself, man." The baron found many things worthy his notice in the ruined chapel; but the knight was so full of the praises of his harriers, that the antiquary had not opportunity to form one conjecture. After looking round the chapel for some moveable piece of age, on which he might employ his speculative talents, to the eternal honour of his judgment, he pitched upon a stone which had no antiquity at all; and, transported with his fancied prize, placed it upon his head, and bore it triumphantly to his chamber, desiring the knight to give

him no disturbance the next day, as he intended to devote it to the service of futurity. This important piece of stone had by the huntsman been sacrilegiously stolen from the neighbouring church-yard, and employed with others to stop up a breach in the kennel, through which the adventurous Jowler had squeezed his lank carcass. Nothing can escape the clutches of curiosity. The letters being ill cut, had an appearance of something Gothic; and the baron was so far gone in this Quixotism of literature, that at the first glance he determined them to be of the third runic alphabet of Wormius. The original inscription was: James Hicks lieth here, with Hester his wife.

The broken stone is here represented.

h. j. c. k. S. U.
R.E.

The baron having turned over Camden, Dugdale, Leyland, and Wever, at last determined it to be, *Hic jacet corpus Kenelmæ Sancto Legero. Requiescat, &c. &c.* What confirmed him in the above reading, and made it impossible for him to be mistaken, was that a great man of the name of Sancto Legero, had been buried in the county about five hundred years ago. Elated with the happy discovery, the baron had an elegant engraving of the curiosity executed, and presented it to the society of antiquaries, who look upon it as one of the most important discoveries which have been made since the great Dr. Trefoil found out, that the word *kine* came from the Saxon *corvine*. When this miracle of literature left the village, the bells were again rung, and the baron was wrapped in elysium on the success of his visit.

I had served Sir Stentor above two years, when by a lucky hit Sir Charles Banbury and myself took the whole field in, and cleared above twenty thousand pounds; eight thousand of which fell to my share. I was now once more established in the world, and redeemed from the dependence which had mortified my pride. As I was seldom ungrateful, I repaid Sir Stentor's kindness, by revealing to him the whole arcana of the turf; which he has improved to so much advantage, that he has added five hundred per annum to his paternal estate, by his successes at Newmarket. In prosperity I never gave ear to the sage whispers of prudence; her cool advice was never felt, but in the winter of adversity. I was flush, and resolved to go over to Paris

Paris, and glitter in all the splendor of an Englishman. This rapid resolution was as rapidly executed, and in less than ten days after my success I found myself at the city of noise and frippery. I had too much spirit to murmur at the expence, but I often wished for something more substantial than *soupe* or *fricasee*: after living at the gigantic table of Sir Stentor, and feasting on roast beef and venison, I found it difficult to swallow liquids and shadows. But every other consideration was soon drowned in that of a young marchioness, who never met my eyes without telling them such a tale of love, that it was impossible not to understand it. I directed my valet La Fosse, to make every possible enquiry after her: he brought me intelligence that she was the widow of a marquis, and of a very noble family. This was sufficient, I instantly dispatched a messenger of love to her; and ere another moon had gilded up her horns, married her. But I had cause to repent my expedition; she was indeed the widow of a marquis, but one of the poorest of that title in France: his debts were great, and his widow instead of discharging them, had contracted more, her noble family not being able to support her. I was soon roused from my dream of happiness, and thrown into prison; my fortune was insufficient to procure my liberty, and there I should have perished, had not an old rich farmer-general taken my wife under his protection, paid her debts, generously set me free, and presented me with a bill of two hundred pounds, on condition I returned to England. I did not chuse to reject his offer, and with that sort of pseudo-repentance, which generally waits on us when we are grown wise too late, took my leave of France and prosperity. Immediately on my return to England, I waited on Sir Stentor; but the knight knowing my genius in horse-flesh, was not willing to put me in a condition of rivalling him upon the turf. "Zounds, Hall, whoy thou spendest every thing; no, no, I duont want a top game-keeper now. Here, I'll gee thee this bill of one hundred pounds, and my bay gelding Jockey: go and see 'un, he is as fine a beatt as any I have in hand." I thought it not prudent to refuse the knight's offer; and making the best of a bad bargain, accepted Jockey, and the bill, and made the best of my way to London. Here, after a long deliberation, I resolved to turn stock-jobber; and the first time I visited Jonathan's, by propagating a report that Jamaica was taken by the Spaniards, in-

AUGUST, 1770.

creased my small sum to two thousand pounds. I was now in raptures, and saw once again the visions of good fortune swimming before my sight. I still continued improving my principal, when an account from Trieste reduced me to seven hundred; and in a few days after another account from the same unfortunate place utterly ruined me, and I waddled a lame duck out of the alley. What could I now do? As to mechanic business I was utterly a stranger to it, and my soul disdained the livery of a slave. I had distracted myself with reflection till the last bill of ten pounds was mutilated, when I thought of setting up for an author. As I did not doubt my invention, and had vanity enough for the character, I sat down to invoke the muses. The first fruits of my pen were a political essay and a piece of poetry: the first I carried to a patriotic bookseller, who is in his own opinion of much consequence to the cause of liberty; and the poetry was left with another of the same tribe, who made bold to make it a means of puffing his Magazine, but refused any gratuity. Mr. Britannicus at first imagining the piece was not to be paid for, was lavish of his praises, and I might depend upon it, it should do honour to his flaming patriotic paper; but when he was told that I expected some recompence, he assumed an air of criticism, and begged my pardon; he did not know that circumstance, and really he did not think it good language, or sound reasoning. I was not discouraged by the objections and criticisms of the bookelling tribe; and as I know the art of Curlism pretty well, I make a tolerable hand of it. But, Mr. Printer, the late prosecutions against the booksellers having frightened them all out of their patriotism, I am necessitated either to write for the entertainment of the public, or in defence of the ministry. As I have some little remains of conscience, the latter is not very agreeable. Political writing, of either side of the question, is of little service to the entertainment or instruction of the reader. Abuse and scurrility are generally the chief figures in the language of party. I am not of the opinion of those authors, who deem every man in place a rascal, and every man out of place a patriot. Permit this then to appear in your universally admired Magazine; it may give some entertainment to your reader, and a dinner to

Your humble servant,

HARRY WILDSIRE.

K k k

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Panel 3 : Taylor, p.1108 : four pages of analysis, the small extract below sums it up.

"Though 'Memoirs' is a lively picaresque fiction, it is perhaps even more interesting for the amount of personal fantasy and of ironically viewed personal experience that C was able to work smoothly into it. In the first half, we have the irresistible gentleman-amorist with his anti-bourgeois tone—a combination often seen in C's letters and poems. Then he mocks his own Ossianics as well as Macpherson's. The second half makes comic fiction of the Walpole episode, with its expectations and eventual dis- appointment, and of his struggles to extract a fortune from the London editors."

End :

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