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978-1-108-05658-8 - *Museum Criticum: Or, Cambridge Classical Researches: Volume 1*

Edited by Charles James Blomfield and James Henry Monk

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### Museum Criticum

This short-lived (1813–26) classical journal was edited by James Henry Monk (1784–1856) and Charles James Blomfield (1786–1857), who were contemporaries at Trinity College, Cambridge. Both went on to ecclesiastical careers: Monk left his position as Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge to become Dean of Peterborough and subsequently Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, while Blomfield, who already held the country living of Quarrington in Lincolnshire when the journal was founded, became Bishop of London. Encapsulating the dominant contemporary style of English classical scholarship – the close linguistic analysis of (primarily Greek) texts, as practised by Richard Porson (1759–1808), Monk's predecessor as Regius Professor – the *Museum Criticum* became a rival to the *Classical Journal* (also reissued in this series) and was collected in two volumes in 1826. Illuminating the early development of academic journals, Volume 1 contains issues 1–4.

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VOLUME 1

EDITED BY  
CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD  
AND JAMES HENRY MONK



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## PREFACE.



So fertile has been the ingenuity and so unwearied the exertions of our countrymen in the cause of literature during their long exclusion from the usual supplies of continental scholarship, that he who wishes to strike out a new path without intruding upon pre-occupied ground, will find no less difficulty in tracing out the course of his plan, than in collecting the materials for its execution. To those, however, for whose amusement or instruction the following Work is intended, little apology is necessary for want of novelty in the subject or of originality in the design. Every scholar is fully sensible how much yet remains to be done in smoothing the asperities and removing the obstacles which occur even in the beaten track, and how much useful industry may yet be expended on the wide field of general criticism. Various important manuscripts have been hitherto wholly neglected or but imperfectly collated; a correct text of many smaller pieces of acknowledged beauty has never yet been presented to the world, much assistance to the student from philological investigation, or amusing illustration still remains to be supplied, much curious matter which has escaped the researches of former scholars, may claim his attention and regard. In some of these departments a large portion of information has been occasionally furnished by the reviewers and journalists of the present day, but from the very nature of their several plans, their attention could not have been directed to

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every point in question. As therefore the present publication, with respect to its objects and intentions, will essentially differ from any periodical work now in existence, it may be expedient, for the mutual satisfaction of the conductors and the reader, shortly to state the nature and extent of its design.

While the labours of the most distinguished scholars have been expended on works of greater magnitude and more general importance, many inestimable relics of antiquity have been from various causes consigned to unmerited obscurity; and it may be difficult to determine whether they have suffered most from the errors of a careless and hasty publication, or from the indifference of total neglect. To embody the scattered remains of ancient poets, to present an accurate and amended collection of their several fragments, to introduce to public notice even the whole of such short and detached pieces, as from their own intrinsic excellence, or the interest of concurring circumstances, may be thought worthy the attention of the scholar, will be a leading object in the present work.

Various unedited notes, conjectural emendations, and illustrations by the first scholars of their day, the autographs of which are deposited in the libraries of public bodies, will be presented for the first time to the literary world. Collations of various manuscripts under the same circumstances will be made from time to time, as the importance of their authors or general curiosity may require. It may not be considered as altogether useless, occasionally to reprint an amusing or instructive extract from such scarce and valuable works as are wholly withdrawn from public inspection by the rapacity of the collector, or are preserved only in the cabinets of the curious.

In this part of the work, as the materials will have

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been furnished by the invention or the industry of others, little more can be required than judgement in the selection and arrangement. Into that department which is reserved for original communications, such miscellaneous treatises or essays will be admitted, as may contribute to throw any new light on the manners and customs, arts and sciences, history and antiquities of the Greek and Roman empires, whether from the observations of modern travellers, or the stores of ancient learning. The more immediate province of criticism will be conducted with the attention due to the important rank which it justly holds in the scale of human learning. Many indeed of the works, which will fall within the province of this publication to consider, may already have been amended by the corrections, or enriched by the observations of former scholars; but there is scarcely a book within the extended range of Greek and Roman literature which has been edited with so perfect a regard to every branch of critical information, as to require no aid from the learning and assiduity of a subsequent age. In one we have a corrupt and mutilated body adorned with the most elegant and instructive illustrations, in another we have the text restored to its original beauty and perfection, but encompassed with the barrenness of cautious reserve. The defects of former editions will never be removed by the effort of a single hand; their omissions must be gradually supplied by the labours of succeeding scholars. The works of genius, like the fame of their authors, as they devolve from one generation to another will receive new light, and acquire new strength at every transmission.

As a relief to the dry and less amusing portions of the work, there will be occasionally interspersed biographical memoirs of the most eminent scholars, and short histori-

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cal accounts of the rise and progress of critical learning in the several ages of the world. Whatever in short may be considered as possessing sufficient attractions to arrest the attention of the scholar, or sufficient merit to promote the general cause of literature in any of its departments, will find an admission into this publication.

It is intended to insert in each Number such accounts of the different classical works which make their appearance in our own country, and on the continent, as may give to the reader a general notion of the contents and merits of each. The notice of these publications will also afford opportunities of conveying additional information upon the subjects which they comprise. In discussing however the labours of contemporary scholars, the mode of examination pursued in some Reviews of the present day, will not be considered as a model for imitation. Where from the frequency of literary or social intercourse, a bond of union has been established among a certain number of those who are engaged in the same pursuits, it cannot reasonably be expected that the faults and deficiencies of their several works should be mutually exposed to public censure, nor in regard to the best feelings of human nature ought it to be desired. On the other hand, a succession of reciprocal compliments, however founded in truth, and distributed with justice, must appear to the public eye flat and unprofitable. It is true that the pretence of examining the labours of others has often been made the vehicle of much valuable information from the private stock of the examiner: but no reason can be alledged, why the same information should not be exhibited in a more genuine form, or why it should lie shrouded under the title-page of another publication. The class of readers, for whom this work is intended,

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cannot be suspected of that depravation in taste, which does not relish either discussion or information, unless it be dressed in a borrowed garb, or be alloyed with the venom of personal invective.

The present Miscellany is therefore submitted to the world, not as the voice of a literary tribunal, from whose determination there lies no appeal, but as a source of varied information in the several departments of classical learning. In every stage of its publication there may be much that the finished scholar will deem superfluous; there may be somewhat also that the younger student will consider as beyond his present purpose. Such censures however are merely relative, and must be considered as necessarily attached to a work which is dedicated to general utility. If those, who are advanced to the highest eminence of well-deserved reputation, shall find something to admire and approve; if those, who are just entering upon the same paths, shall meet any new light which may dispel their difficulties and direct their progress, the intention of the *Museum Criticum* will be fully answered.

With regard to the extent of the Work, it is impossible to speak with precision. Should the hopes of the conductors be realized in the most perfect success, it is not intended to exceed the limits of a few volumes; not so much through the apprehension of any failure in the subject, or of any scarcity of materials, as from the probable exhaustion of vigour in the pursuit, or of interest in the public. There is a certain period, after which the minds of those, who are pledged to afford periodical amusement or information to the world, become fatigued by successive demands on their labour or imagination. On the first symptoms of failure in the activity necessary

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for such an undertaking, it may be considered the wisest step to withdraw from public notice ; before a lame and impotent conclusion shall have disgraced a successful beginning ; before the fatigue of the Author shall have found its correspondent effect in the weariness of the Reader. When however it shall be thought adviseable to draw the Work to a conclusion, it will not be finished either hastily or abruptly ; and with a view of preserving its unity as a whole, a Table of Contents will be attached to each volume, and a general and extensive Index will accompany the concluding Number of the publication.