

To PHILIP CLAYTON, Esquire, at present
Clerk of the Inferior Court for Richmond
County.

I SHALL not apologize for any deficiency of abilities, in venturing to answer your last essay, the world will clearly comprehend, that I am not contending for literary fame, even if I had talents to acquire a reputation as a writer; my sole object is truth, and the subject I assert in contradiction to you Mr. Clayton is of a public nature; a cause, which every member of the community is deeply interested;---the most daring infraction of a legislative act, to which every man is a party, and rendered the more insulting to the people, as the criminal exults in the crime not adorned with the "pleasing flowers of fiction," but containing plain facts, which you have vainly attempted to vindicate, by diverting the attention of your readers with a detail of extraneous incidents, serving the good purpose however of discovering to the people, that as you were obliged to resort to such low shifts for a defence, and had no other subterfuge, my charge against you with respect to extorting *illegal fees* remains uncontroverted, and in full force against you. It requires only a little industry and attention, with a moderate capacity to state with precision evident facts, and to refute glaring falsehoods; in pursuance, therefore of my promise, I shall proceed to trace you through all your turns and windings, and when I have fastened you to the *whipping post*, which, of all the variety you are a candidate for, you seem to require the most, my utmost ambition will be gratified; and, I shall then have you, a melancholy spectacle of human depravity---Happily for me, I am considerably relieved from the observations, I might otherwise have made, when it is known that my antagonist is a *prodigy of memory*, and possesses the rare quality of remembering things, that *never happened*, for among the numerous spectators that were present at the Coffee-house, it appears a little problematical, that you should be the only traditionist of such a doughty transaction;---whether true or false; I am under no apprehension, of being stigmatized as a *quack* and a *coarct*, nor shall I take further notice of an assertion coming from a character, who in this respect is unworthy a serious refutation.

I never could receive delight in contemplating or exposing the *dark side* of any man, whatever I have said or may say you have shamefully *extorted* from me;---you have travelled out of your way, called in the aid of fiction, and asserted the most palpable falsehoods to wound my feelings, and probably had the dirt been thrown by any other man but Clayton it might have occasioned a momentary pang, but you, Sir, can never injure me, and it was the greatest error, that could have entered into your imagination, to suppose I thought so, I wished an opportuni-

ty to chastise you, and thereby make you a decent man, but as it has been often and repeatedly proved, that no provocation, even of the most disgraceful kind could ever induce you, to risque that precious plump carcase of yours, in the field of battle, it may be thought a laudable deed, if some person would show the people the *man unmasked*, and thereby work an amendment in some other way---Your hint to the thick settled neighbourhood of the Kiokas shews your folly in an eminent degree, at the same time it discovers, a consummate degree of impudence, if they have screened murderers, and embrued their hands in the blood of innocence, they will think you a proper dictator for them, but if they are humane citizens, which every charitable man must suppose, they will look with contempt on you and your advice, and treat me with respect, or not, as I should deserve it in their estimation. But on the contrary if the people of Richmond county will only reflect on your past conduct, and open their ears to conviction, they will have only to struggle with pity and compassion for a "helpless family" to induce them to keep you in office---At the same time you are giving Barbecues in the country for electioneering purposes, feasting the honest mechanicks in town, *cracking* your pleasant jokes, and holding forth every specious allurements for favour and popularity, do they know you laugh them to scorn as soon as their backs are turned, and speak of them with such contempt and insolence, that your words are worse than gall and bitterness;---must they be apprized you are at present using every exertion; and trying every *mean artifice* in opposition to a young man, who is now absent for his health, which was considerably impaired, by an indefatigable attention to the duties of his office;---one who has behaved with the utmost propriety;---and who, for ability, integrity, and responsibility, is universally acknowledged to be far superior to you---Is it not remarked, even by your best friends, you have lately grown overbearing, and so insolent in office, that it is painful to do business with you;---that you have forgot the hand that feeds you;---that you frequently assume the provinces of Clerk and Judge, and are so *puffed and bloated* by success, that impudence, and arrogance conjoined, will soon transport you into the most unbounded extravagance;---that flushed with victory and triumphing over all apponents, in every instance, except that of Treasurer, when superior ability prevailed, there would be no cause for wonder, if your vanity and presumption should tempt you to be a candidate for Governor---I shall now request the attention of the people, whilst I state my reasons, why, I think Mr. Clayton totally unworthy of trust, and rendered by his own wickedness, unfit to hold any office of profit or honour, until his principles are known to have undergone a reformation---Independence of the barefaced charge of fourteen millions, in the case of Hays's against McKinnie, instead of the legal sum of seven, which is made in the bill of costs, signed with his name, in defiance of the express letter of the law, I have in my possession the most clear and undoubted evidence, that *Philip Clayton* has made a common practice of robbery in this iniquitous way, ever since his exaltation into

the office which he now holds, and the following statement will testify it to the world; -- Francis Woodward brought an action upon a bill in chancery against John Clayton, in Richmond county, previous to the division, which was removed by consent into Columbia county, when the plaintiff applied for the papers, Mr. Clayton refused to deliver them, unless he paid four pounds for costs, Mr. Woodward offered to deposit a bond of Judge Stith's for thirteen pounds---until he could raise the money, which was refused, Mr. Woodward suspecting the illegality of the charge applied to the present Attorney General and told him the circumstances, Mr. Walker replied that Clayton was a *darned extraordinary man* and wrote to him in the most positive terms, to deliver the papers, for that four dollars, in addition to the three which he had received, were all the fees he was entitled to, and after the receipt of this letter, Mr. Clayton gave up the papers, with reluctance, and seemed very unwilling to submit to a legal necessity;---from this statement, of which I have the most satisfactory proof, and can be published if Mr. Clayton denies it, there can be no doubt remaining, but that he meant to cheat Mr. Woodward in the sum of two pounds, seven shillings and four pence, had not the timely interference of his counsel prevented it--- Daniel Ham, esquire, received similar treatment, respecting fees, and many are the instances, where artless countrymen, who unfortunately fell into the clutches of this *ravenous plunderer*, were arbitrarily, and unjustly stripped and pillaged of their money, under the cloak and colour of law---In answer to my first charge, he comes forward, with the impudence of a hardened culprit, just launching from the cart, and tell me, I first accuse him, and then clear him, without attempting even a single syllable in justification of his conduct, and in general terms pronounces with an air of defiance to a supposed world of idiots, that my piece contains neither truth, candour, or impartiality;--- nevertheless, I shall not say, nor do any thing further for your conviction on paper, but when you arrive at that *honorable post* which I design for you, the magic operation of the number thirty-nine, will perform a wonderful revolution---It must be recollected by these who have read my former publications, that although I never held you guiltless, yet the responsibility appeared to be between the court and bar, but Mr. Clayton by his mock defence has gloried in the act, assumed with pride all the guilt to himself, and for his vindication has only abused the man, who has stated his injustice to the public eye--- Throughout this publication then, I have never once called you a liar, or a villain, however I might have proved you both, but that I have convicted you of robbery and also of several attempts towards it, is what no person can doubt or deny---I should now take my final leave of you, with a serious request, that you would, as all sinners are enjoined in that good old book, the bible, *turn from your wicked ways*, and do that which is *lawful and right*, but for this airy expedition you have meditated for me;---nor do I in the least question your sincerity, or doubt your joy at my departure to a different region, when, you might revel in ease and luxury, upon ill-gotten pelf, and your crimes to remain untold---But was this a project of your own, or was it the fanciful excaration of one of your *eccentrick* assistants? Three to one, is great odds at any weapon; but I shall comfort myself with this reflection, that if I cannot bring you all to the *charge*, I may at least effect a coalition at the post, where, with *accord, concert, and strong cord*, Justice will have her claims.

R. DICKENSON.

N. B. It may be observed, that although this piece is directed to Mr. Clayton, I have occasionally addressed myself to the people