

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

TO RICHARD BENTLEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

I should have replied sooner to your letter, but that the last three days in January are, as you are aware, always dedicated, at the Hall, to an especial *battue*, and the old house is full of shooting-jackets, shot-belts, and “double Joes.” Even the women wear percussion caps, and your favourite (?) Rover, who, you may remember, examined the calves of your legs with such suspicious curiosity at Christmas, is as pheasant-mad as if he were a biped, instead of being a genuine four-legged scion of the Blenheim breed. I have managed, however, to avail myself of a lucid interval in the general hallucination, (how the rain *did* come down on Monday!) and as you tell me the excellent friend whom you are in the habit of styling “a Generous and Enlightened Public” has emptied your shelves of the first edition, and “asks for more,” why, I agree with you, it *would* be a want of *respect* to that very *respectable* personification, when furnishing him with a farther supply, not to endeavour at least to amend my faults, which are few, and your own, which are more numerous. I have, therefore, gone to work *con amore*, supplying occasionally on my own part a deficient note, or elucidatory stanza, and on yours knocking out, without remorse, your superfluous i’s, and now and then eviscerating your *colon*.

My duty to our illustrious friend thus performed, I have a crow to pluck with him, — Why will he persist — as you tell me he does persist — in calling me by all sorts of names but those to which I am entitled by birth and baptism — my “Sponsorial and Patronymic appellations,” as Dr. Pangloss has it? — Mrs. Malaprop complains, and with justice, of an “assault upon her parts of speech:” but to attack one’s very existence — to deny that one *is* a person *in esse*, and scarcely to admit that one *may* be a person *in posse*, is tenfold cruelty; — “it is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging!” — let me entreat all such likewise to remember, that as Shakspeare beautifully expresses himself elsewhere — I give his words as quoted by a very worthy Baronet in a neighbouring county, when protesting against a defamatory placard at a general election —

“Who steals my purse steals stuff! —  
‘Twas mine — ‘tisn’t his—nor nobody else’s!  
But he who runs away with my GOOD NAME,  
Robs me of what does not do him any good,  
And makes me deuced poor!!”<sup>1</sup>

In order utterly to squabash and demolish every gainsayer, I had thought, at one time, of asking my old and esteemed friend, Richard Lane, to crush them at once with his magic pencil, and to transmit my features to posterity, where

---

<sup>1</sup> A reading which seems most unaccountably to have escaped the researches of all modern Shakspearians, including the rival editors of the new and illustrated versions.

all his works are sure to be “delivered according to the direction;” but somehow the noble-looking profiles which he has recently executed of the Kemble family put me a little out of conceit with my own, while the undisguised amusement which my “Mephistopheles Eyebrow,” as he termed it, afforded him, in the “full face,” induced me to lay aside the design. Besides, my dear Sir, since, as has well been observed, “there never was a married man yet who had not somebody remarkably like him walking about town,” it is a thousand to one but my lineaments might, after all, out of sheer perverseness be ascribed to anybody rather than to the real owner. I have therefore sent you, instead thereof, a very fair sketch of Tappington, taken from the Folkestone road (I tore it last night out of Julia Simpkinson’s *album*); get Gilks to make a woodcut of it. And now, if any miscreant (I use the word only in its primary and “Pickwickian” sense of “Unbeliever,”) ventures to throw any further doubt upon the matter, why, as Jack Cade’s friend says in the play, “There are the chimneys in my father’s house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it!”

“Why, very well then—we hope here be truths!”

Heaven be with you, my dear Sir!—I was getting a little excited; but you, who are mild as the milk that dews the soft whisker of the new-weaned kitten, will forgive me when, wiping away the nascent moisture from my brow, I “pull in,” and subscribe myself,

Yours quite as much as his own,

THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

TAPPINGTON EVERARD,  
Feb. 2nd, 1843



## THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

“Tunc miser Corvus adeo conscientiae stimulis compunctus fuit, et execratio eum tantopere excarnificavit, ut exinde tabescere inciperet, maciem contraheret, omnem cibum aversaretur, nec amplius crocitaret: pennae praeterea ei defluebant, et alis pendulis omnes facetias intermisit, et tam macer apparuit ut omnes ejus miseressent.”

“Tunc abbas sacerdotibus mandavit ut rursus furem absolverent; quo facto, Corvus, omnibus mirantibus, propediem convaluit, et pristinam sanitatem recuperavit.”

*De Illust. Ord. Cisterc.*

The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair!  
Bishop and abbot, and prior were there;  
Many a monk, and many a friar,  
Many a knight, and many a squire,  
With a great many more of lesser degree, —  
In sooth, a goodly company;  
And they served the Lord Primate on bended knee.  
Never, I ween,  
Was a prouder seen,  
Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,  
Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

In and out  
Through the motley rout,  
That little Jackdaw kept hopping about;  
Here and there,  
Like a dog in a fair,  
Over comfits and cates,  
And dishes and plates,  
Cowl and cope, and rochet and pall,  
Mitre and crosier! he hopp'd upon all!  
With a saucy air,  
He perch'd on the chair  
Where, in state, the great Lord Cardinal sat  
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat;  
And he peer'd in the face  
Of his Lordship's Grace,  
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,  
“We Two are the greatest folks here to-day!”  
And the priests, with awe,  
As such freaks they saw,  
Said, “The Devil must be in that little Jackdaw!!”

The feast was over, the board was clear'd,  
The flawsns and the custards had all disappear'd,  
And six little Singing-boys,—dear little souls!  
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,

Came, in order due,  
Two by two,  
Marching that grand refectory through!  
A nice little boy held a golden ewer,  
Emboss'd and fill'd with water, as pure  
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur,  
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch  
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.  
Two nice little boys, rather more grown,  
Carried lavender-water, and eau de Cologne;  
And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,  
Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.  
One little boy more  
A napkin bore,  
Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,  
And a Cardinal's Hat mark'd in "permanent ink."

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight  
Of these nice little boys dress'd all in white:  
From his finger he draws His costly turquoise;  
And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws,  
Deposits it straight By the side of his plate,  
While the nice little boys on his Eminence wait;  
Till, when nobody's dreaming of any such thing,  
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring!

\* \* \* \* \*

There's a cry and a shout,  
And a deuce of a rout,  
And nobody seems to know what they're about,  
But the monks have their pockets all turn'd inside out;  
The friars are kneeling,  
And hunting, and feeling  
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.  
The Cardinal drew  
Off each plum-colour'd shoe,  
And left his red stockings exposed to the view;  
He peeps, and he feels  
In the toes and the heels;  
They turn up the dishes,—they turn up the plates,—  
They take up the poker and poke out the grates,  
—They turn up the rugs,  
They examine the mugs:—  
But, no!—no such thing;—  
They can't find THE RING!  
And the Abbot declared that, "when nobody twigg'd it,  
Some rascal or other had popp'd in, and prigg'd it!"

The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,  
He call'd for his candle, his bell, and his book!  
In holy anger, and pious grief,  
He solemnly cursed that rascally thief!  
He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed;  
From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head;  
He cursed him in sleeping, that every night  
He should dream of the devil, and wake in a fright;  
He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking,  
He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking;  
He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;  
He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying,  
He cursed him in living, he cursed him dying!—  
Never was heard such a terrible curse!!  
But what gave rise  
To no little surprise,  
Nobody seem'd one penny the worse!

The day was gone,  
The night came on,  
The Monks and the Friars they search'd till dawn;  
When the Sacristan saw,  
On crumpled claw,  
Come limping a poor little lame Jackdaw!  
No longer gay,  
As on yesterday;  
His feathers all seem'd to be turn'd the wrong way; —  
His pinions droop'd — he could hardly stand, —  
His head was as bald as the palm of your hand;  
His eye so dim,  
So wasted each limb,  
That, heedless of grammar, they all cried, "THAT'S HIM!—  
That's the scamp that has done this scandalous thing!  
That's the thief that has got my Lord Cardinal's Ring!"  
The poor little Jackdaw,  
When the monks he saw,  
Feebly gave vent to the ghost of a caw;  
And turn'd his bald head, as much as to say,  
"Pray, be so good as to walk this way!"  
Slower and slower He limp'd on before,  
Till they came to the back of the belfry-door,  
Where the first thing they saw,  
Midst the sticks and the straw,  
Was the RING, in the nest of that little Jackdaw!

Then the great Lord Cardinal call'd for his book,  
And off that terrible curse he took;  
The mute expression Served in lieu of confession,  
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,

The Jackdaw got plenary absolution!  
—When those words were heard,  
That poor little bird  
Was so changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd,  
He grew sleek, and fat;  
In addition to that,  
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat!  
His tail waggled more Even than before;  
But no longer it wagg'd with an impudent air,  
No longer he perch'd on the Cardinal's chair.  
He hopp'd now about  
With a gait devout;  
At Matins, at Vespers, he never was out;  
And, so far from any more pilfering deeds,  
He always seem'd telling the Confessor's beads.  
If any one lied,—or if any one swore,—  
Or slumber'd in pray'r-time and happen'd to snore,  
That good Jackdaw  
Would give a great "Caw!"  
As much as to say, "Don't do so any more!"  
While many remark'd, as his manners they saw,  
That they "never had known such a pious Jackdaw!"  
He long lived the pride  
Of that country side,  
And at last in the odour of sanctity died;  
When, as words were too faint  
His merits to paint  
The Conclave determined to make him a Saint;  
And on newly-made Saints and Popes, as you know,  
It's the custom, at Rome, new names to bestow,  
So they canonised him by the name of Jem Crow!

