

**Supplement to An address to the Wernerian Natural History Society, dated Jily 1830 : containing a reply by Mr Neill to Mr Cheek's answer. November 1830.**

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**SUPPLEMENT**

TO AN

**ADDRESS TO THE WERNERIAN NATURAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY,**

**DATED JULY 1830 ;**

CONTAINING

**A REPLY BY MR NEILL TO MR CHEEK'S  
ANSWER.**

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NOVEMBER 1830.

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TO AN

ADDRESS TO THE WERNERIAN NATURAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY

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ANSWER.

NOVEMBER 1830.



## SUPPLEMENT, &c.

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### *Reply to Notice in No. XI. of Mr Cheek's Journal.*

UPON the envelope of the Address to the Members of the Wernerian Natural History Society, dated July 1830, I mentioned that it had been announced to me some time previous by a friend of Mr Cheek, that an explanatory article would appear in No. XI. of his Journal (to be published 1st August), and that, if desired, a copy of that article would be sent to me before the time of publication; that my answer had been, that I could not ask any favour of Mr Cheek; but that, if the article was communicated to me in time, I would doubtless notice it, and modify my Address accordingly. No communication of any kind reached me—up to the 30th July, when my Address was sent to press. But immediately thereafter, Mr Cheek sent me a copy of No. XI. of his Journal; and I acknowledged in a Postscript printed on the envelope, dated 2d August, that it “contained an admission of the correctness of my statements regarding Mr Arnott’s signature, and an expression of ‘regret’ for the ‘strong language’ which he had employed in contradicting me.”

This was the first apology—deserving the name of an apology—which Mr Cheek had made. I thus took the earliest opportunity of acknowledging it, and it is therefore altogether without reason that Mr Cheek accuses me of being implacable and overlooking it.

Although, however, Mr Cheek states his regret at having “expressed his contradiction in such strong language,” he spoils his apology very much by again repeating, that the remarks he made never “were intended to attach to Mr Neill.” My signature, it will be observed, was appended to the circular, and my name alone



appeared there. I was therefore the "writer" of the circular; and Mr Cheek accused the "writer" of falsehood,—asking, "What sensations must the writer now feel?" &c. Most undoubtedly, the readers of his Journal could attach the censure only to me, and I was therefore justified in making the call upon Mr Cheek.

Mr Cheek now explicitly admits that an untrue statement was made, when it was affirmed that "Mr Arnott did not sign the letter." He says he "has since ascertained that Mr Arnott's name is appended;" and he adds, "We have received *that gentleman's assurance* that his signature was made before the letter was delivered to the chair." This cautious mode of expression intimates, if I mistake not, a lurking insinuation that "that gentleman's assurance" is the *only* evidence, and possibly that it is not so "conclusive" as Mr Neill, in his Address, has presumed it to be. I am far from thinking that Mr Arnott's "assurance" needs to be corroborated by other evidence; but I may here, in passing, mention, that Mr Stark, a member of Council and of Library Committee, has informed me, that he recollects perfectly well of seeing Mr Arnott sign the letter of requisition at the table of the Society before the meeting was constituted. Some sort of doubt seems also to be thrown on Mr Arnott's statement, that, being in the chair, he read out only the names of Mr Falconar and Dr Gillies, and, in place of his own, read "*et cætera*;" for Mr Cheek is pleased to announce to the public, that "the addition of the *et cætera* does not appear to have been heard by the members of the Society, as far as we have been able to learn." From this it would appear, also, that Mr Cheek desires it to be understood that he is widely in communication with the members of the Wernerian Society, and is supported by them in throwing doubts on Mr Arnott's statement. But such, I have reason to know, is not the fact. Again, Mr Cheek excuses himself for not applying to Mr Arnott for information, by alleging that Mr Arnott was "absent from Scotland" (by which Mr Cheek must mean "absent from Edinburgh"). As mentioned in the Address, Mr Arnott was residing with Professor Hooker at Glasgow. I wrote to him on 1st July, and received an answer dated 2d July; and the post would certainly have conveyed Mr Cheek's letter with the same despatch, had he been as anxious as myself to get at the truth. Lastly, in a letter to me dated 7th July, Mr Arnott mentioned his having sent a communication to Mr Cheek, the editor of the Journal, and his hope that its publication would put



matters to rights. Mr Cheek acknowledges in No. XI., that he had received a "full communication" from Mr Arnott upon the subject; but he declined giving Mr Arnott's letter a place in his Journal! The suppression of this conciliatory communication would indicate somewhat of a rancorous spirit in the editor, although he labours hard to throw all the responsibility of hostile feeling upon me. I cannot help thinking that the Censor of Edinburgh has treated Mr Arnott rather unceremoniously; and if such be his conduct to a friend and a regular contributor to his Journal, what could *I* look for but the rejection of any communication from me? or how can I give him credit for sincerity, when he regrets that the "Secretary" did not address the "Editors," and professes that such address would have been "noticed with all due courtesy?"

Mr Cheek next informs us, that he has the authority of Mr Falconar and Dr Gillies to state, that it was their "full impression that the letter was only signed by themselves when delivered to the chair." The introduction of the names of these gentlemen in this manner, led myself and others to conclude, that Mr Cheek wished the public to think that they were, or that one or other of them was, the "authority" he had so triumphantly referred to; and such, indeed, must necessarily have been the impression conveyed to the mind of every reader.

I immediately wrote, therefore, (2d August), to each of those gentlemen, in such a way as to afford them an opportunity of disavowing their being the "authority." Mr Falconar answered, that he "felt most sincerely for any disquiet" occasioned to me by Mr Cheek's Journal; that he had "no share whatever in the paragraph which had caused so much uneasiness;" that the "first time he saw Mr Cheek was about the 3d of July," and therefore that he was "not personally acquainted with him till *after* the publication of his No. X." containing the offensive paragraph. Dr Gillies answered, that he "was at a loss to conceive how any reader of the Journal could be led to conclude that he had in any way authorised Mr Cheek to make any aspersions against Mr Neill's character," and that "nothing has ever been farther from his intention than to authorise any language calculated to be injurious to his character." I am fully entitled to hold, therefore, that neither Mr Falconar nor Dr Gillies was the "authority" referred to by Mr Cheek.



Mr Cheek is pleased to add, that "delicacy restrained him (Mr Cheek) from interrogating Mr Neill, because his connexion with the circular was of rather a dubious nature."—Delicacy restrained Mr Cheek from interrogating me! Indeed! Yet delicacy did not restrain him from dragging before the public the private concerns of a Society to which he did not belong, nor from doing all in his power (fortunately little) to hold up to contempt and infamy either its President or Secretary, or both, by the grossest imputations, now proved to be unfounded\*. Mr Cheek has never ventured to assign the slightest reason why my connexion with the circular should be regarded as of a *dubious* nature. The allegation is a pure invention of his own, without the slightest foundation to rest upon. I may here remark, that, in his fly-slip, Mr Cheek spoke of his having "requested information" from me, but that I denied his having done so; and now, after the lapse of a "little month," Mr Cheek, forgetting what he had said in his fly-slip, actually begins, with singular inconsistency, to explain why he "did *not* request information from Mr Neill;" to-wit, "delicacy" forbade it.

According to the order of time, I have next to mention, that, on 15th August, I received the following letter from Mr Cheek:

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your presentation of two copies of your Address" (*i. e.* one for each editor). "I am sorry that you had not an opportunity of seeing the correction and apology published in the last Number of our Journal, prior to the circulation of your pamphlet, if it could have led to the suppression or modification, in any degree, of the personal invective which you have thought proper to mingle with a public discussion. As, however, this did not occur, and as you have suppressed certain facts which are very necessary to a clear perception of the merits of the case *utraque parte*, I fear I shall be obliged to answer your statements; and I should be additionally indebted to you for a further exhibition of that 'kindness' with which, as you remark, you have 'ever treated' me, if you would provide me with a list of those gentlemen to

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\* While Mr Cheek on all occasions treats with contumely these office-bearers of the Wernerian Society, or "managers," as he styles them, he most inconsistently disclaims making any attack on the "Society" itself; as if he could attack a Society in any way but by assailing its office-bearers as such. He "beholds with disgust a coterie brooding like a night-mare over the Wernerian Society." I was at a loss to know what this meant; but having learned from "good authority" that a *coterie* signifies a "little club" of pleasure-hunters, whose most innocent amusements are scandal and slander, I am in the judgment of my readers (as the lawyers say), whether this term can be fairly considered as more applicable to the office-bearers of the Wernerian Society than, to the editorial club of Gardner's Crescent.



whom you have forwarded your Address, that, by circulating my Reply (Answer) amongst the same individuals, I may furnish them with an outline of the other side of the dispute, for the purpose of a fair judgment between us.

" May I also request your permission to make use of such parts of the correspondence which has taken place between ourselves and others in this business, as I may be able to obtain, and as appear to be necessary to a perfect understanding of the case.

" I feel assured that you will receive my answer with the same amicable spirit which must have presided over the composition of your Address; and that 'the waters of Marah' will not be more bitter after I have given a reply, than whilst you have it all your own way,—even though that reply should savour a little of the Philippick. I trust, therefore, that thereafter the matter may be allowed to rest, and that peace and good-will may be resumed. To say the truth, men devoted to science are not so numerous as to authorise continual squabbles amongst them, independently of more worthy considerations; and for my own part, I can declare that I shall always be ready for a reconciliation, though I shall be obliged to defend myself whenever I am singled out for personal attack."

To this letter I immediately returned the following answer :

" Had I asked from you a list of the Edinburgh subscribers to your Journal, you would have had a right to ask from me a list of the gentlemen to whom I have sent my paper. But I never thought of making such a request; and you must feel conscious that, had it been made, it would not have been very graciously received either by the editor or the publisher. Further, were I anxious to furnish you with my list, I could not; for I kept no note of the names. They were *chiefly* members of the Wernerian Society, resident within reach of the twopenny post; and as you have shewn that you are assisted by at least two members of it, you cannot be much at a loss in this matter. Your attack on the Society, contained in your *published* Journal, must have been seen by hundreds who can never see my defence; so you have the thing all your own way with your Journal readers.

" In the circumstances of the case, it was necessary to speak of 'Mr Cheek' as the offender. I did not single *him* out as the object of attack; *he* came to me; *he* promised to cancel, &c. But had not reports been abroad that certain *members* of the Wernerian Society had associated themselves with Mr Cheek in the attack, I never would have circulated any Address on the subject.

" I assure you that I did not intentionally *suppress* any *fact* which seemed to me to bear on the points in dispute,—in dispute not between you and me, but rather between Drs Knox and Gillies and the Wernerian Society, and which are not, and ought not to be, the subject of 'public discussion,' although you make them so in your Journal. I scrupulously abstained from printing any part of the correspondence that had the aspect of being confidential; and the propriety of your observing the same rule is obvious; for, in the careless familiarity of a confidential note, modes of expression may inadvertently and innocently be used, which might look awkward in print. As you do not specify particulars, I can only answer thus generally: and I trust you are not asking liberty, after having already taken it.

" To conclude this long, and I trust final letter,—I believe you are, or lately were, in honourable office in the Royal Medical, and also in the Royal Physical Society. Had *members* of either of these Societies (*visitors* are own



out of the question) instead of bringing their complaints before the Society itself, gone to hostile editors with reports of the *private business* of the Society, thus instigating to mischief, would not *you* have been one of the first to condemn their conduct, and to call them to account? I know you would,—unless these Societies be now on a very different footing indeed from that on which they stood twenty years ago.”

Both of these letters I would have been inclined to have regarded as strictly private. But Mr Cheek did not so consider them; for it appears that he transmitted garbled extracts of my letter to Dr Knox and Dr Gillies, thus endeavouring to instigate them to hostility against me. It seemed proper, therefore, to give the entire letters, that the reader might form a fair judgment of them.

I may remark, that one part of my letter is not well expressed, or does not fully convey my meaning. When I state, that any dispute appears “rather to be between Drs Knox and Gillies and the Wernerian Society” than between Mr Cheek and me, I merely *supposed* the existence of such dispute as *assumed* by Mr Cheek, but did not intend to affirm that such dispute actually existed. Dr Gillies has intimated to me by letter, that he does not consider himself as having any dispute with the Society.

The *argumentum ad Præsidem* in my letter, I understand, produced a strong sensation; and well it might. Had Mr Cheek presumed to publish in his Journal any of the private proceedings of the Royal Medical Society, he would probably at once have been removed from the chair; for this Society is so jealous of its privileges, that, not many years ago, a member having on one occasion lampooned the office-bearers in a few harmless Hudibrastics, was formally accused before the Society, and compelled to abjure publication; and on another occasion, when the New Philosophy of Gall was discussed, the same Society actually applied to the Judge Ordinary for an interdict against the Phrenological Journal reporting even its public proceedings.

*Reply to Notice in No. XII. of Journal.*

In No. XII. of his Journal, published on 1st September (shewn to me by a friend), Mr Cheek again takes up the subject, and in the very first word evinces disregard of candour. He says, “*Since* the publication of No. XI., a pamphlet by Mr Neill has appeared,” although he well knew that my pamphlet preceded the publication of his No. XI., or appeared, at all events, quite simultaneously with it. He ingeniously represents his attack on the Wernerian Society and its office-bearers as



now converted into a *private quarrel* with me,—and complains bitterly, that “Mr Neill has chosen to single out Mr Cheek, and to level unmeasured vituperation personally against him.” Now, in the very opening of my Address, I expressly mentioned “Messrs Ainsworth and Cheek” as the “editors” (in the plural) of the offensive Journal. I had no wish to deprive Mr Ainsworth of his just share of the merit, or to screen that gentleman from his just share of the obloquy, of the publication. I sent a copy of my Address for each of the editors. If I afterwards spoke more especially of Mr Cheek, let it be remembered that it was with Mr Cheek alone that I had any intercourse: it was Mr Cheek who came to me, and virtually insulted me in my counting-room; it was Mr Cheek who promised to cancel the calumnious passage; and it was Mr Cheek who broke the promise thus made to me. If the reader will turn to Mr Cheek’s letter to me of 29th June (page 8 of my Address), he will find the personal pronoun *I* occurring eight-and-twenty times in it, and the editor speaking of the “fly-slip which *I* (Mr Cheek) had annexed to the Journal.” He never gives the most distant hint that he would consult with his brother editor. I may here remark, that, in July, the editors made their Journal the channel of conveying to the public the grossest slanders against me; in August a kind of half apology was wrung from them; and in September they talk of the “character of their Journal” being such as “not to allow of its name being mixed up” with such matters! With a few unmeaning big words, the editors then contrive to skulk from the field,—a pretty sure proof that they feel conscious that they have earned no laurels, but have perhaps suffered not a little discomfiture and disgrace. I shall only further remark, that, by a strange perversion of language, the *private business* of the Wernerian Society becomes in the editors’ view a “public question,” while their virulent attack on the President of that Society is not to be regarded as *personal invective*!

In this same No. XII. Mr Cheek announces, that a “peculiarly great accession of talent has been prospectively acquired” by his Journal. The glory of the Journal, as stated to me by himself some months ago, consisted in the *frequency* of publication; he declared that nothing short of monthly publication was adapted to the present progressive state of science. It was therefore to have been expected, that, after this boasted “peculiarly great accession of talent,” Mr Cheek would publish weekly, or at least



once a fortnight. But no ; strange to tell ! the first fruits of this accession of talent is a retrograde movement,—a diminution in the frequency of publication to the extent of one half ; instead of a monthly journal, it is to become a bimestral one. Let us hope, however, that a better result of the accession of talent will be an infusion of delicacy and right feeling, and the absolute exclusion of such sarcasm and invective as have too often disgraced the pages of the monthly publication \*.

\* While this sheet is in the press, a friend has favoured me with a sight of a "Supplement to No. XII." in which Mr Cheek announces the conversion of his establishment into a sort of Literary Bank, with a Board of Directors, but with this anomaly (according to report), that Mr Cheek, the Cashier and Secretary, appoints the Directors, instead of the Directors appointing him. The proposed "two-monthly intervals" are abandoned, and the plan of monthly publication reverted to. This Journal is in future to be a "Repertorium of Facts," and absolutely to contain "all that is worth knowing !" So at least promises Mr Cheek. He adds, that under the head of "Original Articles," will be "comprized *translations*"—a suggestion that must doubtless have come from Messrs Curry & Co. He now denounces the "anonymous discussions" which have "disfigured the pages of scientific works"—meaning, of course, his own previous Journal ; and holds out a hope, that in future the "courtesies of society" will be respected. The names of the Board of Directors will be the best guarantee for this, provided they be not *voces et præterea nihil*, as far as respects Mr Cheek's Journal. Most certainly they will not long lend their names to the Editor, if he shall, as in times past, "shoot his arrows in secret," or play bo-peep behind men of straw. . . . Methinks the reader, and even Mr Cheek, will exclaim, "What right have you, Mr Neill, "to interfere with the arrangements of this Journal, a publication with which "you have no concern ? Let the Editor and the Directors manage their own "business in their own way."—Gentle Reader, I have thus interfered only by way of illustration,—to bring home the impropriety of Mr Cheek interfering in the management of the Wernerian Society, a society with which he has no concern.



## REPLY

*to certain parts of Mr Cheek's Answer.*

I come now to Mr Cheek's voluminous pamphlet. He announced it to me as in preparation on 15th August last; he took about two months from that date to bring it out; and he was still actively engaged in circulating it in the first week of November. It has evidently been the fruit of much labour and study; and he has circulated it widely, even to gentlemen who (as they have themselves told me) never before heard of his name, and who knew nothing of the affairs in dispute. I have delayed making any reply till I should, from casual intercourse, learn whether any, and which particular parts of the pamphlet, might be regarded as deserving of that trouble; for it would be equally irksome and unprofitable to the reader and to myself to review it in detail, or to expose all the little arts by means of which the author tries to lead away the attention from the principal facts, and to fix it on secondary matters. I am convinced that my statement, in all its essential points, remains unshaken, or has rather been confirmed; and I feel confident, that if any reader shall take the trouble to compare the Address and the Answer, he will be of this opinion. My remarks must in a great measure be desultory and unconnected; but they shall be as few and as brief as possible. The subject, however, having been taken up by the public press, some explanations must be given, which would be wholly superfluous, if this Reply were to be considered as addressed solely to members of the Wernerian Society.

Mr Cheek affects to have been against printing, but alleges (p. 1.) that his friends overruled him, and compelled him to "add gall to the wormwood," (such is his own statement). Elsewhere, however, he seems to rejoice that his "adversary has written a book \*," so as to afford him an opportunity of answering. He erroneously states, that he had admitted to me, "privately," that he was the "author of the obnoxious article," (p. 2). He never did so: indeed, in the next page of his pamphlet, he says, "I shall

\* For this expression, Mr Cheek quotes the "Prophet" Job! (Answer, p. 25.)



declare openly, that it was entirely written by me ;” and this is the first distinct admission of the fact.

He promises (p. 3) “ gently to wipe off the aspersions hurled upon him ;” but immediately begins with indulging in slanderous, and perhaps actionable, misrepresentations about the Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, employing the terms “ disgraceful”—“ calculated to delude”—“ actual dishonesty”—“ obtaining money under false pretences,” &c. &c. May we not conclude, that he is so very audacious, purely in the hope that that gentleman will treat his calumnies with contempt? He quotes (p. 4) with eclat, Mr W. S. Macleay, whose answer to the Rev. Dr Fleming’s Comparative View of the Dichotomous and Quinary Systems, seems to have been the model which he has striven to imitate and emulate in his present performance.

I had said in my Address, that I had “ ever treated Mr Cheek with kindness, as far as my slender opportunities extended.” This last qualification Mr Cheek suppresses, and he takes the liberty of inserting the epithet “ extraordinary” before “ kindness.” Mr Cheek admits having received from me letters of introduction to members of the Linnean Society, though he now finds some fault with the nature of those letters: all I can say is, that they were precisely such letters as he wanted, and such as I could give in the circumstances of the case. It may further be mentioned, that for the greater part of two sessions, I took upon me to extend to him (who was no member) the privilege of receiving billets announcing the meetings of the Wernerian Society and specifying the business to be transacted. I considered him as a respectable young stranger and diligent student of nature; and as he had repeatedly come to me inquiring about the meetings of the Society, I was anxious to save him this trouble, and, by sending him billets, to enable him to judge for himself whether the business announced made it desirable for him to apply for a visitor’s ticket to any particular meeting. Alas! however, Mr Cheek complains that he “ never *visited* at Mr Neill’s *house* at Canon-mills!” (p. 5): there was, it seems, no beef and pudding—no substantial kindness of this sort; and therefore Mr Cheek “ does not remember the kindness alluded to by Mr Neill!”

Mr Cheek informs us (p. 6), that he “ received information, upon the accuracy of which he thought he could depend,”—“ from a person who was present” at the meeting of the Wernerian Society when the letter of requisition was presented. This “ per-



son," it would appear, volunteered his evidence to accuse Mr Neill of falsehood or of forgery, assuring Mr Cheek that "Mr Arnott did not sign that letter," although Mr Neill had deliberately affirmed in print that Mr Arnott's signature was affixed to it! Mr Cheek now states, for the first time, that the "information of this person was subsequently *confirmed* by the testimony of other persons,"—"numbers \* of the Society, as well as several visitors." Now, it is very remarkable, that neither the first mentioned "person," nor the "other persons," nor any of the "numbers of the Society," nor of the "several visitors," are *named* by Mr Cheek. The truth is, they could not be named by Mr Cheek; for they are completely ideal—all mere men of straw! The meeting of the 17th April was far from being numerous, not twenty members being present, with four or five visitors. The voluntary testimony of members whom I have incidentally met during the recess, has enabled me so to narrow the list of those who could by possibility give the information, that I feel emboldened to say that Mr Cheek's statement is utterly destitute of foundation. All the members whom I have seen, have expressed the most unqualified indignation at the attack on our President, and surprise at the "impertinence" of Mr Cheek in interfering with the affairs of a Society of which he is not a member. In point of fact, too, the allegation which Mr Cheek here declares to have been "subsequently confirmed," &c. was *demonstrated* to be false and calumnious, and has in reality been *admitted* to be so by Mr Cheek himself, both in his letters and in his Journal! It is altogether impossible to argue with a writer capable of such inconsistency and tergiversation.

Mr Cheek says (p. 8), that "it appears that Dr Traill was able to find *one* copy without the errata fly-slip in Liverpool." Mr Cheek's want of candour compels me to repeat the truth more explicitly, viz. that Dr Traill "could only hear of one copy in Liverpool," and that this solitary copy contained no fly-slip. If there were more copies in Liverpool, the natural conclusion is, that they were all in the same predicament, without the errata fly-slip, which Mr Cheek had promised to append to every copy.

Mr Cheek is now pleased to deny that he "protested strenuously" that he "was not the author" of the offensive passage. But in his letter of 29th June (printed in Address, p. 8), he mentions, that he "said that he did not make the statement on his own responsibility." Now, if we suppose Mr Cheek to have said this

\* Perhaps a typographical blunder for "members."



with some degree of energy (not an unreasonable supposition certainly), then it would have been perfectly correct to have reported, that he "protested strenuously that he was not responsible" for the passage; and if Mr Cheek thinks that this alteration in the mode of expression betters his case, he is welcome to the correction.

In his letter of 7th July, Mr Cheek expressly said, that, after the appearance of the errata-slip, "every explanation he chose to enter into must be entirely between ourselves as individuals;" yet he now blames me (Answer, p. 9) for regarding this as an intimation that such explanation should not be printed and published. If, after such a caution, I had presumed to print his letter, might he not, and would he not, have cried out against me for publishing a confidential letter? Mr Cheek indeed stated, in a letter dated 31st July, that he did not wish his letter of the 7th of that month to be regarded as private; but my Address was printed *before* I received that communication. Until I received that letter, I certainly could not imagine that I was at liberty to print a letter which bore that the explanation it contained "was entirely between ourselves as individuals." Mr Cheek now pretends (p. 10) that this letter of the 7th July contained a sufficient apology for the gross calumny he had published against me. But examine for a moment the nature of the apology. He regrets "the annoyance which the *misapplication* of his remarks, and the inaccuracy of a particular passage, have occasioned." *Misapplication* by whom? If he mean to throw upon me the burden of *misapplying*, then was there no apology at all.

I have now to notice the unhandsome way in which Mr Cheek tries to implicate me in self-contradiction or falsehood, by a reference to the "clerk" or shop-lad of his publisher, and to what is styled a "business-like letter," which Mr Cheek has evidently impetrated from that person. I presume this may be the same individual who had asserted, that, on 29th June last, I had, in Mr Lizars' shop, expressed my satisfaction with the errata-slip, while the truth was, that I had then and there most strongly expressed my dissatisfaction with it. For the correctness of my account of what then passed, I referred to Mr Robert Spittal and Mr Macgregor of the North Briton, one or other of whom witnessed all that passed. These gentlemen, I have reason to believe, were strictly interrogated on the subject by an agent of Mr Cheek; but Mr Cheek remains silent, without the slightest



attempt to vindicate the misrepresentation made by the clerk. Testimony coming from the same individual, now somewhat irritated, and anxious to retrieve himself, will scarcely be held admissible, if inconsistent with real evidence arising from the circumstances of the case. All that I said about "never having seen Mr Cheek's periodical work," will be found perfectly correct, provided my language be interpreted in the ordinary manner, viz. that I had never *seen* Mr Cheek's work in such a way as to become acquainted with its contents. I may here notice, that I recollect perfectly well of having mentioned to different friends,—since Mr Cheek's attack first appeared, but before the circulation of my Address,—that, "with the exception of Captain Brown's account of the different states of plumage of the whidah bird," I had never seen any part of Mr Cheek's Journal. Besides, the circumstances of the case afford real evidence that I had never examined No. V., and Mr Cheek must be abundantly sensible of this. Here is the proof. In enumerating, from memory, the principal donations received by the Society (Address, p. 14.), I entirely forgot a suite of the minerals of the coal formation of Alloa by Mr Bald, and of the rocks of Papa Stour by Dr Fleming. Now, it so happens that these two donations are actually blazoned forth in separate lines, at the top of a page (p. 354), in the identical No. V. of Mr Cheek's Journal, and must inevitably have caught my eye, and have thus been brought to my recollection, had I ever *seen* (i. e. examined or perused) that number. I presume Mr Cheek will readily acquit me of any intention to afford him so fine an opportunity of crowing. As a further proof that I had not seen the article on the Wernerian Society, except as quoted in the Observer Newspaper, I may mention, that in July last I naturally applied to the editor of that newspaper, and was favoured with a sight of the office *file*, that being the only mode that occurred to me to revive my recollection of what I had formerly read. Thus alone did I learn all that I knew of Mr Cheek's attack in No. V. until the 27th of September last, when Mr Cheek sent me (without assigning any reason) a copy of that number of his work, when I discovered, to my surprize, that this attack was contained in the same number which was embellished with the figures of the whidah bird.

The extent of my acquaintance with Mr Cheek's Journal previous to the appearance of No. X. containing the libel on myself,



was this. Some time in the course of last winter (or it might be in the beginning of February), I was desirous to procure for a friend, Captain Brown's account of the changes of plumage of the whidah bird; and, in quest of this publication, I recollect of calling at the shops of Mr Black and Mr John Anderson jun., and being thence directed to the shop of Mr Lizars. I inquired for "Captain Brown on the whidah bird," or probably for the Number of Captain Brown's Journal containing the account of that bird; for at that time, and for months afterwards, I was impressed with the notion that the Captain was a principal editor of the Journal. I recollect perfectly well of the shop-lad puffing off the new journal, and willingly bear testimony to his abilities as a *canvasser*, and his zeal in recommending Mr Cheek's wares. The number which I thus procured was not an hour in my hands, and passed from them uncut and unexamined. With the contents generally, I remained unacquainted; the only fact which I ascertained was, that the identical whidah described was a specimen with which I was acquainted at Drumseugh. It seems this number of the Journal was sold to me at what is called "trade-price." Surely there was nothing improper in this. Mr Cheek himself purchases all new books at trade-price; and it would be very foolish in him not to do so, he being of the "profession," and entitled to this privilege of favour. But since the clerk mentions, and Mr Cheek thinks it worth while to publish, that No. V. was sold to me for "eighteen pence," they ought, in fairness, to have added that the full price of two shillings was paid for No. X., being the only other number which I ever purchased. If the cash-book of 29th June be examined, it will show that this was the case, and that Mr Cheek was not deprived of a sixpence, or his share of a sixpence, by my claiming privilege. In reality, it was a breach of common courtesy to take the full retail price from me, since it appears I was known to be "of the trade." In most shops in town, the customary abatement would have been tendered to me without my asking for it\*.

The latter part of the clerk's letter I cannot explain. It narrates a conversation which could not have taken place on that occasion: I was then hurrying to a meeting at Physicians' Hall, the hour of which had arrived; I was not more than one minute

\* A copy of No. X. marked with Mr Cheek's compliments, was handed into my counting-room on 28th October, the messenger instantly disappearing.



in the shop ; I got the book, paid the price, and walked away without holding unnecessary intercourse with any one belonging to the establishment. In this I am confirmed by Mr R. Spittal. That gentleman informs me, that as he was coming down South St David Street, he observed me enter Mr Lizars' shop ; that he immediately proceeded towards the shop to join me ; and that by the time he reached it, which could not exceed a minute, he found me already in the act of leaving it. There was, therefore, a physical impossibility that any confabulation with the clerk could, on that occasion, have taken place, supposing me never so well inclined for such gossiping. Further, there is real evidence in the circumstances of the case to shew that no such conversation could then have taken place. Had the clerk in any way alluded to the fact of my having, some months before, purchased a copy of No. V., I would, of course, have prevented all this cavilling by saying that I had never *read* or *perused*, instead of seen ; or that I had never *seen* a Number, " with the exception of that one which contained the figures of the whidah bird." My alleged assertion to the clerk, that I had " never before seen a Number," is represented as quite ultroneous, and it seems equally destitute of meaning and motive. The clerk states that he " mentioned having formerly sold him one, and to this remark Mr Neill made no reply ;" I state that I never heard his remark, else the captious criticism would have been obviated.

Mr Cheek is pleased to contrast my *profession* with his *profession* ; and, at p. 14., insultingly remarks, that Mr Neill cannot " serve both God and Mammon." He might have spared these taunts ; but, as he has not had the discretion to do so, he must just take some home truths and gentle touches in return, although they should at once illustrate and mortify his self-conceit and vanity. Mr Cheek quotes, or rather misquotes (p. 2. note), the celebrated reply of young Pitt to Horace Walpole ; and the whole of his " dignified bearing" shews that he is willing to indulge in the vain imagination of being somewhat on a par with the youthful statesman. Some months ago, this tantling claimed for himself the " office of censor" of Edinburgh ; and now he vindicates his fitness for that station, by declaring that he is " unshackled by local connexions," (an argument altogether inconsistent, by the by, with the wrath he displays at my denominating him a " stranger"). He likewise wishes to hold himself forth as the patron of naturalists here,—the Baron Cuvier of Edinburgh ; and he seems desirous



that the Saturday evenings' conversaziones of Gardner's Crescent should vie with the soirées of the Jardin des Plantes. He writes himself, in the title-page of his Journal, "President of the Royal Medical Society," (which can mean only that he is one of the four annual presidents of that society), and thus intimates that he aims at the *medical* profession. Such was also my object for some time, but I changed my views. Mr Cheek harps upon the circumstance of my mentioning the fact of his converting his dwelling-house into a printing-office, and denominates it an "envious elucidation," (p. 22.) Now, I admit that it was as lawful for him to become a printer as for me to do so. I firmly believe that he thus expected to save money, or to make profit, which are synonymous phrases; for Mr Cheek doubtless has been long enough in Scotland to learn the wisdom of the maxim, "A penny hained is a penny gained." But while I am very far from being envious of his *profits*, I must remark that he seems unreasonably ashamed of his new profession;—the profession of a Franklin and a Smellie. He need no longer tax his ingenuity in devising expedients for evading the law that requires the name and residence of every printer to be affixed to all publications that issue from his press. Whatever Mr Henry H. Cheek may dream, he is at present, to all intents and purposes, a letter-press printer in Gardner's Crescent, in the parish of St Cuthbert's, who, by means of his agents, sells as many copies as he possibly can of the journal which he there prints, and pockets the proceeds, and the *profits*, if any there be. Mr Cheek speaks with indignation (p. 20) of my not being acquainted with the contents of his Journal. He compels me to remind him that he had, many months before, schooled me on the same topic, and that I had then assigned what I considered satisfactory reasons for not taking in his Journal.

Mr Cheek is pleased (p. 25) to complain of my speaking in a derogatory way of the books and specimens belonging to the Wernerian Society. I cannot for a moment here give him credit for sincerity: on the contrary, I regard this as an illustration of his perverse disposition. Had I spoken, without qualification, of the "Library and Museum" of the Society, then would Mr Cheek have exhausted his eloquence in decrying both, and in holding up the Society to ridicule for making so lofty pretensions. My statement was modest and true: we possess a few good books,



and have received a few donations; but we cannot be said to be in possession either of a Library \* or of a Museum.

Mr Cheek is pleased (p. 28.) to say that, in April 1830, the librarian had no catalogue of the Society's books. This looks like an intentional misrepresentation; for Mr Cheek was in possession of an extract of the minutes of 26th January 1828, bearing that Mr Wilson, the librarian, then presented to the meeting a list of the books made up by himself.

Mr Cheek repeats the unfounded charge of the manuscript papers of the Wernerian Society being appropriated to Professor Jameson's Journal; but he does not venture to specify a single instance of such conduct. Why? Because he could not. While Mr Cheek accuses me of "forestalling the marketable papers," (such is his elegant phraseology), without producing a single proof, I retort the charge, and adduce my proof. For example, the leading article in No. XI. of Mr Cheek's Journal, is a paper which was read before the Wernerian Society on the very 17th of April when the letter of requisition was presented! Again, Mr Cheek, taking advantage of an evident misapprehension of Dr Hooker (which I clearly explained to Mr Cheek), insisted on withdrawing from the Wernerian Society a paper on the Native Pine Forests of Braemar, after it had been announced in the proof-sheet of the printed billet. I immediately wrote to Dr Hooker, and that gentleman informed me, in course of post, that I had rightly interpreted his feelings; and added, "Be assured that, as far as *I* was concerned, I should have been *gratified*† at its being read to the Wernerian Society." But Mr Cheek prevented its being read, and instantly had the paper published in his Journal!

Mr Cheek still perseveres in arrogating to himself and his journal, merit for exciting the attention of the Wernerian Society to arranging its books, &c. although the folly of his pretensions

\* Many people, and probably Mr Cheek among others, have no idea of the expense of a natural history library. More than thirty years ago, the formation of a collection of books of reference in natural history was attempted in Edinburgh. Each subscriber engaged to pay down L. 50, and nearly twenty subscribers were procured. In the faith of the plan taking effect, several valuable works were purchased; but it was found that one shop in Edinburgh (Mr Laing's) could have easily furnished L. 500 worth, and that the expense of other books that were indispensable in the commencement, would not be less than L. 1500 more. The project, therefore, fell to the ground.

† The words in *Italics* are underscored in Dr Hooker's letter.



has been fully exposed. His Journal was begun in the autumn of 1829; while a committee of the Wernerian Society, appointed for the above purpose, had all but completed its task in 1827!

In my Address (p. 14.), I had said, "It were a brief and easy task to enumerate all the other donations the Society ever received;" and this was most true: but, in enumerating them from memory, it appears that I forgot three or four; and this affords great ground of triumph to Mr Cheek. The whole omissions are,

Specimen of rocks from the coal formation of Alloa, presented by Mr Bald;

Specimen of the rocks of Papa Stour, by Dr Fleming;

Specimens illustrative of the geognosy of Arran, by Professor Jameson; and

Bones of the Orkney animal, by Mr Gilbert Laing Meason.

Now, it will be remarked, that all these four donations are regularly enumerated, in separate lines, as above printed, in No. V. of Mr Cheek's Journal, that very number which he endeavours to prove I had "seen." To any candid and unprejudiced mind, this circumstance (as already remarked), must afford irresistible evidence that I had not *seen* that number, in the sense of having examined or read it.

Mr Cheek adds, on the authority of Dr Knox, "A specimen of a pelican from Mr Neill;" and a "fossil seal from the marine deposite between Loch Lomond and the Clyde." As to the first, it is a mere mistake, and must have reference to a specimen of the Australasian pelican, presented by my relation Mr Robert Neill of Hobart Town, to Professor Jameson, for the University Museum. As to the fossil bones of a seal having been mistaken by the members for those of a fox, the story must relate to some private conversation before the commencement of business. My recollection is, that the bones were remitted to Dr Knox for examination; and accordingly I find that the only entry in the minute-book on the subject is:—"8th January 1825. Dr Knox read a short communication, shewing that the bones found in a bed of clay near Camelon, and 90 feet above the present level of the Forth, are those of a full grown seal, of the species still inhabiting the Frith of Forth." This statement I believe to be perfectly correct. Had the subject been a rare mineral or ore, it would not have been remitted to the Doctor, nor, had he committed himself in



incidentally conversing about such specimens, would any of us have thought of upbraiding him.

An erratum (*barbarossa* for *babyrussa*), affords scope for Mr Cheek's wit (p. 26). But the Censor is disingenuous even in minutiae. In my Address, the blundered word is printed *barbarossa*, with a small *b*; but Mr Cheek artfully makes it "*Barbarossa*," with a capital *B*, including the word within inverted commas, as if it were fairly quoted; and, by this big *B*, hangs a fine tale about Frederick Barbarossa, who died in Silicia (Cilicia), having been drowned in the Cydnus. Though no "*prophet*," I venture to predict that Mr Cheek will not long exercise the profession of editor and printer, without encountering slips of the press as extraordinary. Indeed on the covers of the two or three numbers of his Journal, now in my possession, notices of some errata very little inferior in ludicrous effect are to be found. Mr Cheek should learn to distinguish between slips *quas incuria fudit*, and errors of ignorance. To shew him how easy it is to retaliate, he may be reminded, 1. Of his supposing that *to instigate*, means merely *to promote* (Ans. p. 18); while every boy in Mr Wood's school could have told him it means "to urge to ill"—"to incite to mischief;" 2. Of his quoting the *prophecies* of Job (Ans. p. 25); and, 3. Of his complaining (Ans. p. 2), of my having "garnished his *patronymic* with adjuncts." Now, at this moment, I do not know his father's Christian name, and am therefore altogether unacquainted with Mr Cheek's *patronymic*. But it is evident that Mr Cheek does not know the meaning of the term; and he will, no doubt, be surprised to learn, that if his father's name be Thomas, William, Richard, or Alexander, then will Mr Cheek's *patronymic* be Thomson, Wilson, Dickson, or Sanderson. 4. It is awkward for the Editor of the Geographical Journal to write *Silicia* (Ans. p. 26.), in place of *Cilicia*; and scarcely excusable in him not to know that such writers as Edward Gibbon deny that Frederick Barbarossa was drowned in the Cydnus; and, 5. To write *apogiatura* (Ans. p. 6.), for *appoggiatura*, would not be pardoned in a miss in her first season at music and Italian. All of these illustrations of Mr Cheek's philological, biblical, historical and geographical acquirements are derived from a few pages of his pamphlet. His prospectus is perhaps equally rich in examples of his fitness for the office of editor, as may be seen by consulting the note p. 8, *suprà*.

Mr Cheek's letter to me of the 14th August (given *suprà*, p. 4),



I suspected at the time to be somewhat of the nature of a *fishing* letter. The early date of it (more than six weeks before the appearance of his pamphlet), and the base use made of my answer to it, have proved my suspicions to have been well founded. The ostensible object of that letter was to procure my sanction to the printing of confidential letters. I stated objections to such conduct; and Mr Cheek, with this warning before his eyes, had sent garbled extracts of my answer to Dr Knox and Dr Gillies, with the evident view of exciting them to hostility; in which amiable project he has been to some extent successful.

It would certainly have been more dignified, and in better taste, if Dr Knox had either repelled the approaches of a stirrer up of strife, or had communicated with me before going to press on the subject. The letter of 15th August, elicited from me by a manœuvre of Mr Cheek, has already been given at full length (*suprà*, p. 5); and the reader can judge for himself whether it deserve the epithet "foolish," bestowed on it by Dr Knox. I must, however, be excused for defending my circular or extracts. The Doctor, who, be it observed, declares that he had never thought nor spoken of the Wernerian Society for five years past, says that these extracts are "full of misrepresentations and nonsense." But Mr Walker Arnott, a much more regular attendant on the Wernerian Society, and certainly not less accustomed to accurate business habits than Dr Knox, declares that these same extracts are, "as far as he at present recollects, *true in every respect*," (Address, p. 20.) On the one hand, Mr Arnott has never retracted this verdict; and, on the other, Dr Knox has not specified a single misrepresentation! The activity and diligence of Dr Knox as a comparative anatomist, I have often admired. But was it not, I would ask, in the University Museum, and under the auspices of Professor Jameson, that he first had an opportunity of distinguishing himself? I recollect well of expressing admiration at the extent of his labours in that Museum; and I can never forget the warm, and doubtless sincere and well merited eulogy which he then pronounced on Professor Jameson for the liberality and attention with which he (Dr Knox) had been treated by that gentleman. I may add, that Dr Knox really admits all that had been alleged regarding him, viz. that, since 1825, the Doctor had ceased to take an interest in the affairs of the Society.

At the institution of the Society, Professor Jameson was chosen



President, and he has been annually re-elected for twenty-three sessions. This must be considered by every impartial person as highly creditable to both parties. The Society justly felt that, to have the Professor of Natural History of the University for its head, was an enviable mark of distinction, and he has been a most attentive and useful President. His zeal has not unfrequently made up for the occasional apathy of other members. He has evidently taken much pleasure in promoting the objects of the Society, and has often put himself to inconveniency in accommodating us.—Surely it can scarcely be necessary to add, that this Supplement, like the Address, has been prepared without communication with the President.

It is perhaps unnecessary to repeat, that the great object of the Society was to bring together those who were attached to natural history, so that we might encourage and stimulate each other in the prosecution of the science. This object we have fully accomplished for nearly a quarter of a century. Let it not be forgotten, too, that the Wernerian Natural History Society was instituted at a time when the Royal Society of Edinburgh was managed on principles less liberal than those which happily now prevail, and that the existence and prosperity of our Society most materially tended to improve the older establishment. Ours was most completely a voluntary association, every thing compulsory being carefully avoided, and fines being utterly unknown. The Society had no funds wherewith to prepare and maintain a museum, and therefore unanimously adopted a resolution that objects of natural history presented to it should be deposited in the University Museum. This resolution, lawful in itself, and prudent in the circumstances, has however been denounced as “*most ungentlemanly and most dishonest!*”—language which requires no comment from me.

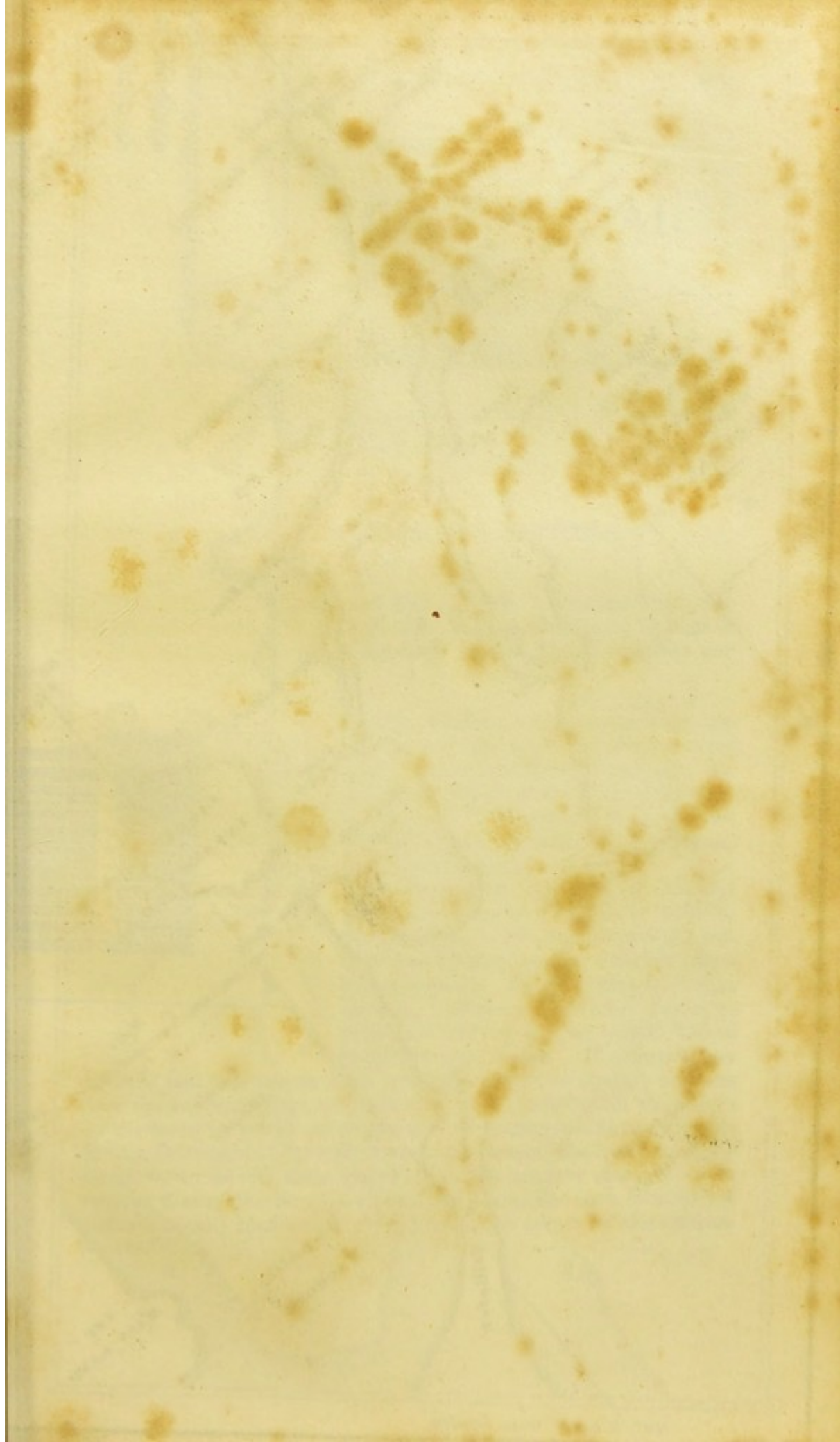
To go farther into detail would exhaust the patience of the reader, even if it should approach that of Mr Cheek's favourite “prophet” of the land of Uz. I therefore pass several minor misrepresentations unnoticed, and willingly close my disagreeable task, thus taking leave of the subject for ever. If the style of this Reply have sometimes been severe, and the remarks a little tart, some apology may perhaps be found in the circumstance of Mr Cheek's pamphlet, of 40 pages (twice the length of mine),



being from beginning to end a tissue of virulent abuse, disguised under the most hollow and insidious pretensions to candour. To the various friends who have hinted that there was not here a *nodus vindice dignus*, and that it was a needless waste of time to go into a paper war with the soi-disant Censor of Edinburgh, I make this apology—that I have thus avoided the necessity of entering into any explanation in the Wernerian Society—where, it is my earnest wish, that no topic should be introduced, calculated to hurt the feelings of any member, or to occasion disagreeable discussion.

PAT. NEILL.







A Map of  
**PERON'S**  
 PENINSULA  
 in Sharks Bay—  
 WESTERN  
 AUSTRALIA.



114° E. Long. from London