

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

# Humphry Clinker

TOBIAS SMOLLETT



EDITED BY JAMES L. THORSON

AN AUTHORITATIVE TEXT  
CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES  
CRITICISM



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JAMES L. THORSON

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

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# Acknowledgments

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# Preface

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When Tobias George Smollett (1721–71) published *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* in June, 1771, reaction to the new work by the controversial writer was mixed, but the excellence of the novel was quickly recognized by the public and by many critics. Its popular and critical success in the more than two hundred years since its first publication has been firmly established, and it is often called one of the very best English novels in the epistolary form.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) was the first author to utilize the formal fiction of presenting a novel in the form of a series of letters. His first novel, *Pamela* (1740), was largely made up of letters from the besieged but virtuous young title character to her parents. Henry Fielding (1707–54), with whom Smollett is often compared, retained Richardson's form in his parody of *Pamela*, called *Shamela* (1741), but he did not use the device in *Joseph Andrews* (1742) or in his later comic masterpiece *Tom Jones* (1748).

Richardson returned to the epistolary form in the extensive *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady* (1747, dated 1748) but added considerable sophistication to it by including the letters of two pairs of correspondents, *Clarissa Harlowe* and her young friend, *Anna Howe*, and the vile rapist *Robert Lovelace* and his correspondent, *Belford*. The form was used in *Clarissa* to communicate psychological nuance and shade of emotion as well as to portray tragic events in a masterful way, but for all of his accomplishments, Richardson did not explore the capacity of the epistolary novel for humor.

In 1766 Christopher Anstey (1724–1805) brought out *The New Bath Guide: or, Memoires of the B\_R\_D Family. In a series of Poetical Epistles*. The book consists largely of versified observations of Bath and the customs which pertain to that spa rather than the telling of a progressive story. It uses humor, some of it rather broad, in many of its letters and shifts the point of view among members of the party of visitors.

Smollett may well have taken some hints from Anstey's *New Bath Guide*, but the idea of using an epistolary form had occurred to him before. Smollett's major contribution to travel literature is *Travels through France and Italy* (1766). In it, the traveler's observations are related through a series of familiar letters, though the volume is not simply the unedited letters of a traveler. The author forms his experiences and observations into a literary structure.

When Smollett wrote *Humphry Clinker*, he wove several threads into the fabric of his new work. In the manner of travel literature, he included descriptions of the cities and countryside visited, but many of the descriptions, particularly in the early portions of the novel, do as much to characterize the observer as to present what is being observed. One correspondent is Matthew Bramble, an irascible Welsh squire of fifty-five, whose search for health is one of the stimuli for the tour. His somewhat younger sister, Tabitha Bramble, is trying desperately to avoid being an old maid. Her letters back to their home at Brambleton Hall, an imaginary country seat near the real market town of Abergavenny, Wales, reveal her concerns with her dowry, which she accurately perceives as her most attractive feature to a potential husband. Two young people, a tutor-sick scholar, Jeremy Melford, apparently on leave from his studies at Jesus College, Oxford, and his sister Lydia, just released from a boarding school for young ladies at Gloucester, are nephew and niece to the oddly matched older pair of siblings. Jerry and Liddy are orphans, children of Matt's sister, and the valetudinarian has decided to take them along on the trip to improve their knowledge of the United Kingdom and to improve his own acquaintance with his nephew, who is likely to become his heir. Win Jenkins, the Welsh maid to Miss Tabby, is the last of the important correspondents.

Each of the writers has an appropriate person to whom to send his or her letters. Matt Bramble writes to his confidant, friend, and physician, Dr. Lewis. Tabby writes for the most part to Mrs. Gwyllim, the housekeeper at Brambleton Hall, and Win Jenkins to Mary Jones, another maid at the Hall. Both Win and Tabby reveal more of themselves than they intend as Smollett has a high old time with their malapropisms, misspellings, and inadvertant double-entendres. Lydia corresponds mainly with her schoolmate, Laetitia Willis, and Jerry with his college chum, Sir Watkin Phillips, a baronet in residence at Jesus College, Oxford. But what of the Humphry Clinker of the title? Suffice it to say that he comes into the story rather belatedly as a substitute postilion; readers will discover the rest of his story in the novel.

While travel observations make up part of the substance of the book, there is also a good bit of storytelling. Matthew Bramble seeks and finally finds his health; Lydia finds out the identity and suitability of the mysterious Wilson, whom she has fallen in love with; Tabby finds a very unlikely husband; Jerry finds some maturity; and Humphry Clinker finds his identity, his father, and a place in the world. The novel presents a number of important themes. The critical essays included in this edition suggest what some of them are, but the book will provide a rich field for further thematic exploration.

Tobias Smollett, as the title page of the first edition of *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* proclaimed, was the author of *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), but he was many other things as well. He was

born in 1721, the third and last child of Archibald and Barbara Smollett, who were the less affluent branch of a prominent Scottish family. His father died soon after the author's birth, and Tobias was subsequently educated at Dumbarton Grammar School and Glasgow University. In the 1730's he was apprenticed to two surgeons in Glasgow, but in 1739 he was released from his contract and went to London with his play, *The Regicide*, in his luggage.

To his chagrin, the play did not bring him instant fame and fortune, and after spending some months in London, he obtained a commission as a naval surgeon and sailed in H.M.S. *Chichester* in 1740 to take part in the ill-fated British expedition to Carthage, then a Spanish colony. Smollett visited Jamaica and returned to England in 1744, when he set up a surgical practice in London. He had, in the interim, married a Jamaican heiress, Anne Lassells, though her inheritance was not enough to give the Smolletts complete financial independence.

Smollett published some poems in 1746 and 1747, and in 1748 launched the work that was to establish his early literary reputation, *Roderick Random*. The young title character of not overwhelming virtue and his traveling companion Strap have numerous adventures during their extensive wanderings. Told with great verve and humor, it was extremely popular at the time of its appearance, and it continues to be eminently readable and highly considered by many critics. In 1748 Smollett also published his translation from the French of Le Sage's (1648–1747) picaresque tale, *Gil Blas*, which he had been working on for some time and which had influenced his own work. He published *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, another novel in the picaresque vein, in 1751, after having brought out *The Regicide* by subscription in 1749, but none of these ventures made him very much money. The author was to plunge into a wide variety of literary and journalistic projects over the next two decades in order to try to gain financial security.

Smollett published *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* in 1753, but the novel, which featured an utterly reprehensible title character, had little success, either critically or commercially. In 1755, he published a translation from the Spanish of Miguel de Cervantes's (1547–1616) *Don Quixote*. His claims as a translator from Spanish have been largely discredited, but the work was to have an important influence on Smollett nevertheless.

He worked on *A Complete History of England* during the middle 1750's, and founded, edited, and wrote a great deal of *The Critical Review* from 1756 until he withdrew from active participation in the periodical in 1763. He edited the seven volumes of *A Compendium of Authentic and Diverting Voyages*, which came out in 1757, and in 1760 he started *The British Magazine* and published his novel *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves* serially in it. He took an important part in editing and translating *The Complete Works of Voltaire* (1761) in more than thirty volumes, in

compiling and writing the five volumes of the *Continuation of the Complete History of England* (1763–65), and in editing and writing much of *The Briton*. This periodical supported the Scottish Lord Bute's ministry during 1762–63. Smollett and his wife undertook a trip to France and Italy in 1763 after the death of their only daughter at the age of fifteen. They returned to England in 1765, and in the next year he published *Travels through France and Italy*. In 1766, he made a pilgrimage to his native Scotland and returned to London via Bath. In 1768, he published *The Present State of All Nations* in eight volumes and left England to seek health in Italy. In 1769, he published *The History and Adventures of an Atom*, a political satire on England purportedly set in Japan. In June 1771, while the Smolletts were living near Leghorn, Italy, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* was published. Smollett died about three months later, in September 1771, in Italy, where he was buried.

The text of the present edition has been newly established from the Zimmerman Library copy of the three-volume first edition of 1771 (Volume I, mis-dated 1671) at the University of New Mexico. It has been read against the editor's copy of the same edition and also against the Bodleian Library copy. None of the other early editions of the work is bibliographically significant, but they have all been examined by the editor. The "long s" characteristic of eighteenth-century editions has silently been changed to the modern s, and the conventional continuation of quotation marks down the left-hand margin in extended direct discourse has been eliminated. The eighteenth-century use of parentheses rather than closing and re-opening quotation marks for "he/she said" has been retained. A few obvious typographical errors have been corrected, but since Tabitha Bramble's and Win Jenkins's letters are filled with creative spellings which are part of Smollett's joke, the editor has used extremely conservative principles in emendation.

The illustrations in this edition are those designed by Thomas Rowlandson for the 1793 two-volume edition of the novel. They were originally engraved by C. Grignion and have been photographed from the Zimmerman Library copy of their first edition by Karl P. Koenig. The topics for the illustrations were selected by Rowlandson with no care to spreading them out through the text, as most of them appear in the first half of the novel. The cover picture is also by Rowlandson, and it first appeared in the 1790 edition of the novel. It is reproduced from the Bodleian Library copy of the 1790 edition, shelf mark 12 Θ 1675, and is reproduced with the permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Smollett provided two notes for the first edition, and they have been retained and identified, but all other notes to the text of *Humphry Clinker* are the editor's. Most of the places mentioned in the novel are real, and where the geographical relationships are clear in the text or by reference to the map provided by Charles Seavey, the editor has tried not to belabor the obvious. The same restraint has been exercised on words

which are defined in context. Where persons mentioned in the text can be identified, they have been noted. Smollett often italicized proverbial sayings and literary quotations in his text, and these typographical distinctions have been retained and sources identified as far as possible. Notes in the Contemporary Responses section are generally the editor's, but notes in the Criticism section are those of the writers of the essays unless otherwise indicated.

The editor owes particular thanks to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and to the Principal and Fellows of Jesus College, Oxford, who extended hospitality and help as well as a Visiting Senior Research Fellowship while some of the research for this edition was being done. The University of New Mexico has been generous with sabbatical leaves and leaves without pay, which also facilitated the research. The Research Allocations Committee and the English Department of the University of New Mexico provided grants to allow Zimmerman Library to acquire copies and microfilms of early editions of the novel. Many of the identifications of quotations, persons, and places in the novel have been made by earlier scholars, and individual discoveries have been attributed to earlier students in many of the notes. The editor's personal thanks are owed to Professor O. M. Brack, Jr., who generously shared his knowledge of Smollett's work, to Professor Donald Farren and many other members of the staff at Zimmerman Library, and to Professor Ernest Baughman for his help with folklore problems. Mrs. K. T. Martin and the English department office staff, particularly Carol Belcher-Morgan, were most helpful in accomplishing many tedious tasks. Thanks also to Emily Carlin and Barry Wade, my helpful editors at W. W. Norton, and to Margaret White Wilson and Esther Fleming, who helped with the proofreading. The editor is especially thankful to Connie C. Thorson, who contributed the bibliographical essay and the bibliography and whose other help was immeasurable.

JAMES L. THORSON

The Text of  
HUMPHRY CLINKER

THE  
EXPEDITION  
OF  
HUMPHRY CLINKER.

By the AUTHOR of  
RODERICK RANDOM.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.

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—Quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt,  
Furcifer ? ad te, inquam— HOR.

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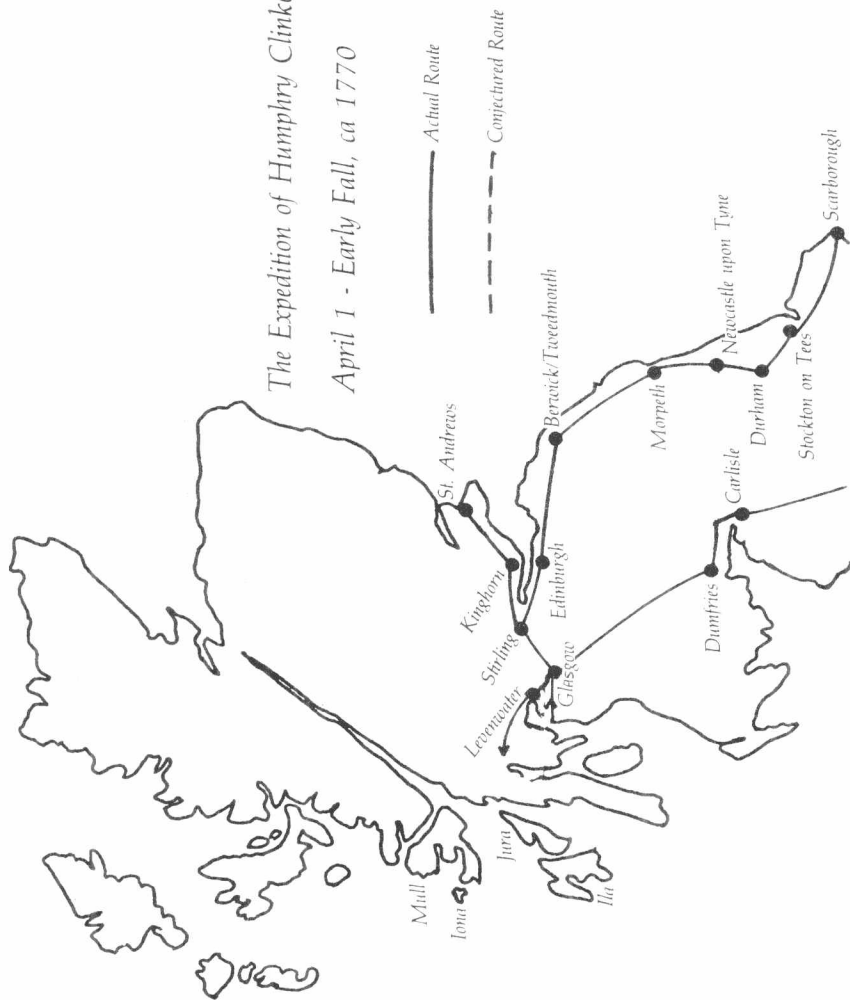
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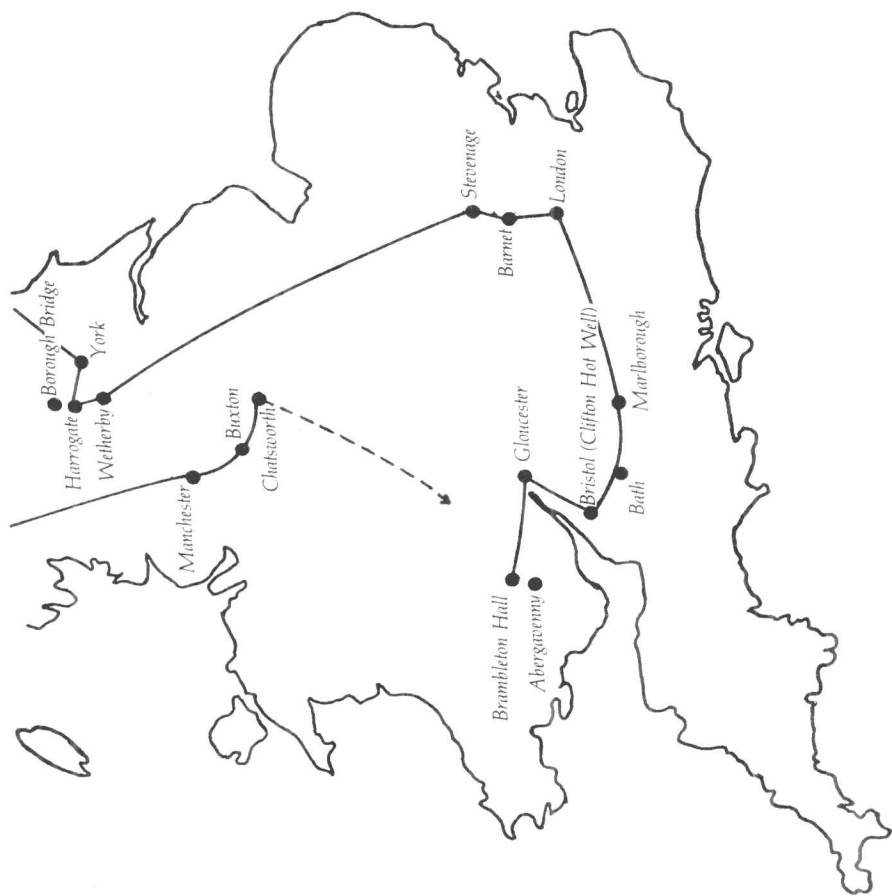
## Note

The epigraph is taken from Horace's *Satires* II. vii. 21–22. This is the Saturnalian satire in which Horace's servant Davus is taking the seasonal privilege of lecturing to his master, but the impatient Horace is telling him to get to the point. Horace says, "What is the point of this rot," and Davus responds, "It is aimed at you." The first volume of the first edition is mis-dated 1671 though it appeared in 1771.

# *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*

*April 1 - Early Fall, ca 1770*





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# Volume I

TO MR. HENRY DAVIS, Book-seller, in London.

Abergavenny,<sup>1</sup> Aug. 4.

RESPECTED SIR,

I have received your esteemed favour of the 13th ultimo, whereby it appeareth, that you have perused those same Letters, the which were delivered unto you by my friend the reverend Mr. Hugo Behn; and I am pleased to find you think they may be printed with a good prospect of success; in as much as the objections you mention, I humbly conceive, are such as may be redargued,<sup>2</sup> if not entirely removed—And, first, in the first place, as touching what prosecutions may arise from printing the private correspondence of persons still living, give me leave, with all due submission, to observe, that the Letters in question were not written and sent under the seal of secrecy; that they have no tendency to the *mala fama*,<sup>3</sup> or prejudice of any person whatsoever; but rather to the information and edification of mankind: so that it becometh a sort of duty to promulgate them *in usum publicum*.<sup>4</sup> Besides, I have consulted Mr. Davy Higgins, an eminent attorney of this place, who, after due inspection and consideration, declareth, That he doth not think the said Letters contain any matter which will be held actionable in the eye of the law. Finally, if you and I should come to a right understanding, I do declare *in verbo sacerdotis*,<sup>5</sup> that, in case of any such prosecution, I will take the whole upon my own shoulders, even *quoad*<sup>6</sup> fine and imprisonment, though, I must confess, I should not care to undergo flagellation: *Tam ad turpitudinem, quam ad amaritudinem pœna spectans*<sup>7</sup>—Secondly, concerning the personal resentment of Mr. Justice Lismahago, I may say, *non flocci facio*<sup>8</sup>—I would not willingly vilipend<sup>9</sup> any Christian, if, peradventure, he deserveth that epithet: albeit, I am much surprised that more care is not taken to exclude from the commission all such vagrant foreigners as may be justly suspected of disaffection to our happy constitution, in church and state—God forbid that I should be so uncharitable, as to affirm positively, that the said Lismahago is no better than a Jesuit in disguise; but this I will assert and maintain, *totis viribus*,<sup>1</sup> that, from the day he qualifed, he has never been once seen *intra templi parietes*, that is to say, within the parish church.

1. Abergavenny is a real market town in Wales, near where the fictional seat of Matthew Bramble, Brambleton Hall, is supposedly located. No further notes will be provided for real places mentioned in the text which can be found on the map, pp. xix–xx.

2. Refuted.

3. Ill Fame.

4. For the good of the public.

5. On my sacred word.

6. As far as.

7. As much for the shame as the bitterness of the penalty.

8. I care not a straw, or rush.

9. To treat as of little value, to belittle.

1. With all of [my] power.