on the case to recover the sum of 485l. lost to the plaintiff by the misconduct of the defendant.

Mr. Erskine said, that this cause took its rise from the transactions of a female who had of late made much noise in the world. No one who read a newspaper could be ignorant of Miss Robinson, that illustrious personage in the annals of swindling. One of the grand promoters of the imposture had been the defendant, Mr. Creasy, who was a leather manufacturer at Greenwich. By his misrepresentations Mr. Haycroft, the plaintiff, an ironmonger at Deptford, had been induced to trust her to a very considerable amount. For the goods thus sold it was well known he had no chance to be paid by Miss Robinson; but the law of England, just in this as in every other particular, provided him with a remedy. The gentleman who had been the occasion of these goods being ordered was responsible for the payment of them. The principles upon which actions of this kind rested were so familiar, not only to professional men, but to the world at large that it would be superfluous to state them. The learned Counsel said, he should be sorry if these principles, now so well established, should be in any degree shaken. There was no species of action more clearly founded in justice, or more conducive to the good of the community. In this great town, where men in business are often obliged to deal with strangers, and where knavery is so prevalent, the affairs of life could not be carried on if people were not to be held answerable for the characters they give of each other. As the noble Lord of the bench had very emphatically expressed it, "when a person is asked for an account of the circumstances of his neighbor, he is at liberty to hold his tongue: but, if he speaks, he must speak the truth at his peril."

The present was far the stongest case of the kind the honorable and learned gentleman had ever stated to a jury. What defence could be set up it was impossible for the wit or imagination of a man to anticipate.—In April 1800 the defendant sent a message to the plaintiff's house, requesting the favor of an interview. Mr. Haycroft, senior, was then at Bath for the benefit of his health; but had left his son to manage his affairs in his absence. Mr. Thomas Haycroft therefore immediately repaired to Mr. Creasy's, and he was here told a story which in general would have been sufficient to put youthful prudence off its guard. Mr. Creasy informed him of a new customer who was to open an account with his father, from the execution of whose large orders no moderate profit was to be expected. Thomas a wary young man, enquired as to the credit of this great customer. "Oh, (said he) it is Miss Robinson, of Blackheath, a young lady whom it will be quite safe to trust. She has lately entered into possession of a large fortune by the death of her mother, and she has very great expectations from her grand-father, who has been for some time bed ridden." He likewise knew that her companion Miss Sharpe, though by no means in such opulent circumstances, had an independency of 100l. per annum.—Young Thomas remained unsatisfied, and before he would enter into this tempting connection he wrote to his father. Old Mr. Haycroft desired him to consult his uncle Joseph, and Joseph and he, after some deliberation, agreed once more to interrogate Mr. Creasy. They accordingly waited upon him, and Mr. Joseph Haycroft solemnly asked him whether it would be safe for his brother to enter into dealings with Miss Robinson? "Quite safe, (replied Creasy,) she is a woman of great fortune and still greater expectations. I know she may be trusted to any amount. She is a near relation of Mr. Secretary Dallas, and sister to Lady Paget." To make all sure, Mr. Joseph demanded if he spoke from hearsay, or from his own knowledge; "From my own knowledge," was the answer, "I can positively assure you that all this is true." Every doubt being now removed, it was agreed that she should be supplied with all she wanted in the ironmongery line to fit up her splendid mansion. She accordingly came squired by the defendant, and gave an order to a very great amount. The workmen were immediately set to work to execute this order, but before the articles were ready for being delivered, Mr. Haycroft returned from Bath, and himself had an interview with Mr. Creasy, who now represented in still more glowing colors the immensity of Miss Robinson's fortune, and added to the list of her noble and illustrious relatives. After stating how astonishingly her great income would soon be increased, he observed that she was nearly connected by blood with the noble Lord on the bench (who perhaps never heard of her name till the council had opened his brief.) and the immortal Washington, late President of the United States of America. Although the defendant was really himself deceived, it was no defence to this action; but that he could believe such romantic absurdities was not within the bounds of credulity. While the lady was laying out this magnificent palace she lived for several weeks under his roof, and he must have had ample opportunities of detecting her. Nay more, he escorted her to Margate. On their way thither an occurrence took place by no means immaterial in this cause. Miss Robinson, travelled with her usual equipage, a coach and four with several out-riders. In a corner of the coach, which was on the most fashionable construction, and elegantly lined with leather, sat the little currier. At Greenwich he had been of considerable use to her in alluring game to her toils, but she began to fear that he might not curry favour with her guests at a fashionable watering place. As they were going up shooter's hill, therefore, she made the coachman stop, and desired him by no means to mention Creasy's name at Margate. He was strictly to observe this injunction himself, and to communicate it to all his fellow servants. Mr. Creasy remained silent, perhaps wrapt up in contemplating the figure he should make under some high sounding title. After remaining together some time at Margate they proceeded in this manner to Brighton. Their adventures on this tour were highly amusing, but unfortunately irrevalent to this cause. From Mr. Creasy's conduct at the conclusion of the piece likewise, it might be fairly conjectured that he was not altogether ignorant of the nature of the machinery which had made it go off with so much eclat. When the talisman was broke, and his magic castle had dissolved into air, he shewed that he had known how to guard himself against the spells of the enchantress. No sooner was Miss Robinson's credit at an end, no sooner, from the importunity of her creditors had she taken to flight, than Mr. C. produced a warrant of attorney, dated some time before, and which secured the re-payment of all the money he had advanced to her, or should advance to her in future, up to a very great amount. He immediately entered up judgment upon this, and levied an execution upon her goods. A circumstance no less suspicious should be proved than this—that he ordered a post chaise to Miss Robinson's; that he put up two hampers into it so heavy, that the post boy could with difficulty lift them; that he then drove to town; that he shifted them into a hackney coach; that he remained away for several hours, and that afterwards re-entering the post chaise he returned home to Greenwich.—He actually seized the greatest part of the furniture and took the lease of the house, so that while those whom he had misled were ruined, he himself was completely indemnified. Mr. E. said he understood the defence was to be, "True you have lost a large sum of money; it is likewise true that you have lost it through my means; but I myself was duped. I believed Miss Robinson to be a woman of immense fortune, and of wonderful expectations. I believed that she was sister to Lady Paget, and nearly related to Mr. Dundas, to Lord Kenyon, and to general Washington." Though the defendant, however, could thus stultify himself, it would not avail him. Without a fraudulent intention he was equally liable.—A man must repair the wrong he has done, whether he has done it from malice, from inadvertence, or from ignorance.

Mr. Thomas Haycroft, Mr. Joseph Haycroft, Mr. M'Ewer, who was present at the conversation between the defendant and the plaintiff; Phiers, Miss Robinson's coachman; Curley, a carpenter, who worked at the house; and Thomas King, the postilion, who drove the defendant from Black Heath to London were examined and their evidence fully substantiated the statement of the learned opener.

Mr. *Attorney general* observed, that as the age in which we lived produced beyond almost any that preceded it great virtues and splendid talents, so it was proportionably productive of gigantic crimes. Than the imposture of Miss Robinson, history did not present a more fraudulent and iniquitous deception of mankind. This lady, who had lately shone as a star of the first magnitude in the hemisphere of fashion, was of mean origin, and had passed the greater part of her life in the humble situation of teacher to a boarding school. Having gained considerable reputation for her talents in this capacity, she was some years ago recommended by a lady in Cheshire to Miss Sharpe, who kept a young ladies' boarding school at Croom's hill near Blackheath. By her exemplary display of piety, and wonderful religious deportment, joined to a strict attention to her duty in the school, and great affability of manners, she soon insinuated herself into the good graces of all who knew her. She then began to represent herself as a young woman of high rank in disguise. She had a rooted aversion to the dissipation of the age; she could not live with her relations without going into all the follies of fashionable life, and therefore retired from the world that she might follow the bent of her inclination unmolested. She used at times to mention the death of her father, and to tell his melancholy tale, shedding many a tear for his sufferings. He had early in life incurred the displeasure of her grandfather, by marrying against his consent. He was driven from his home, and his country, and was obliged to wander in exile over the earth. At length he found shelter at Mount Vernon, under the hospitable roof of general Washington, and was there joined by his beloved wife. A brother and several sisters were born while her parents were in America. Her brother, the heir to Phascally the family estate, was killed in a battle—not however before, he had married a woman of great fortune and exquisite beauty. This lady had since been led a second time to the hymenial altar by a counsellor Leicester, a gentleman whom Mr. A. G. professed himself to know very intimately, and who on Sunday last, solemnly declared that he was still a bachelor. One of her sisters was married to an officer of the name of Pigot, but this marriage too proved unhappy; for not long after the ceremony, captain Pigot was shot in a duel. His widow, however, looked lovely in her weeds, and captivated the heart of no meaner a person, than the heir apparent of the illustrious house of Uxbridge. The bishop of London, by a special license, tied the matrimonial knot, with the entire consent of the relations on both sides. Her family after this began to be kinder to her. Pieces of plate and other valuable articles were brought her at miss Sharpe's which she said were presents from her sister, Lady Paget. But a dreadful blow now impended over her; on reading a letter brought her by a special messenger, she fainted away, and on recovering her senses, informed those around her that it brought the dreadful intelligence of the death of her mother. She refused all comfort, and such a pitch of distraction had she reached, that she wished to go and take her mother from the coffin and fall prostrate at her feet. She accordingly sent for a physician, and asked whether she could do so with propriety. The funeral, she said, had stopt at Dr. Lettsom's, and she might there indulge in all the luxury of grief. The physician strongly remonstrated against this romantic resolution, [*Mr. A. G. has been for some time describing scenes which were actually proved to have taken place*] and after a long struggle she was at last prevailed upon to forego it. However, that she might shew all respect to the memory of the deceased, she ordered from her goldsmith a number of mourning rings, and distributed them among her acquaintances. The defendant had a daughter at miss Sharpe's school, and she, among others, was presented with one of these elegant ornaments. Thus early did she begin, said Mr. A. G. to *curry* my poor leather seller. By the death of her mother she pretended that she came into possession of a considerable landed estate, and a large sum of ready money. When her grief began to abate, she announced a resolution to live in a stile more becoming her high rank. She therefore took a lease of an elegant house in the Paragon, Black heath. The jury would be surprised to learn that the landlord was Mr. Cater, but their surprise would subside when they were informed that the house was furnished, and that he was thus always sure of a distress. After giving orders for the fitting up of her villa, she began to turn her attention to her seat in the North. She resolved to make a great many alterations at Phascally. The Gothic mansion in which her renowned ancestors had dwelt for so many generations was not at all to her liking; and its stately battlements, together with the long avenues leading to it, and the deep moat by which it was surrounded, must disappear to make way for an Italian house placed in the midst of a modern park. She therefore sent for an eminent surveyor, and shewed him a map of the whole domain. Here were green hills, there stately forests, and a little farther on a majestic river the fisheries upon which were an inexhaustible source of riches. She pointed out the different improvements she had projected, and actually engaged the gentleman to accompany her to Scotland. Having made an acquaintance with Mr. Creasy while at Croom's hill, she now renewed it; and he, an experienced man, moving in an humble sphere, was greatly flattered with the attention of a woman of fashion. While she told him all these marvellous stories, he stared with amazement; but swallowed every word that she uttered. His feelings were exactly those of a child reading the Arabian Nights. She frequently received baskets of fruit, which she said were presents from her grand father, who after their mother's death, had become reconciled to her and her sisters. To this she liberally helped her guest, and the palate of poor Creasy was so highly gratified that the complete use of his faculties was suspended. She pretended that her rents did not come in so fast as she expected, and that she feared she should not receive much money from her steward before July. Creasy immediately took the hint, and advanced her as much money as she could desire. But poor Creasy was not the only man taken in; the disease of credulity was endemic, and scarely any one of note about Greenwich escaped. All things considered, however, this was not so much to be wondered at. She had always plenty of money, and she managed matters so as to make every lender believe that it was from him or her alone that she borrowed. She rode about in her carriage with a coronet, which she boldly maintained had been sent her by her brother-in law, lord Paget. In this elegant vehicle she used to carry about Creasy and others, and as they had never before been in a carriage with a coronet, *except, perhaps in a hackney coach*, while they rolled along their reason was lulled asleep. Creasy wishing to *wash his hide*, willingly went along with her to Margate. The adventure in ascending Shooter's hill was not at all extraordinary; few things were more common than when a party is going to Margate for the *characters to be new cast*. After stating some particulars, Mr. Attorney General inferred that the defendant made to the plaintiff a representation which he believed to be true, and entered into an able argument to shew that in this case the plaintiff had no right to recover. He concluded by saying that a heavy calamity had fallen on them all, but that there was no reason why a scape goat should be made of Mr. Creasy, because he had shewn more innocence and simplicity than all the rest, and had allowed himself to be more completely gulled, held up more conspicuously to ridicule, and reduced nearer to ruin.

Extraordinary as these statements may appear, they were almost all proved to have been well founded. Several circumstances came out which the learned counsel had omitted, but which our limits prevent us from mentioning. She never seemed to have been embarrassed but once, when mr. Searls, the surveyor, asked her where her estate of Phascally lay. She said it was in Perthshire, but could not tell in what part of that extensive country. Next day, however, she wrote him a note, saying that it lay on the river Tummel, about 14 miles above Perth. The coachman said she one day brought home the model in wax of a dead child, which she said was an exact likeness of one of her sister's children. Mr. Dobey, an attorney, said he drew a deed of factory, (*anglice*, a power of attorney,) authorising some of her friends to take possession of the estate of Phascally in her name, and to receive the rents. She shewed him a bond of ten thousand pounds, executed by John Robertson, her steward, to secure the payment of arrears of rent then in his hands. It appeared that a servant once brought her a haunch of venison, as if from the Earl of Uxbridge, that Creaty was invited to partake of it, and that after dinner a bumper was drank to the health of the noble donor. There were examined mrs. Neale; who gave an account of her while at Croom's hill; the surveyor, the attorney, the coachman, a footman, the dissenting clergyman at Blackheath (from the questions put to whom it appeared that she had some thoughts of building a chappel) the physicians and the apothecary; mr. Oakley of Bond street, and the Jeweller who made the mourning rings.—After a very able reply from mr. Erskine,

Lord Kenyon addressed the Jury. The cause he said was of great importance, not only to the parties but to the public. The true nature of it he thought had been mistaken by the counsel on both sides. In his opinion the question lay in the shortest compass. Did the defendant speak from his own knowledge as he solemnly declared? He certainly had not. His Lordship imputed to him no malice or ill intention. But that a civil injury may be maintained, it was not necessary that a corrupt motive should be proved to have existed. On that ground he thought that the defendant was bound both in *foro conscientie*, and in *foro legati* to repair the loss he had occasioned.

The Jury immediately found a verdict for the Plaintiff, damages 486l. 9s. 1d.