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or, The triumphs of folly
A poem dedicated to a celebrated duchess. By the author of The Diaboliad.

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE FIRST OF APRIL; ***

**THE
FIRST OF APRIL:
OR, THE
TRIUMPHS
OF
FOLLY:
A
POEM.
DEDICATED TO A
CELEBRATED DUTCHESSE.**

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE DIABOLIAD.

— DOST THOU CALL ME FOOL, BOY?—
ALL THY OTHER TITLES THOU HAST GIVEN AWAY
THAT THOU WAST BORN WITH!—

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON:

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DEDICATION

TO A

CELEBRATED DUTCHESS.

MADAM,

I am rather apprehensive that you will rank me among the Impertinents of the Age, in giving a performance which treats professedly of the Triumphs of Folly, the Sanction of Your Grace. But tho', in the too great quickness of apprehension, this may be the case; I have not the least doubt but, in some succeeding moments of coolness and candour, you will accompany me through this Address; and not suffer a condemning spirit to pass a final sentence upon me, without giving some little attention to my justification.

I need not tell Your Grace, that, in former times, every Family of Distinction was considered as incomplete in its establishment, if it did not possess a certain whimsical Character called a *Fool*; who was either to afford amusement to his witty Master by the real singularity of his Humour,—or to act as a foil to his foolish Lord by well-timed displays of affected Folly.—These appendages to Greatness have long been laid aside.—Indeed, the present Age, which is remarkable for its refinements, has, in the general methods of forming the Great, blended the two Characters;—and it does not seldom happen, as Your Grace very well knows, that a Modern Man of Fashion serves his Company both as their *Host* and their *Buffoon*. I cannot therefore, in justice, be considered as guilty of any impropriety in addressing this work to Your Grace, as it relates to a Personage, who has heretofore possessed, as it were, a domestic union with the Great, by furnishing, from among her Children, the *chief Wits* of their noble Houses.

Tho' it has changed its appearance, the connection has not ceased to subsist; and FOLLY, though she extends her influence over all ranks and professions, still seems more particularly attached to the higher Orders of Life.

FOLLY loves the Toilette of a Woman of Fashion!—It is her Altar.—The enormity of its expences,—the frivolousness, to say no worse, of its conversation,—and the time which is lost in attending its duties, are so many offerings to her honour. The love of display is inherent in her nature:—every place of public amusement is, more or less, her delight;—but an *Opera* is her favourite entertainment.—There, she not only presides, but triumphs.—There, Sense, Taste, and Reason, lie beneath her Feet.

As she is now become your intimate companion, I will not mortify Your Grace with the history of her origin, and an account of her genealogy, which I am sure would greatly distress you. Believe me, Madam, I should be sorry to give you a moment's mortification. My sincere desire is to do you good, by warning you of the danger which awaits such a disgraceful connection.

At your time of life it is not wholly unnatural that you should find something pleasant in the frolic gaiety of your Friend; and the Flatterers, who are alike under her influence, may find something graceful in the manners which she might communicate to you: but in the Mirror of Wisdom, the highest beauties of FOLLY appear but as foul deformities; and she is there seen in her natural appearance, attended by Vice, Contempt, and Misery.

The Prosperity of Fools, says the Wise Man, *shall destroy them*. The influence of FOLLY is more dangerous, as the station it possesses is more exalted; and as the means of doing good are more enlarged among the Rich and Great, that time is the more to be lamented which they consume in frivolous pursuits and empty pleasures.

Without intruding upon your recollection the more awful obligations attendant upon your station in the world, you will forgive me if I just hint to Your Grace that Society has claims upon you, which you cannot refuse but with dishonour to yourself, and the contempt of those who possess the right which you refuse to grant; a contempt which they will not fail to bestow.

Give then to Society what it requires—a great and noble example of *female excellence*.—Discard your present Associate;—cultivate the more solid Graces;—exalt your character by the dignity of Virtue;—and let continual actions of Benevolence and Generosity mark those hours which are passing hastily away, and will never return.

Should Your Grace honour the following Poem, if it may deserve that name, with a perusal, you will, perhaps, consider me as a visionary Character.—Be that as it may,—I am quite awake to your Honour and Interest in the Counsels I have given you; and if your Grace should adopt them, you will awake also.—The Visions of Folly will vanish away;—and your eyes will open on the real prospect of wise and honourable days.

I am, Madam, with all due respect,

Your Grace's most sincere Friend,

And humble Servant,

* * * * *

[Pg 1]

THE FIRST OF APRIL.

[Pg 2]

'Twas on the Morn when *April* doth appear,
And wets the Primrose with its maiden tear;
'Twas on the Morn when laughing FOLLY rules,
And calls her Sons around, and dubs them Fools;
Bids them be bold, some untry'd path explore,
And do such deeds as Fools ne'er did before;
'Twas on that Morn, when Fancy took her stand
Beside my couch, and, with fantastic wand,
Wav'd, from her airy cells, the Antic Train
That play their gay delusions on the brain:
And strait, methought, a rude impetuous Throng,
With noise and riot, hurried me along,
To where a sumptuous Building met my eyes,
Whose gilded turrets seem'd to dare the skies.
To every Wind it op'd an ample door,
From every Wind tumultuous thousands pour.
With these I enter'd a stupendous Hall,
The scene of some approaching festival.
O'er the wide portals, full in sight, were spread
Banners of yellow hue, bestrip'd with red,
Whereon, in golden characters, were seen:
THE ANNIVERSARY OF FOLLY'S QUEEN!
Strange motley ornaments the Building grac'd,
With every emblem of corrupted Taste.
No stately Column rose to meet the Dome,
No Sculpture borrow'd from the Arts of Rome;
No well-wrought Frieze crept graceful on the walls,
Th' *Acanthus* weav'd no splendid Capitals;
Nor did the Attic elegance supply
One simple foliage for the judging eye.
But, in their stead, Confusion void of Sense,
And all the pride of false Magnificence,
Display'd an idle, vain, fantastic show,
Fit only for the Crowd that gaz'd below.

[Pg 3]

Gay China's unsubstantial forms supply
The place of Beauty, Strength, Simplicity.
Each varied colour, of the brightest hue,
The green, the red, the yellow, and the blue,
In every part the dazzled eyes behold,
Here streak'd with silver, there enrich'd with gold;
While fancied forms upon the ceiling sprawl,
And shapeless monsters decorate the wall.

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In every scatter'd niche I look'd in vain
For Heroes famous on th' embattled plain;
Or animated Bust, whose brow severe
Mark'd the sage Statesman or Philosopher.
But in the place of those whose Patriot fame
Gave glory to the Greek and Roman name,
Or Heroes who for Freedom bravely fought,
Men without heads,—and Heads that' never thought,
Greet my sick eye,—with all their names enroll'd
In the vain pomp of prostituted gold.

Nor had the Painter's active hand restrain'd
The all-bedaubing brush: the walls were stain'd
With the gay colourings of capricious Art,
Wherein nor Truth nor Genius bore a part.
There *Sigismunda's* form again I knew,
Which FOLLY hinted, and old *Hogarth* drew.

No sketch of REYNOLD's pencil did appear,
Science and Taste found no admittance there;
But the vain Painter had essay'd to trace,
In rude distortion, and with strange grimace,
Each story the Historic Pages tell,
Where FOLLY triumph'd, and where WISDOM fell.

[Pg 5]

There the great BACON, whose sagacious eye
Pierc'd through the gloom of dark Philosophy,
And to the World unveil'd her awful face,
Crouch'd a low, servile Courtier in disgrace.
There PULTENEY, who the first stout bulwark stood
Of British Freedom 'gainst the torrent flood
Of dire Corruption, having stemm'd the wave,
Shook off the Patriot, and became the Slave.
There PITT, whose great and comprehensive soul
No threats could frighten, no events controul;
Whose name dash'd terror on his Country's foes,
From GALLIA'S Shores to where the GANGES flows
Through Eastern Nations;—There he wore the chain
Of Royal Gold, and join'd the pension'd Train.
But the Muse weeps, and drops the silent tear
O'er the sad truths which were recorded there.

[Pg 6]

High, in the midst, a Pageant of a Throne
In the extreme of Tinsel Splendor shone.
No Sacred Ensigns, no Imperial Chair,
Mark'd the high worth of those who counseled there;
But, shaded by a Curtain's vivid green,
A splendid, soft, luxuriant Couch was seen.
The spangled Banners glitter'd all around,
And the unfolded Silver strew'd the ground;
While the false Mirrors pain the dazzled eye
With mingled Forms, and gay Perplexity.
Hung from the roof by many a golden thread,
The Canopy its airy cov'ring spread,
Inwove with plumage borrow'd from the wing
Of India's feather'd Tribe, or those that sing
Mid the green woodlands of a Western Spring.
Before the Throne a splendid Altar stood,
Inlaid, in curious forms, with fragrant wood;
Whereon the faithful Votaries might lay
Their Offerings sacred to the festal day.

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Methought, that, tir'd of the disgusting scene,
Fit for Fools only, and their silly Queen,
I sought in haste to leave the inglorious Throng:
But as the pressing Crowd my steps prolong,
The deafening Cymbals, and the noisy brawl
Of pealing Laughter, ecchoed round the Hall.
And strait a troop of dancing Youths appear'd,
Of rosy hue, by friendly BACCHUS cheer'd.
The tinkling bells upon their feet they wore;
Each, in his hand, a rural Tabor bore,
Whose sides they frequent beat, and, at the sound,
Aloft in air, with, antic step, they bound.

Next came a blooming Boy in robe of green;
On his fair brow a flowery crown was seen,
Where the pale Primrose with the Cowslip vied,
And fragrant Violets shone in purple pride.
Upon a Bull he rode, whose horns were gay
With many a golden flower and budding spray.
Around him every vernal Songster fled,
While the Lark soar'd and whistled o'er his head.
And now he smil'd with joy, and now, apace,
The crystal tears bedew'd his alter'd face.
Like the young Fondling on his Mother's breast,
Who cries for absent joys, and thinks them best:
'Mid smiles, and tears, and frowns, he onward came,
With gentle pace,—and APRIL was his name.

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To him succeeds a light and frolic Train
Of wanton Females, insolent and vain,
Whose cheeks, by Art encrimson'd, far outvie

The vivid hue of blushing Modesty.
Their auburn ringlets float not in the air;
No silken fillet binds their flowing hair;
But, plaister'd into form, the curls disgrace
Each animated feature of the face.
The gladsome Fair, in honour of the day,
With artificial flow'rets strew'd the way.

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But in what language shall the Muse describe
The dancing, dressing Millinery Tribe,
Who, with their various emblems, next appear,
And joyful tell th' approach of FASHION near.

With mincing step the fickle Princess came:
Th' attending Crowds shout forth her empty name.
Strange was her form,—her look, her dress were strange;
And yet each moment saw their sudden change.
Now her Locks soar aloft, and threat the sky;
Now shade the brightness of her rolling eye:
Awhile they on her wanton bosom break;
Then, upward forc'd, display th' uncover'd neck.
Ere the long train could spread its shady folds,—
Drawn up,—a knot the alter'd vestment holds.
Soon fade the glories of th' enormous Plume;
As soon the superseding Chaplets bloom.
The rigid Stay, whose daring height conceals
Those swelling charms where many a Cupid dwells,
Ere they can heave again,—no more appear;
But leave each vulgar eye to revel there.
As I look'd down, the dropping Silk denies
Her pretty feet to my intruding eyes:
Again I look'd,—th' according flounce updrew,
And gave the well-turn'd ankle to my view.
Now stiff,—now slouching in her gait she walk'd;
Now lisp'd, now mouth'd each sentence as she talk'd.
A form so changeful I had never seen;—
The red, the blue, the yellow, and the green,
In quick succession, o'er her figure past,
A moment loiter'd, but refus'd to last.
And as, in various pride, she mov'd along,
Now charm'd,—now angry with the shouting Throng,
Submissive *Eunuchs* to their Mistress bend,
And in shrill warblings hail their *only* Friend.

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Now LUXURY advanc'd, a pamper'd Dame;
In these brave piping days a favourite name.
Tissues of gold her gorgeous robe compose;
In many a fold the shining vestment flows;
And far behind sends forth a sweeping Train,
Which *Dame Cornelys* scarcely can sustain.
Gems bright as those which Eastern Monarchs wear,
Hang on her breast and sparkle in her hair.
She but commands, and lo!—submissive Art
Is proud its curious labours to impart.
She but commands,—and eager Nature brings
The best and fairest of her offerings.
The distant Climates with each other vie,
Whate'er she wants or wishes, to supply.
The *North* before her spreads his furry store;
The *South* his golden sands and silver ore;
The sumptuous *East* is anxious to display
Gems of the brightest hue and purest ray;
The *West*, by arts to other climes unknown,
For her gives lustre to th' unpolish'd stone,
And shapes the rugged gold with cunning all his own.

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Th' obedient *Seasons* bend to her controul,
Invert their course, and in new order roll.
The hoary *Winter* to her wish doth bring
The scented blossoms of the balmy *Spring*;
The forward *Spring* impatient doth disclose
The full-blown beauties of the *Summer* Rose;
Th' encroaching *Summer* robs th' *Autumnal* fields
Of the rich fruitage which their bounty yields;
While *Autumn* looks on *Winter* with disdain,
And courts an union with the *Vernal* Train.

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E'en *Time* accords to her imperial sway;
 She rules the Night, and she directs the Day.
 But the glad Day affords her no delight;
 She hates the Sun, and revels in the Night.
 As she went on,—the gaudy carpet spread
 Its velvet surface for her stately tread;
 While the soft flute and animating lyre
 Awake to rapture every fond desire.
Profusion follow'd,—for whose single meal,
 Whole Hecatombs receive the Butcher's steel.
 Next *Drunkenness* roar'd forth the beastly strain,
 And *Waste* and *Riot* closed the gluttoned Train.

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And yet methought I saw, to them unseen,
 Wan *Ruin* stalk behind, with haggard mien,
 Expecting instant prey;—and with him came
 The angry *Fever*, whose insatiate flame
 Drinks up the pure and purple streams of Life;
 And every Disease that harbours strife
 {With mortal Natures.—Pallid, pining Care,
 Pain, griping Penury, with black Despair,
 And agonizing Death, in all his sable pomp, were there.

Next *Melancholy* came, with solemn pace;
 A purple veil o'er-spread her moisten'd face.
 And now she fix'd her eyes upon the ground;
 Now with dejected air, she turn'd around,
 As if to view the sad approaching Train,
 Degraded by unfeeling FOLLY'S chain.
 Pale *Science* follow'd;—to the sky she bore
 Her fasten'd looks, as eager to explore
 Some great design; nor did she seem to hear
 The cruel scoffings, and th' insulting sneer,
 Of brazen Ignorance and her foul-mouth'd crew,
 Who at the Holy Maid their venom threw.
 Grave *Wisdom*, next, with wrinkled brow appear'd,
 White was his head, and white his flowing beard.
 By the right hand *Religion's* self he led;
 Who, as she pass'd along, devoutly read
 In that *Celestial Book*, whose sacred page
 Shall pass unhurt through every distant Age.
 Meek *Resignation* with her Mistress came,
 And gentle *Patience*, and unsullied *Fame*:
 Onward they went, nor fear'd the assailing cry
 Of frontless *Vice* and barking *Calumny*.

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I mourn'd the piteous fight, and curs'd the hour
 When FOLLY first assum'd her fatal power:
 And much I sorrow'd that she dare maintain
 The shameful show of her fantastic reign.
 But as I wip'd away the silent tears,
 With rout and revelry the QUEEN appears.
 On a gay car the painted *Mischief* rode,—
 Her pride a *Feather*, and her grace a *Nod*.
 A flaunting, party-colour'd vest she wore,
 With many a glittering star bespangled o'er.
 Upon her cap, in order, plac'd around,
 The bells send forth an emblematic sound.
 Her right-hand did a wooden sword embrace,
 Known to the Chiefs of *Pantomimic* Race;
 Whose magic powers, to please a silly Age,
 She first encourag'd on the *British* Stage;
 And, driving *Sense* and *Reason* to despair,
 Her *duteous Delegates* continue there.
 Her eyes no penetrating gleam betray'd,
 Upon her face no gentle graces play'd.
 The *Harlot's* smile,—the *Ideot's* vacant stare,
 And *Baby* vehemence, were blended there.
 An *Ostrich* drew the gilded weight along,
 Whose harness'd plumage charm'd th' admiring Throng.
 Methought I saw her from the car descend,
 While her surrounding vot'ries lowly bend;
 And, with loud, pealing bursts of laughter, own
 Their Monarch seated on her *Annual Throne*.

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[Pg 16]

And now, in crowds, press'd through the yielding doors,
High Lords, deep Statesmen, Dutchesses, and Whores;
All ranks and stations, Publicans and Peers,
Grooms, Lawyers, Fiddlers, Bawds, and Auctioneers;
Prudes and Coquettes, the Ugly and the Fair,
The Pert, the Prim, the Dull, the Debonnair;
The Weak, the Strong, the Humble and the Proud,
All help'd to form the motley, mingled Crowd.

[Pg 17] With curious eye, attentive I survey'd
Each busy Figure of the Masquerade.
A Mask it might be call'd, tho', free from shame,
All shew'd their Faces, and each told his Name.
For FOLLY's presence spoils the attractive grace
That plays around the most bewitching face.
Where'er she reigns, beneath her magic sway
Each charm, each envied beauty melts away.
Where'er she governs, WISDOM will descry
In the fair form a foul deformity.
—There tottering Old Age essay'd to prance
With feeble feet, and join'd th' imperfect dance.
There supercilious Youth assum'd the air
And reverend grace which hoary Sages wear.
There I beheld full many a youthful Maid,
Like colts for sale to public view display'd,
Shew off their shapes and ply their happiest art,
While the old Mother acts the Jockey's part;
Who, well-instructed in the World's great School,
Knows how to trap the rich and noble Fool.
Bold Prostitution look'd with downcast eye,
And veil'd her painted cheeks with modesty;
While wedded Dames a bold demeanour wear,
And think their eyes resistless when they stare.
[The shameless Gamester shook the loaded die,
Nor fear'd the Stripling's unsuspecting eye,
That knows not to discern th' approaching ruin nigh.

[Pg 18] Old powerless *S*— still essay'd to charm
The Whore that dangled on the Dotard's arm.
Bold *P*— made Appointments with the Fair,
Certain he should not meet his *Countess* there.
Pale *G*—, as he stroll'd about to chuse
Some *unbroke Filly* for his favourite *Meuse*,
Where faithful *W—n* for his — *ship's gain*,
With pliant hand breaks in th' unruly Train,
Fix'd on his *frisky Wife*,—and, in her eye,
Saw the *mild beams of artless Modesty*.
[—There *H—'s Countess* views the *ducal Heir*,
[With silent caution does the toils prepare,
[And with her *raw-bon'd* Daughters baits the *snare*.
The wretched *B— sneaks* behind to wait
The doubtful progress of his *S—r's fate*.^[a]
The Maiden's Piety,—the boasted smiles
Of Royal Favour, and the secret wiles
Of hoary Artifice, at length, succeed;
And *the flow*^[b] *L—* to the Altar lead.
—There filly *D—* mourn'd, in briny floods,
His lessen'd Household, and diminish'd Woods.

[Pg 19] Thus as I gaz'd,—the Hautbois shrieking sound,
With swelling Clarions through the Dome resound;
And, in brisk, airy, measure, lightly play
A Prelude to the business of the day.
The Music ceas'd—and, in a treble tone,
Thus spake the Royal Puppet on the Throne:

[Pg 20] "Ye High, ye Low,—ye Vulgar and ye Peers!
Ye youthful Dames, and you of riper Years!
Ye longing Maids, who heave the midnight sigh
Beneath the burthen of Virginity!
Or you, ye stray'd ones, who, unblushing, boast
Your Virtue sullied, and your Honour lost!
Ye *Pidgeons*, who hold forth the Golden Plume
For Knaves to pluck, and Harlots to consume!
Ye wedded Fair, who, splenetic at home,

Think it the duty of a Wife to roam!
Ye Husbands, from whose cold neglect proceeds
The Cuckold sproutings of your aching heads!
Ye *City Wights*, who feel it pride to trace
The faded manners of St. JAMES'S PLACE,
'Till with imperial deeds you blend your fame,
And ROYAL GAZETTES propagate your Name!
Ye blazing Patriots who of Freedom boast,
'Till in a gaol your Liberties are lost!
Ye Noble Fair, who, *satisfied with Show*,
Court the light, frothy flatteries of a *Beau*!
Ye high-born Peers, whose ardor to excel,
Grows from the beauties of some modish *Belle*!
Ye jocund Crowd, of every degree,
Welcome, thrice welcome, to this place and me!
—Haste—on the Altar your best offerings leave;
And, in return, my favouring smiles receive!
First let the PEERAGE come:—'tis my decree
To pay all Honours to *Precedency*."

[Pg 21]

At her command, the pressing Crowds retreat:
When D—, uprising from her feat,
With careless gesture to the Altar moves.
Then *Virtue* shriek'd,—and all the *Laughing Loves*
That play'd around, droop'd instant with dismay,
And spread their wings, and, weeping, fled away!

[Pg 22]

The Noble Dame her offering now prepares.—
A Father's counsels, and a Mother's cares.
Upon the Altar's gilded surface lie,
With winning grace, and sweet simplicity;
The gay, yet decent, look; the modest air,
Which loves the brow of Youth, and triumphs there;
The power to give delight, devoid of art,
Which stole unconscious o'er the Lover's heart;
The wish to bless, with all those Virgin charms
Which heighten'd rapture in a Husband's arms;
Each infant friendship, each domestic care,
Each elevated thought was offer'd there.
Nor did the *lavish Votary* deny
One solid charm,—but chilling Chastity.
Enraptur'd FOLLY bless'd the lucky hour
That gave so fair a subject to her power.
Nor did the long delay, with circling hand,
To wave around the Fair her magic wand.
When, lo!—the sudden Plumes her temples grac'd;
The yielding Stays sink downwards to the waist;
And, strange to tell, her rosy lips dispense
Double-entendres and Impertinence.

[Pg 23]

Throughout the Hall a loud applause was heard,
Nor ceas'd till D—'s airy form appear'd.
No common offering she seem'd to bear;
Connubial tenderness,—the watchful care
Which tender Infants from their Mothers claim,
The sage demeanor, and the blameless name
In which High Life should ever be array'd,
Her steady hand upon the Altar laid.

The Queen with laughter loud her joy exprest,
And, strait, I saw the giddy *Countess* drest
In Infant's garb, and like an Infant smil'd;
The Parent now was sunk into the Child.
The rattle pleas'd it, and the painted toy;
Awhile the trifles charm, but soon they cloy.
Anon she cries,—for some new play distrest,
'Till FETES CHAMPETRES hush it into rest.

[Pg 24]

Next B— was seen, whose sprightly eye
Beam'd with the pertness of Vivacity.
To the gay shrine the wanton Fair proceeds,
And, smiling, offers up her Widow's weeds.
Here E—'s chaste vows, and proffer'd love,
With *Hymeneal* garlands interwove,
And injur'd D—'s unavailing sighs,

Together form an ample sacrifice.

Delighted FOLLY wav'd her pow'rful wand!
A sprightly figure came at her command;
Its face of GALLIC mould and sallow hue.
And o'er his shoulder hung the *Cordon Bleu*.
Up-rose the QUEEN.—"My favourite Prince, she cried,
To me and to my House so near allied,
To you I shall resign no common care:
Beneath your wing I place a favourite Fair.
Regardless of her Children's growing years,
Deaf to their prattle, heedless of their tears;
Tir'd of her native land, and pleasant home,
On foreign shores she languishes to roam;
In foreign Courts to play coquettish arts,
And dart her lightnings into foreign hearts.
Yours is the Court where she would wish to shine;
And where's the heart so soon inflam'd as thine?"
She spoke.—They heard their Mistress with delight;
When, in a cloud, she veil'd them from my sight.

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The painted A——, who appear'd once more,
To do what she'd so often done before,
Approach'd the Altar, to deposite there
Each thought, each action of the finish'd year.
Alone the Lady came,—alone return'd;
None joy'd her presence,—none her absence mourn'd.

Next M—— came, whose pleasing looks disclose
Charms which must soften her severest foes.
Plac'd by her hand upon the Altar, lie
Each *single Item of Oeconomy*;
While her good, easy Lord the rite survey'd,
And ratified the sacrifice she made.
Tho' small the Offering seem'd, in truth, 'twas great;
It was the Fragment of his vast Estate.
E'en FOLLY saw their gay career must end,
But, for their duties past, now prov'd their friend;
And gave a Book that teaches the repair
Of ruin'd Fortunes *in a foreign Air*.

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But now advanc'd a melancholy Train:—
In plaintive notes the breathing flutes complain.
And lo! the sorrowing D—— then succeeds,
In all the mournful pomp of Widows' weeds.
I heard her loud lament and bitter moan,
Not for a Husband, but a Title gone.
Close by her side I saw the *illustrious* Dame
Whom Wits the *Modern Messalina* name;
Who whisper'd comfort to the mourning Fair,
And told of joys which blooming Widows share;
Whose easy life no haughty ruler knows;
Who, when th' awaken'd passion wanton grows,
May, where her fancy leads, allay the flame,
Nor fear a husband's threats or ruin'd fame.
'Twas thus the BELDAME counsel'd; nor in vain
Did she pour forth th' admonitory strain.

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The weeping Fair before the Altar stood,
In all the dignity of Widowhood.
First, from her eyes she wip'd away the tears;
And then the solemn offering prepares.
—Connubial love,—the Altar's sacred tie,—
Pure thoughts, chaste words, and many a tender sigh
Which issued from the breast of virtuous A——ry;
With golden prospects, and a future claim
To the fair glories of a titled name;
All these, in order plac'd, bedeck the shrine.
—Ill-fated D—— for they once were thine!
Of all this precious treasure nought remains,
But the sad remnant of a Mother's pains.

Then spoke the Queen.—"Fair Dame, dispel your fears,
And stop the fruitless current of your tears!
Tho' Friends may prove unkind, all are not gone;
Still there remains the *virtuous H——ton*:

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Nor shall the wedded H—— faithless prove,
Or quite forget the proofs of *former Love*.
Ne'er shall you more lament the name of Wife;
The Widow's joys will crown your future life."

Next filly *V——rs*, who once had by heart
Each *golden rule* her *Mother* could impart;
But since, escap'd from the Maternal School,
Soon learn'd to break through every *golden rule*,^[c]
With her the weeping, whining D—— came,
And the *repentant* L——'s tasteless Dame.
To these an idle, giggling Train succeed,
Of various figure and as various breed—
Whose mingled faces I had never seen—
Eager to pay their duties to the Queen.
And now before the Shrine, promiscuous, lie
The Morning Blame, the Evening Flattery;
Sonnets, and Sighs, and Garlands from the Grove,
With all the soft Artillery of Love;
Lampoons and Ballads, Jealousies, Alarms,
And all the shafts which blast a Rival's charms;
Volumes of false Reports the Altar load,
Brought up from squint-eyed *Scandal's* dark abode:
And having yielded their accustom'd sport,
Are duly register'd in FOLLY'S COURT.

Now shoals of Damsels to the place repair,
To sacrifice their reputations there;
While others, careful of their own good name,
Give to the gaping crowd a neighbour's fame.
FOLLY, well-pleas'd, the varied heap survey'd
Of *Female Offerings* before her laid,
And wav'd her wand:—The Altar disappears;
But strait, at her command, another rears
Its *silver* base, whose firm, compacted mould
Beam'd with the splendor of contrasted gold;
And many a beauty shew'd, with strength to bear
The *weighty* tributes to be offer'd there.

Before it stood a modest, blooming Peer,
Who bow'd with easy grace, and offer'd there
Some fine-spun Verses which he never wrote,
Some worthy Speeches which he spoke by rote:
For thus I heard surrounding tongues rehearse,
"H—— wrote the Speeches, H—— composed the Verse."
And soon amid the mingled heap there lay
The blasted wishes for *Hibernian* sway.
And here he sigh'd, and, as I thought, a tear
Rose in his sullen eye, but linger'd there;
When FOLLY, pointing to the splendid show
Of *Star* and *Ribbon* that bedeck'd the Beau,
"For shame, my Lord, she cried, your doubtings cease!
With such a wish and such a power to please,
As you possess—Oh think not of the strife
And labours of the Politician's life!
Let *heavy Carlo* feel the toilsome fate
That doth on fruitless Opposition wait!
Let *clumsy* NORTH, unenvied, still preside
O'er Britain's welfare, and her Counsels guide!
Let *purbblind* GRANTHAM strive, in soothing strain,
To calm the fury of revengeful SPAIN!
Let *gentle* STORMONT threat intriguing FRANCE!
You shine, my Lord, *unrival'd in the dance*.
'Tis yours, with nimble step and graceful air,
In measur'd mazes, to delight the Fair.
Of all the various arts, how few are known
To gain an excellence in more than one.
What real praises then become your due!
For who can DRESS and DANCE so well as you!"
She ceas'd:—In minuet step my Lord retired;
To higher *Entre-Chats* he now aspir'd:
Then, capering as he went, he hasten'd home,
To plan with St——r Triumphs yet to come.

Now hoary S—— near the Throne appears,

Bent with the follies of full three-score years.
 These, heap on heap, the solid Altar grace:
 When FOLLY, sighing, mourn'd his wrinkled face;
 And thus in words of consolation spoke:—
 "Fear not, my aged Child, the impending stroke
 Of loit'ring Fate, which soon may cut in twain
 Thy cable's dwindled strength, and feeble chain,
 And set thy bark afloat upon th' Eternal Main!
 Fear not; but still indulge thy wanton hours,
 And strew thy wint'ry path with vernal flowers.
 How long thine hours may last, I cannot say;
 FOLLY ne'er sees beyond *the present day*.
 And should Old Time, with subtle art, delude
 Thy feebled Age into decrepitude;
 Still on thy crutches sing, and dance, and play,
 And gild the close of Life's short Holiday!
 No *second Childhood* can my S—— wear;
 The *first* yet boasts an incomplete career.
 Amid the duties of maturer age,
 The playful Child was blended with the Sage;
 And e'en th' important labours of the State,
 The secret Councils, and the deep Debate,
 Have oft been left unfinished, to enjoy
 Some childish pastime, or some fangled toy,
 Then fear not,—tho' thy years are almost past,
My friendly Ray shall cheer you to the last."

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Now on the Altar, reeling, W—— lays
 The expectations of his early days;
 And talents which, improv'd by GRANVILLE'S care,
 Promis'd a ripe and plenteous crop to bear
 Of golden Virtues. But his care was vain:
 With these were mingled the accursed bane
 Of noble deeds, fell instruments of Vice,
 The treacherous Cards and desolating Dice,
 Which forc'd the noble Gamester, for support,
 To claim the mercies of a pitying Court.

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The flatter'd Queen beheld, with laughing eye,
 The Offerings of her faithful Votary;
 And, in return, she gave a Scroll, which bore
 On its smooth face the *trusty* name of H——,
 And other monied Wights, who boast to reign
 O'er L——'s flow'ry lawns and proud domain:
 Which when he saw, for WINE he call'd aloud,
 And stagger'd onward through the yielding Croud.

But, as I look'd, methought, beneath the gate,
 Counting her dropping tears, REPENTANCE sat:
 And as the giddy Votaries return'd,
 They caught her sorrows, and their follies mourn'd.

Bold M—— offer'd up his patriot zeal,
 And flaming Harangues for BRITANNIA'S weal;
 And *Oaths*^[d] by which he swore to stem the tide
 Of Courtly Sway and Ministerial Pride;
 Which thro' the ecchoing Isle were frequent heard,
 When he a *Northern Candidate appear'd*.
 But FOLLY gave him, with satiric look,
 A *Dispensation* from the Oaths he took;
 Suspicious that, the patriot frenzy o'er,
 These pious *Swearings* had been *broke before*.

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[Pg 36]

Smiles that ne'er pleas'd, and words as light as air,
 Which scarce could claim regard from FOLLY'S ear;
 O'er-weening arts, which, tho' in smiles array'd,
 By base-born fears have ever been betray'd;
 A few fair deeds, whose merit has been lost
 In *selfish* ends, or *Pharisaic* boast;
 Soft, gentle Phrases, and meek, smiling Lies,
 Which could not veil his bare hypocrisies;
 Dull hours of *Courtship* with the *unwilling* Fair,
 Who wonder'd *rosy Love was never there*;
 Curses pour'd forth upon the nuptial hour,
 Which sadly *fail'd him of the expected Dower*^[e];

All these and more the splendid Shrine display'd,
By B——'s trembling hand with caution laid.

Now FOLLY frown'd, *who had not frown'd before*;
And, as I thought, in her right hand she bore
A Parchment Scroll, which strait she downward threw,
For the pale, timorous Lordling to review.
A Will it seem'd;—and soon, with weeping eye,
He told aloud *th' omitted Legacy*^[f].

Then FOLLY titter'd^[g], and the joyful Croud
Burst forth in laughing shouts so shrill and loud,
The affrighted vision fled in haste away,
And my glad eyes beheld the chearful day.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [a] [*His S——r's Fate.*]—If the Reader should think I have strayed beyond the line of propriety in introducing a Family so *profitably* employed as this, into the *Temple of Folly*, —I shall beg leave to refer him to a *sacred Book* which this Family pretend to read with great care and attention; wherein he will perceive that the *wisdom of this world*, with which this Family so much abounds, is accounted *foolishness*.—Tho', if he should object to *Scripture* authority, he will find, in the *laugh* and *contempt* of Mankind, the real folly of those who, in the midst of affluence, by the most bare-fac'd and indelicate proceedings, obtain and continue to grasp at every means of *domestic emolument*.
- [b] [And the *flow L——*.]—I do not allude to this noble person's capacity,—but to his *great and well-known Indispositions to this Connection*.
- [c] [*to break through every golden-rule.*] This woman, as an example of the good effects of a *prudential* and *parsimonious* education, the moment she was let loose, run into the extreme of Folly and expensive Fashions.—It has been said of one of her sisters, that she never spoke before her marriage, and was never silent afterwards.—This is the true art of managing Daughters—To prevent a discovery of their real dispositions 'till the end of the hypocrisy is answer'd,—and the *Settlement for Life* irrevocable.
- [d] [*And Oaths by which he swore.*] At the last General Election, it was consider'd as a certain road to success by the Patriotic Candidates for the Senatorial Dignity, to propose and take oaths to support certain *wise* measures, and to endeavour at the Repeal of certain *dangerous* Laws. This person was among the outrageous Partisans of Opposition, who, at that time, look the propos'd oaths with great noise and clamour in various parts of the Kingdom: But his success was not then equal to that which he has since found, without any *public engagements*, beneath the smile of Ministerial favour.—But I do not mean, indeed I have no right to express myself with severity at this change of Party;—I will not add *Sentiments*;—for they are in the secret recesses of his own breast.—Nor shall I endeavour, at present, to develope the turnings and windings of that course which many of our Modern Patriots have taken.—These things will, in due time, explain themselves.—The Right Honourable Captain fought and found an empty Renown among the Frozen Seas of the *North*.—Some more substantial Honours seem to await him here.—I do not despair of seeing him a *Lord of the Admiralty*.—The Noble Relation to whom he owes the rudiments of naval wisdom, may also have communicated to him that subtle Spirit, which, in spite of Private Connections, Family Dissentions, Public Engagements, and Ministerial Confusion, looks alone to, and will maintain its own Interests.
- [e] [*th' expected Dower.*]—The Anecdote to which this relates is known to every one.—It contains the picture of a *sordid Man in the extreme*, who was capable of seeking for emolument in the Injustice of a Parent to his Children;—and, being repulsed in this hope, made the basest resolutions, but possess'd not sufficient courage to put them in execution.—And his reward is *Disappointment for Life*.

It is very extraordinary,—but the polite *Clubs* and *Circles* were alive at this event.—What then must that Man be, whose Miseries furnish delight to his Fellow-Creatures!—But when a *money-loving spirit* alone *leads* a man to the Altar,—the World will rejoice if a *cowardly spirit* should *drive him thither*.

- [f] [*th' omitted Legacy.*] About three or four months ago, the following Paragraph, or something like it, appear'd in the Morning Papers.—"Yesterday Lord ——, who had been

called into the country by the sudden illness of a noble Lady not twenty miles from *Windsor*, return'd to Town with an account of her Death and his Disappointment, to an anxious Family in *Lower Grosvenor Street*."—This Article of Intelligence would, probably, have been unnotic'd by me, had not a Person without any previous notice, exclaim'd aloud in a Coffee-House where I happened to be,—*I am glad of it, by G—d*.—Upon being ask'd by some of the Company, what might occasion such a *joyful Asseveration*,—he read the above paragraph,—and the *whole room* express'd an almost equal satisfaction.

[g] [*Then Folly titter'd*.] Mankind, who are accustomed to have their attention awaken'd to acts of daring Vice, or pre-eminent Virtue, may think the mean, base, cowardly, hypocritical Character not sufficiently interesting to claim their particular notice;—and that the exposing to the general knowledge of the World, those miserable, sneaking qualities which have not courage to rise into general notice, and are too mean to be long the topics of any conversation, is drawing aside the veil where it ought to be covered with thicker folds.—But when the mean Character, conscious of the universal contempt of those in his own rank, endeavours, by occasional smiles, and a silky demeanour, to acquire some degree of respect from the subordinate stations, his hopes, surely, ought to be dash'd;—and he deserves well of Society and of Virtue who performs the office.—Tho', I believe, in the *Character before me*, the *gentle* semblance of Virtue will not pass current with those who possess the least suspicion, or the most ordinary penetration.—*But more of this hereafter*.

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