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FABLES

ANCIENT *and* MODERN;

Translated into VERSE from

HOMER, OVID,

Boccace, and Chaucer:

WITH

ORIGINAL POEMS.

By Mr. DRYDEN.

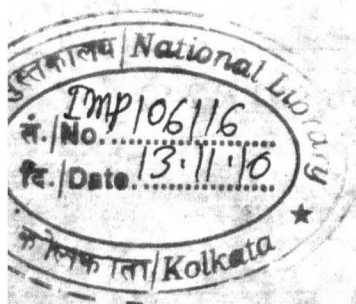
*Nunc ultro ad Cineres ipsius & ossa parentis
(Haudequidem sine mente, reor, sine numine divum)
Adsumus.* Virg. Æn. lib. 5.

L O N D O N:

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970





TO HIS
G R A C E
THE
DUKE of ORMOND.

My LORD,



SOME Estates are held in *England*, by paying a Fine at the Change of every Lord: I have enjoy'd the Patronage of your Family, from the time of your excellent Grandfather to this present Day. I have dedicated the Translation of the Lives of *Plutarch* to the first Duke; and have celebrated the Memory of your Heroick Father. Tho'

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in very short of the Age of *Nestor*, yet I
re liv'd to a third Generation of your House;
I by your Grace's Favour am admitted still
hold from you by the same Tenure.

I am not vain enough to boast that I have
serv'd the Value of so Illustrious a Line; but
Fortune is the greater, that for three De-
cents they have been pleas'd to distinguish my Pos-
s from those of other Men; and have accord-
ly made me their peculiar Care. May it be per-
mitted me to say, That as your Grandfather and
her were cherish'd and adorn'd with Ho-
urs by two successive Monarchs, so I have
in esteem'd, and patronis'd, by the Grand-
ner, the Father, and the Son, descended
in one of the most Ancient, most Conspi-
ous, and most Deserving Families in *Europe*.
'Tis true, that by delaying the Payment of
last Fine, when it was due by your Grace's
cession to the Titles and Patrimonies of
ur House, I may seem, in rigour of Law, to
e made a Forfeiture of my Claim, yet my
art has always been devoted to your Service:
d since you have been graciously pleas'd, by
ur Permission of this Address, to accept the

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Tender of my Duty, 'tis not yet too late to lay these Poems at your Feet.

•The World is sensible that you worthily succeed, not only to the Honours of your Ancestors, but also to their Virtues. The long Chain of Magnanimity, Courage, Easiness of Access, and desire of doing Good, even to the Prejudice of your Fortune, is so far from being broken in your Grace, that the precious Metal yet runs pure to the newest Link of it: Which I will not call the last, because I hope and pray, it may descend to late Posterity: And your flourishing Youth, and that of your excellent Dutchess, are happy Omens of my Wish.

'Tis observ'd by *Livy* and by others, That some of the noblest *Roman* Families retain'd a Resemblance of their Ancestry, not only in their Shapes and Features, but also in their Manners, their Qualities, and the distinguishing Characters of their Minds: Some Lines were noted for a stern, rigid Virtue, salvage, haughty, parcimonious and unpopular: Others were more sweet, and affable; made of a more pliant Paste, humble, courteous, and obliging; studious of doing charitable Offices, and dis-

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fulive of the Goods which they enjoy'd. The last of these is the proper and indelible Character of your Grace's Family: God Almighty has endu'd you with a Softness, a Beneficence, an attractive Behaviour winning on the Hearts of others; and so sensible of their Misery, that the Wounds of Fortune seem not inflicted on them, but on your self. You are so ready to redress, that you almost prevent their Wishes, and always exceed their Expectations: As if what was yours, was not your own, and not given you to possess, but to bestow on wanting Merit. But this is a Topick which I must cast in Shades, lest I offend your Modesty, which is so far from being ostentatious of the Good you do, that it blushes even to have it known: And therefore I must leave you to the Satisfaction and Testimony of your own Conscience, which though it be a silent Panegyrick, is yet the best.

You are so easie of Access, that *Poplicola* was not more, whose Doors were open'd on the Outside to save the People even the common Civility of asking Entrance; where all were equally admitted; where nothing that was rea-

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sonable was deny'd; where Misfortune was a powerful Recommendation, and where (I can scarce forbear saying) that Want it self was a powerful Mediator, and was next to Merit.

The History of *Peru* assures us, That their *Inca's* above all their Titles, esteem'd that the highest, which call'd them *Lovers of the Poor*; A Name more glorious, than *The Felix, Pius, and Augustus* of the *Roman* Emperors; which were Epithets of Flattery, deserv'd by few of them; and not running in a Blood like the perpetual Gentleness, and inherent Goodness of the *ORMOND* Family.

Gold, as it is the purest, so it is the softest, and most ductile of all Metals: Iron, which is the hardest, gathers Rust, corrodes its self; and is therefore subject to Corruption: It was never intended for Coins and Medals, or to bear the Faces and Inscriptions of the Great. Indeed 'tis fit for Armour, to bear off Insults, and preserve the Wearer in the Day of Battel: But the Danger once repell'd, 'tis laid aside by the Brave, as a Garment too rough for civil Conversation; a necessary Guard in War, but too harsh and cumbersome in Peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more human Life.

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For this Reason, my Lord, though you have Courage in a heroical Degree, yet I ascribe it to you, but as your second Attribute: Mercy, Beneficence, and Compassion, claim Precedence, as they are first in the divine Nature. An intrepid Courage, which is inherent in your Grace, is at best but a Holiday-kind of Virtue, to be seldom exercis'd, and never but in Cases of Necessity: Affability, Mildness, Tenderneſs, and a Word, which I would fain bring back to its original Signification of Virtue, I mean Good-Nature, are of daily use: They are the Bread of Mankind, and Staff of Life: Neither Sighs, nor Tears, nor Groans, nor Curses of the vanquish'd, follow Acts of Compassion, and of Charity: But a sincere Pleasure, and Serenity of Mind, in him who performs an Action of Mercy, which cannot suffer the Misfortunes of another, without redress; least they should bring a kind of Contagion along with them, and pollute the Happiness which he enjoys.

Yet since the perverse Tempers of Mankind, since Oppression on one side, and Ambition on the other, are sometimes the unavoidable

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Occasions of War; that Courage, that Magnanimity, and Resolution, which is born with you, cannot be too much commended: And here it grieves me that I am scant'd in the Pleasure of dwelling on many of your Actions: But *αἰδέσθαι Τρώας* is an Expression which Tully often uses, when he would do what he dares not, and fears the Censure of the *Romans*.

I have sometimes been forc'd to amplify on others; but here, where the Subject is so fruitful, that the Harvest overcomes the Reaper, I am shorten'd by my Chain, and can only see what is forbidden me to reach: Since it is not permitted me to commend you, according to the extent of my Wishes, and much less is it in my Power to make my Commendations equal to your Merits.

Yet in this Frugality of your Praises, there are some Things which I cannot omit, without detracting from your Character. You have so form'd your own Education, as enables you to pay the Debt you owe your Country; or more properly speaking, both your Countries: Because you were born; I may almost say in Purple, at the Castle of *Dublin*, when your

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Grandfather was Lord-Lieutenant, and have since been bred in the Court of *England*.

If this Address had been in Verse, I might have call'd you as *Claudian* calls *Mercury*, *Nu-
men commune, Geminio faciens commercia mundi*.

The better to satisfy this double Obligation you have early cultivated the Genius you have to Arms, that when the Service of *Britain* or *Ireland* shall require your Courage, and your Conduct, you may exert them both to the Benefit of either Country. You began in the Cabinet what you afterwards practis'd in the Camp; and thus both *Lucullus* and *Cæsar* (to omit a crowd of shining *Romans*) form'd themselves to the War by the Study of History; and by the Examples of the greatest Captains, both of *Greece* and *Italy*, before their time. I name those two Commanders in particular, because they were better read in Chronicle than any of the *Roman* Leaders; and that *Lucullus* in particular, having only the Theory of War from Books was thought fit, without Practice, to be sent into the Field, against the most formidable Enemy of *Rome*. *Tully* indeed was call'd the learned Consul in denision; but then he was not born a Soldier: His Head was turn'd another way.

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When he read the Tactics he was thinking on the Bar, which was his Field of Battel. The Knowledge of Warfare is thrown away on a General who dares not make use of what he knows. I commend it only in a Man of Courage and Resolution; in him it will direct his Martial Spirit; and teach him the way to the best Victories, which are those that are least bloody, and which tho' achiev'd by the Hand, are manag'd by the Head. Science distinguishes a Man of Honour from one of those Athlerick Brutes whom undeservedly we call Heroes. Curs'd be the Poet, who first honour'd with that Name a meer *Ajax*, a Man-killing Ideot. The *Ulysses* of *Ovid* upbraids his Ignorance, that he understood not the Shield for which he pleaded: There was engraven on it, Plans of Cities, and Maps of Countries, which *Ajax* could not comprehend, but look'd on them as stupidly as his Fellow-Beast the Lion. But on the other side, your Grace has given your self the Education of his Rival; you have studied every Spot of Ground in *Flanders*, which for these ten Years past has been the Scene of Battels and of Sieges. No wonder if you perform'd your Part with such Applause on a Theater which you understood so well.

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If I design'd this for a Poetical Encomium, it were easie to enlarge on so copious a Subject; but confining my self to the Severity of Truth, and to what is becoming me to say, I must not only pass over many Instances of your Military Skill, but also those of your assiduous Diligence in the War; and of your Personal Bravery, attended with an ardent Thirst of Honour; a long Train of Generosity; Profuseness of doing Good; a Soul unsatisfy'd with all it has done; and an unextinguish'd Desire of doing more. But all this is Matter for your own Historians; I am, as *Virgil* says, *Spatius exclusus iniquis*.

Yet not to be wholly silent of all your Charities, I must stay a little on one Action, which prefer'd the Relief of Others, to the Consideration of your Self. When, in the Battel of *Landen*, your Heat of Courage (a Fault only pardonable to your Youth) had transported you so far before your Friends, that they were unable to follow, much less to succour you; when you were not only dangerously, but in all appearance mortally wounded, when in that desperate Condition you were made Prisoner, and carried

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to *Namur*, at that time in Possession of the *French*; then it was, my Lord, that you took a considerable Part of what was remitted to you of your own Revenues, and as a memorable Instance of your Heroick Charity, put it into the Hands of Count *Guiscard*, who was Governor of the Place, to be distributed among your Fellow-Prisoners. The *French* Commander, charm'd with the Greatness of your Soul, accordingly consign'd it to the Use for which it was intended by the Donor : By which means the Lives of so many miserable Men were sav'd, and a comfortable Provision made for their Subsistence, who had otherwise perish'd, had not you been the Companion of their Misfortune : or rather sent by Providence, like another *Joseph*, to keep out Famine from invading those, whom in Humility you call'd your Brethren. How happy was it for those poor Creatures, that your Grace was made their Fellow-Sufferer ? And how glorious for You, that you chose to want rather than not relieve the Wants of others ? The Heathen Poet, in commending the Charity of *Dido* to the *Trojans*, spoke like a Christian : *Non ignara mali miseris,*

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succurrere disco. All Men, even those of a different Interest, and contrary Principles, must praise this Action, as the most eminent for Piety, not only in this degenerate Age, but almost in any of the former; when Men were made *de meliore luto*; when Examples of Charity were frequent, and when there were in being, *Tencri pulcherrima proles, Magnanimi Heroes nati melioribus annis.* No Envy can detract from this; it will shine in History; and like Swans, grow whiter the longer it endures: And the name of *ORMOND* will be more celebrated in his Captivity, than in his greatest Triumphs.

But all Actions of your Grace are of a piece; as Waters keep the Tenour of their Fountains: your Compassion is general, and has the same Effect as well on Enemies as Friends. 'Tis so much in your Nature to do Good, that your Life is but one continued Act of placing Benefits on many; as the Sun is always carrying his Light to some Part or other of the World: And were it not that your Reason guides you where to give, I might almost say that you could not help bestowing more,

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than is consisting with the Fortune of a private Man, or with the Will of any but an *Alexander*.

What Wonder is it then, that being born for a Blessing to Mankind, your suppos'd Death in that Engagement, was so generally lamented through the Nation? The Concernment for it was as universal as the Loss: And though the Gratitude might be counterfeit in some, yet the Tears of all were real: Where every Man deplor'd his private Part in that Calamity, and even those who had not tasted of your Favours, yet built so much on the Fame of your Beneficence, that they bemoan'd the Loss of their Expectations.

This brought the untimely Death of your Great Father into fresh remembrance; as if the same Decree had pass'd on two short successive Generations of the Virtuous; and I repeated to my self the same Verses, which I had formerly apply'd to him: *Ostendunt terris hunc tantum fata, nec ultra, esse sinunt.* But to the Joy not only of all good Men, but of Mankind in general, the unhappy Omen took not place. You are still living to enjoy the Blessings and

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Applause of all the Good you have perform'd
the Prayers of Multitudes whom you have oblig'd,
for your long Prosperity; and that your
Power of doing generous and charitable Actions,
may be as extended as your Will
which is by none more zealously desir'd than
by

Your GRACE's most Humble,

most Oblig'd, and most

Obedient Servant,

John Dryden.

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TIS with a Poet, as with a Man who designs to build, and is very exact, as he supposes, in casting up the Cost beforehand: But, generally speaking, he is mistaken in his Account, and reckons short of the Expence he first intended: He alters his Mind as the Work proceeds, and will have this or that Convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began. So has it hapned to me; I have built a House, where I intended but a Lodge: Yet with better Success than a certain Nobleman, who beginning with a Dog-kennel, never liv'd to finish the Palace he had contriv'd.

From translating the First of *Homer's Iliads* (which I intended as an Essay to the whole Work) I proceeded to the Translation of the Twelfth Book of *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, because it contains, among other Things, the Causes, the Beginning, and Ending, of the *Trojan War*: Here I ought in reason to have stopp'd; but the Speeches of *Ajax* and *Ulysses* lying next in my way, I could not balk 'em. When I had compass'd them, I was so taken with the former Part of the Fifteenth Book, (which is the Master-piece of the whole *Metamorphoses*) that I enjoind my self the pleasing Task of rendring it into *English*. And now I found, by the Number of my Verses, that they began to swell into a little Volume; which gave me an Occasion of looking backward on some Beauties of my Author, in his former Books: There occur'd to me the Hunting of the Boar, *Cinyras* and *Myrrha*, the good-natur'd Story of *Baucis* and *Philemon*, with the rest, which I hope I have translated closely enough, and given them the same Turn of Verse

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which they had in the Original; and this, I may say without vanity, is not the Talent of every Poet: He who has arriv'd the nearest to it, is the Ingenious and Learned *Sandys*, the best Versifier of the former Age; if I may properly call it by that Name, which was the former Part of this concluding Century. For *Spencer* and *Fairfax* both flourish'd in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*: Great Masters in our Language; and who saw much farther into the Beauties of our Numbers, than those who immediately followed them. *Milton* was the Poetical Son of *Spencer*, and Mr. *Waller* of *Fairfax*; for we have our Lineal Descents and Clans, as well as other Families: *Spencer* more than once insinuates, that the Soul of *Chaucer* was transfus'd into^o his Body; and that he was begotten by him Two hundred Years after his Decease. *Milton* has acknowledg'd to me, that *Spencer* was his Original; and many besides my self have heard our famous *Waller* own, that he deriv'd the Harmony of his Numbers from the *Godfrey of Bulloign*, which was turn'd into *English* by Mr. *Fairfax*. But to return: Having done with *Ovid* for this time, it came into my mind, that our old *English* Poet *Chaucer* in many Things resembled him, and that with no disadvantage on the Side of the Modern Author, as I shall endeavour to prove when I compare them: And as I am, and always have been, studious to promote the Honour of my Native Country, so I soon resolv'd to put their Merits to the Trial, by turning some of the *Canterbury Tales* into our Language, as it is now refin'd: For by this Means both the Poets being set in the same Light, and dress'd in the same *English* Habit, Story to be compar'd with Story, a certain Judgment may be made betwixt them, by the Reader, without obtruding my Opinion on him: Or if I seem partial to my Country-man, and Predecessor in the Laurel, the Friends of Antiquity are not few: And besides many of the Learn'd, *Ovid* has almost all the *Beaux*, and the whole Fair Sex, his declar'd Patrons. Perhaps I have assum'd somewhat more to my self than they allow me; because I have adventur'd to sum up the Evidence: But the Readers are the Jury; and their

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Privilege remains entire to decide according to the Merits of the Cause: Or, if they please to bring it to another Hearing, before some other Court. In the mean time, to follow the Thread of my Discourse, (as Thoughts, according to Mr. *Hobbs*, have always some Connexion) so from *Chaucer* I was led to think on *Boccace*, who was not only his Contemporary, but also pursu'd the same Studies; wrote Novels in Prose, and many Works in Verse; particularly is said to have invented the Octave Rhyme, or *Stanza* of Eight Lines, which ever since has been maintain'd by the Practice of all *Italian* Writers, who are, or at least assume the Title of *Heroick Poets*: He and *Chaucer*, among other Things, had this in common, that they refin'd their Mother Tongues; but with this Difference, that *Dante* had begun to file their Language, at least in Verse, before the time of *Boccace*, who likewise receiv'd no little help from his Master *Petrarch*. But the Reformation of their Prose was wholly owing to *Boccace* himself; who is yet the Standard of Purity in the *Italian* Tongue; though many of his Phrases are become obsolete, as in process of Time it must needs happen. *Chaucer* (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. *Rhymer*) first adorn'd and amplified our barren Tongue from the *Provençall*, which was then the most polish'd of all the Modern Languages: But this Subject has been copiously treated by that great Critick, who deserves no little Commendation from us his Countrymen. For these Reasons of Time, and Resemblance of Genius, in *Chaucer* and *Boccace*, I resolv'd to join them in my present Work; to which I have added some Original Papers of my own; which whether they are equal or inferior to my other Poems, an Author is the most improper Judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the Mercy of the Reader; I will hope the best, that they will not be condemn'd; but if they should, I have the Excuse of an old Gentleman, who mounting on Horseback before some Ladies, when I was present, got up somewhat heavily, but desir'd of the fair Spectators, that they would count Fourscore and eight before they judg'd him. By the Mercy of God, I am already come within twenty Years of his Number, a Cripple in my Limbs, but what Decays are in my Mind, the Reader must determine. I think my self as vigorous as ever

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in the Faculties of my Soul, excepting only my Memory, which is not impair'd to any great degree; and if I lose not more of it, I have no great Reason to complain. What Judgment I had, increaseth rather than diminishes; and Thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only Difficulty is to chuse or to reject; to run them into Verse, or to give them the other Harmony of Prose, I have so long study'd and practis'd both, that they are grown into a Habit, and become familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old Gentleman's Excuse; yet I will reserve it 'till I think I have greater need, and ask no Grains of Allowance for the Faults of this my present Work, but those which are given of course to human Frailty. I will not trouble my Reader with the shortness of Time in which I writ it; or the several Intervals of Sicknefs: They who think too well of their own Performances, are apt to boast in their Prefaces how little Time their Works have cost them; and what other Business of more Importance interfer'd; But the Reader will be as apt to ask the Question, Why they allow'd not a longer Time to make their Works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an Opinion of their Judges, as to thrust their indigested Stuff upon them, as if they deserv'd no better.

With this Account of my present Undertaking, I conclude the first Part of this Discourse: In the second Part, as at a second Sitting, though I alter not the Draught, I must touch the same Features over again, and change the Dead-colouring of the Whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which favours of Immorality or Profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to my self of any such Intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent Expression, or a Thought too wanton, they are crept into my Verses through my Inadvertency: If the Searchers find any in the Cargo, let them be stow'd or forfeited, like Counterbanded Goods; at least, let their Authors be answerable for them, as being but imported Merchandise, and not of my own Manufacture. On the other Side, I have endeavour'd to chuse

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such Fables, both Ancient and Modern, as contain in each of them some instructive Moral, which I could prove by Induction, but the Way is tedious; and they leap foremost into sight, without the Readers Trouble of looking after them. I wish I could affirm with a safe Conscience, that I had taken the same Care in all my former Writings; for it must be own'd, that supposing Verses are never so beautiful or pleasing, yet if they contain any thing which shocks Religion, or Good Manners, they are at best, what *Horace* says of good Numbers without good Sense, *Versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ*: Thus far, I hope, I am right in Court, without renouncing to my other Right of Self-defence, where I have been wrongfully accus'd, and my Sense wire-drawn into Blasphemy or Bawdry, as it has often been by a religious Lawyer, in a late pleading against the Stage; in which he mixes Truth with Falshood, and has not forgotten the old Rule, of calumniating strongly, that something may remain.

I resume the Thread of my Discourse with the first of my Translations, which was the First *Iliad* of *Homer*. If it shall please God to give me longer Life, and moderate Health, my Intentions are to translate the whole *Ilias*; provided still, that I meet with those Encouragements from the Publick, which may enable me to proceed in my Undertaking with some Chearfulness. And this I dare assure the World before-hand, that I have found by Trial, *Homer* a most pleasing Task than *Virgil*, (though I say not the Translation will be less laborious.) For the *Grecian* is more according to my Genius, than the *Latin* Poet. In the Works of the two Authors we may read their Manners, and natural Inclinations, which are wholly different. *Virgil* was of a quiet, sedate Temper; *Homer* was violent, impetuous, and full of Fire. The chief Talent of *Virgil* was Propriety of Thoughts, and Ornament of Words: *Homer* was rapid in his Thoughts, and took all the Liberties both of Numbers, and of Expressions, which his Language, and the Age in which he liv'd, allow'd him: *Homer's* Invention was more copious,

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Virgil's more confin'd: So that if *Homer* had not led the Way, it was not in *Virgil* to have begun Heroick Poetry: For, nothing can be more evident, than that the *Roman Poem* is but the Second Part of the *Ilias*; a Continuation of the same Story: And the Persons already form'd: The Manners of *Aeneas*, are those of *Hector* superadded to those which *Homer* gave him. The Adventures of *Ulysses* in the *Odysses*, are imitated in the first Six Books, of *Virgil's Aeneis*: And though the Accidents are not the same, (which would have argu'd him, of a servile copying, and total Barrenness of Invention) yet the Seas were the same, in which both the *Heroes* wander'd; and *Dido* cannot be deny'd to be the Poetical Daughter of *Calypso*. The Six latter Books of *Virgil's Poem*, are the Four and twenty *Iliads* contracted: A Quarrel occasion'd by a Lady, a Single Combate, Battels fought, and a Town besieg'd. I say not this in derogation to *Virgil*, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly said in his just Praise: For his *Episodes* are almost wholly of his own Invention; and the Form which he has given to the Telling, makes the Tale his own, even though the Original Story had been the same. But this proves, however, that *Homer* taught *Virgil* to design: And if Invention be the first Virtue of an Epick Poet, then the *Latin Poem* can only be allow'd the second Place. Mr. *Hobbs*, in the Preface to his own bald Translation of the *Ilias*, (studying Poetry as he did Mathematicks, when it was too late) Mr. *Hobbs*, I say, begins the Praise of *Homer* where he should have ended it. He tells us, that the first Beauty of an Epick Poem consists in Diction, that is, in the Choice of Words, and Harmony of Numbers: Now, the Words are the Colouring of the Work, which in the Order of Nature is last to be consider'd. The Design, the Disposition, the Manners, and the Thoughts, are all before it: Where any of those are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the Imitation of Human Life; which is in the very Definition of a Poem. Words indeed, like glazing Colours, are the first Beauties that arise, and strike

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the Sight; but if the Draught be false or lame, the Figures ill dispos'd, the Manners obscure or inconsistent, or the Thoughts unnatural, then the finest Colours are but Dawbing, and the Piece is a beautiful Monster at the best. Neither *Virgil* nor *Homer* were deficient in any of the former Beauties; but in this last, which is Expression, the *Roman* Poet is at least equal to the *Grecian*, as I have said elsewhere; supplying the Poverty of his Language, by his Musical Ear, and by his Diligence. But to return: Our two great Poets, being so different in their Tempers, one *Choleric* and *Sanguine*, the other *Phlegmatick* and *Melancholick*; that which makes them excel in their several Ways, is, that each of them has follow'd his own natural Inclination, as well in forming the Design, as in the Execution of it. The very *Heroes* shew their Authors: *Achilles* is hot, impatient, revengeful, *Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, &c.* *Aeneas* patient, considerate, careful of his People, and merciful to his Enemies; ever submissive to the Will of Heaven, *quo fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur.* I could please myself with enlarging on this Subject, but am forc'd to defer it to a fitter Time. From all I have said, I will only draw this Inference, That the Action of *Homer* being more full of Vigour than that of *Virgil*, according to the Temper of the Writer, is of consequence more pleasing to the Reader. One warms you by Degrees; the other lets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his Heat. 'Tis the same Difference which *Longinus* makes betwixt the Effects of Eloquence in *Demosthenes*, and *Tully*. One persuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read *Homer*, even not in the Second Book, (a graceful Flattery to his Countrymen;) but he hastens from the Ships, and concludes not that Book till he has made you an Amends by the violent playing of a new Machine. From thence he hurries on his Action with Variety of Events, and ends it in less Compass than Two Months. This Vehemence of his, I confess, is more suitable to my Temper; and therefore I have translated his First Book with greater Pleasure than any Part of *Virgil*: But it was not a Pleasure without Pains: The continual Agitations

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of the Spirits, must needs be a Weakning of any Constitution, especially in Age; and many Pauses are required for Refreshment betwixt the Heats; the *Iliad* of its self being a third part longer than all *Virgil's* Works together.

This is what I thought needful in this Place to say of *Homer*. I proceed to *Ovid*, and *Chaucer*; considering the former only in relation to the latter. With *Ovid* ended the Golden Age of the *Roman* Tongue: From *Chaucer* the Purity of the *English* Tongue began. The Manners of the Poets were not unlike: Both of them were well-bred, well-natur'd, amorous, and Libertine, at least in their Writings, it may be also in their Lives. Their Studies were the same, Philosophy, and Philology. Both of them were knowing in Astronomy, of which *Ovid's* Books of the *Roman* Fasts, and *Chaucer's* Treatise of the *Astrolabe*, are sufficient Witnesses. But *Chaucer* was likewise an Astrologer, as were *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Persius*, and *Manilius*. Both writ with wonderful Facility and Clearness; neither were great Inventors: For *Ovid* only copied the *Grecian* Fables; and most of *Chaucer's* Stories were taken from his *Italian* Contemporaries, or their Predecessors; *Boccace* his *Decameron* was first publish'd, and from thence our *Englishman* has borrow'd many of his *Canterbury Tales*: Yet that of *Palamon* and *Arcite* was written in all probability by some *Italian* Wit, in a former Age; as I shall prove hereafter: The Tale of *Grizild* was the Invention of *Petrarch*; by him sent to *Boccace*; from whom it came to *Chaucer*: *Troilus* and *Cressida* was also written by a *Lombard* Author; but much amplified by our *English* Translator, as well as beautified; the Genius of our Countrymen in general being rather to improve an Invention, than to invent themselves; as is evident not only in our Poetry, but in many of our Manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from *Boccace* before I come to him: But there is so much less behind; and I am of the Temper of most Kings, who love to be in Debt, are all for present Money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: Besides, the Nature of a

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Preface is rambling; never wholly out of the Way, nor in it. This I have learn'd from the Practice of honest *Montaign*, and return at my pleasure to *Ovid* and *Chaucer*, of whom I have little more to say. Both of them built on the Inventions of other Men; yet since *Chaucer* had something of his own, as *The Wife of Baths Tale*, *The Cock and the Fox*, which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our Countryman the Precedence in that Part; since I can remember nothing of *Ovid* which was wholly his. Both of them understood the Manners; under which Name I comprehend the Passions, and, in a larger Sense, the Descriptions of Persons, and their very Habits: For an Example, I see *Baucis* and *Philemon* as perfectly before me, as if some ancient Painter had drawn them; and all the Pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*, their Humours, their Features, and the very Drefs, as distinctly as if I had sup'd with them at the *Tabard* in *Southmark*: Yet even there too the Figures of *Chaucer* are much more lively, and set in a better Light: Which though I have not time to prove; yet I appeal to the Reader, and am sure he will clear me from Partiality. The Thoughts and Words remain to be consider'd, in the Comparison of the two Poets; and I have sav'd my self one half of that Labour, by owning that *Ovid* liv'd when the *Roman* Tongue was in its Meridian; *Chaucer*, in the Dawning of our Language: Therefore that Part of the Comparison stands not on an equal Foot, any more than the Diction of *Ennius* and *Ovid*; or of *Chaucer*, and our present *English*. The Words are given up as a Post not to be defended in our Poet, because he wanted the Modern Art of Fortifying. The Thoughts remain to be consider'd: And they are to be measur'd only by their Propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the Persons describ'd, on such and such Occasions. The Vulgar Judges, which are Nine Parts in Ten of all Nations, who call Conceits and Jingles Wit, who see *Ovid* full of them, and *Chaucer* altogether without them, will think me little less than mad, for preferring the *Englishman* to the *Roman*: Yet, with their leave,

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I must presume to say, that the Things they admire are only glittering Trifles, and so far from being Witty, that in a serious Poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Wou'd any Man who is ready to die for Love, describe his Passion like *Narcissus*? Wou'd he think of *inopem me copia fecit*, and a Dozen more of such Expressions, pour'd on the Neck of one another, and signifying all the same Thing? If this were Wit, was this a Time to be witty, when the poor Wretch was in the Agony of Death? This is just *John Littlewit* in *Bartholomew Fair*, who had a Conceit (as he tells you) left him in his Misery; a miserable Conceit. On these Occasions the Poet shou'd endeavour to raise Pity: But instead of this, *Ovid* is tickling you to laugh. *Virgil* never made use of such Machines, when he was moving you to commiserate the Death of *Dido*: He would not destroy what he was building. *Chaucer* makes *Arcite* violent in his Love, and unjust in the Pursuit of it: Yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: He repents not of his Love, for that had alter'd his Character; but acknowledges the Injustice of his Proceedings, and resigns *Emilia* to *Palamon*. What would *Ovid* have done on this Occasion? He would certainly have made *Arcite* witty on his Death-bed. He had complain'd he was farther off from Possession, by being so near, and a thousand such Boyisms, which *Chaucer* rejected as below the Dignity of the Subject. They who think otherwise, would by the same Reason prefer *Lucan* and *Ovid* to *Homer* and *Virgil*, and *Martial* to all Four of them. As for the Turn of Words, in which *Ovid* particularly excels all Poets; they are sometimes a Fault, and sometimes a Beauty, as they are us'd properly or improperly; but in strong Passions always to be shunn'd, because Passions are serious, and will admit no Playing. The *French* have a high Value for them; and I confess, they are often what they call Delicate, when they are introduc'd with Judgment; but *Chaucer* writ with more Simplicity, and follow'd Nature more closely, than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my Knowledge, been an upright Judge betwixt the Parties in Competition,

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not meddling with the Design nor the Disposition of it; because the Design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say somewhat of *Chaucer* in particular.

In the first place, As he is the Father of *English Poetry*, so I hold him in the same Degree of Veneration as the *Grecians* held *Homer*, or the *Romans* *Virgil*: He is a perpetual Fountain of good Sense; learn'd in all Sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all Subjects: As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a Continence which is practis'd by few Writers, and scarcely by any of the Ancients, excepting *Virgil* and *Horace*. One of our late great Poets is sunk in his Reputation, because he cou'd never forgive any Conceit which came in his way; but swept like a Drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the Dishes were ill sorted; whole Pyramids of Sweet-meats, for Boys and Women; but little of solid Meat, for Men: All this proceeded not from any want of Knowledge, but of Judgment; neither did he want that in discerning the Beauties and Faults of other Poets; but only indulg'd himself in the Luxury of Writing; and perhaps knew it was a Fault, but hop'd the Reader would not find it. For this Reason, though he must always be thought a great Poet, he is no longer esteem'd a good Writer: And for Ten Impressions, which his Works have had in so many successive Years, yet at present a hundred Books are scarcely purchas'd once a Twelvemonth: For, as my last Lord *Rocheſter* said, tho' somewhat profanely, *Not being of God, he could not stand.*

Chaucer follow'd Nature every where; but was never so bold to go beyond her: And there is a great Difference of being *Poeta* and *nimis Poeta*, if we may believe *Catullus*, as much as betwixt a modest Behaviour and Affectation. The Verse of *Chaucer*, I confess, is not Harmonious to us; but 'tis like the Eloquence of one whom *Tacitus* commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata*: They who liv'd with him, and some time after him, thought it Musical; and it continues so even in our Judgment, if compar'd with the Numbers of *Lidgate* and *Gower*, his Contemporaries:

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There is the rude Sweetness of a *Scotch* Tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, tho' not perfect. 'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who publish'd the last Edition of him; for he would make us believe the Fault is in our Ears, and that there were really Ten Syllables in a Verse where we find but Nine: But this Opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an Error, that common Sense (which is a Rule in every thing but Matters of Faith and Revelation) must convince the Reader, that Equality of Numbers in every Verse which we call *Heroick*, was either not known, or not always practis'd in *Chaucer's* Age. It were an easie Matter to produce some thousands of his Verses, which are lame for want of half a Foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no Pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say, that he liv'd in the Infancy of our Poetry, and that nothing is brought to Perfection at the first. We must be Children before we grow Men. There was an *Ennius*, and in process of Time a *Lucilius*, and a *Lucretius*; before *Virgil* and *Horace*; even after *Chaucer* there was a *Spencer*, a *Harrington*, a *Fairfax*, before *Waller* and *Denham* were in being: And our Numbers were in their Nonage till these last appear'd. I need say little of his Parentage, Life, and Fortunes: They are to be found at large in all the Editions of his Works. He was employ'd abroad, and favour'd by *Edward* the Third, *Richard* the Second, and *Henry* the Fourth, and was Poet, as I suppose, to all Three of them. In *Richard's* Time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the Rebellion of the Commons; and being Brother-in-law to *John of Gaunt*, it was no wonder if he follow'd the Fortunes of that Family; and was well with *Henry* the Fourth when he had depos'd his Predecessor. Neither is it to be admir'd, that *Henry*, who was a wise as well as a valiant Prince, who claim'd by Succession, and was sensible that his Title was not sound, but was rightfully in *Mortimer*, who had married the Heir of *Tork*; it was not to be admir'd, I say, if that great Politician should be pleas'd to have the greatest Wit of those Times in his Interests, and to be the Trumpet of his Praises. *Augustus* had given him the Example, by the

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Advice of *Mecenas*, who recommended *Virgil* and *Horace* to him; whose Praises help'd to make him Popular while he was alive, and after his Death have made him Precious to Posterity. As for the Religion of our Poet, he seems to have some little Byas towards the Opinions of *Wickliff*, after *John of Gaunt* his Patron; somewhat of which appears in the Tale of *Piers Plowman*: Yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the Vices of the Clergy in his Age: Their Pride, their Ambition, their Pomp, their Avarice, their Worldly Interest, deserv'd the Lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his *Canterbury Tales*: Neither has his Contemporary *Boccace* spar'd them. Yet both those Poëts liv'd in much esteem, with good and holy Men in Orders: For the Scandal which is given by particular Priests, reflects not on the Sacred Function. *Chaucer's Monk*, his *Chanon*, and his *Fryar*, took not from the Character of his *Good Parson*. A Satyrical Poet is the Check of the Laymen, on bad Priests. We are only to take care, that we involve not the Innocent with the Guilty in the same Condemnation. The Good cannot be too much honour'd, nor the Bad too cour'sly us'd: For the Corruption of the Best, becomes the Worst. When a Clergy-man is whipp'd, his Gown is first taken off, by which the Dignity of his Order is secur'd: If he be wrongfully accus'd, he has his Action of Slander; and 'tis at the Poet's Peril, if he transgresses the Law. But they will tell us, that all kind of Satire, tho' never so well deserv'd by particular Priests, yet brings the whole Order into Contempt. Is then the Peerage of *England* any thing dishonour'd, when a Peer suffers for his Treason? If he be libell'd, or any way defam'd, he has his *Scandalum Magnatum* to punish the Offender. They who use this kind of Argument, seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserv'd the Poet's Lash; and are less concern'd for their Publick Capacity, than for their Private: At least, there is Pride at the bottom of their Reasoning. If the Faults of Men in Orders are only to be judg'd among themselves, they are all in some sort Parties: For, since they say the Honour

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of their Order is concern'd in every Member of it, how can we be sure, that they will be impartial Judges? How far I may be allow'd to speak my Opinion in this Case, I know not : But I am sure a Dispute of this Nature caus'd Mischief in abundance betwixt a King of *England* and an Archbishop of *Canterbury*; one standing up for the Laws of his Land, and the other for the Honour (as he call'd it) of God's Church; which ended in the Murder of the Prelate, and in the whipping of his Majesty from Post to Pillar for his Penance. The Learn'd and Ingenious Dr. *Drake* has sav'd me the Labour of inquiring into the Esteem and Reverence which the Priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it : Yet I must needs say, that when a Priest provokes me without any Occasion given him, I have no Reason, unless it be the Charity of a *Christian*, to forgive him : *Prior last* is Justification sufficient in the Civil Law. If I answer him in his own Language, Self-defence, I am sure, must be allow'd me, and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp Recrimination, somewhat may be indulg'd to Human Frailty. Yet my Resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have follow'd *Chaucer* in his Character of a Holy Man, and have enlarg'd on that Subject with some Pleasure, reserving to my self the Right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of Priests, such as are more easily to be found than the Good Parson; such as have given the last Blow to Christianity in this Age, by a Practice so contrary to their Doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the mean while, I take up *Chaucer* where I left him. He must have been a Man of a most wonderful comprehensive Nature, because as it has been truly observ'd of him, he has taken into the Compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various Manners and Humours (as we now call them) of the whole *English* Nation, in his Age. Not a single Character has escap'd him. All his Pilgrims are severally distinguish'd from each other; and not only in their Inclinations, but in their very Physiognomies and Persons. *Baptista Porta* could not have describ'd their Natures better, than by the Marks

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which the Poet gives them. The Matter and Manner of their Tales, and of their Telling, are so suited to their different Educations, Humours, and Callings, that each of them would be improper in any other Mouth. Even the grave and serious Characters are distinguish'd by their several sorts of Gravity : Their Discourses are such as belong to their Age, their Calling, and their Breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his Persons are Vicious, and some Virtuous; some are unlearn'd, or (as *Chaucer* calls them) Lewd, and some are Learn'd. Even the Ribaldry of the Low Characters is different : The *Reeve*, the *Miller*, and the *Cook*, are several Men, and distinguish'd from each other, as much as the mincing Lady Priores, and the broad-speaking gap-tooth'd Wife of *Bathe*. But enough of this : There is such a Variety of Game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my Choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say according to the Proverb, that here is God's Plenty. We have our Fore-fathers and Great Grand-dames all before us, as they were in *Chaucer's* Days; their general Characters are still remaining in Mankind, and even in *England*, tho' they are call'd by other Names than those of *Monks*, and *Fryars*, and *Chanons*, and *Lady Abbesses*, and *Nuns* : For Mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, tho' every thing is alter'd. May I have leave to do my self the Justice, (since my Enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good Poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a Moral Man) may I have leave, I say, to inform my Reader, that I have confin'd my Choice to such Tales of *Chaucer*, as savour nothing of Immodesty. If I had desir'd more to please than to instruct, the *Reeve*, the *Miller*, the *Shipman*, the *Merchant*, the *Summoner*, and above all, the *Wife of Bathe*, in the Prologue to her Tale, would have procur'd me as many Friends and Readers, as there are *Beaux* and Ladies of Pleasure in the Town. But I will no more offend against Good Manners: I am sensible as I ought to be of the Scandal I have given by my loose Writings; and make what Reparation I am able, by

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this Publick Acknowledgement. If any thing of this Nature, or of Profaneness, be crept into these Poems, I am so far from defending it, that I disown it. *Totum hoc indictum volo.* Chaucer makes another manner of Apology for his broad-speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our Country-man, in the end of his Characters, before the *Canterbury Tales*, thus excuses the Ribaldry, which is very gross, in many of his Novels.

*But first, I pray you, of your courtesy,
That ye ne arrette it nought my villany,
Though that I plainly speak in this mattere
To tellen you her words, and eke her chere :
Ne though I speak her words properly,
For this ye knowen as well as I,
Who shall tellen a tale after a man
He mote rehearse as nye, as ever He can :
Everich word of it been in his charge,
All speke he, never so rudely, ne large.
Or else he mote tellen his tale untrue,
Or feine things, or find words new :
He may not spare, altho' he were his brother,
He mote as well say o word as another.
Christ spake himself full broad in holy Writ,
And well I wote no Villany is it.
Eke Plato saith, who so can him rede,
The words mote been Cousin to the dede.*

Yet if a Man should have enquir'd of Boccace or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing such Characters, where obscene Words were proper in their Mouths, but very undecent to be heard; I know not what Answer they could have made: For that Reason, such Tales shall be left untold by me. You have here a *Specimen* of Chaucer's Language, which is so obsolete, that his Sense is scarce to be understood; and you have likewise more than one Example of his unequal Numbers, which were mention'd before. Yet many of his Verses consist of Ten Syllables, and the Words not much behind our present *English*: As
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for Example, these two Lines, in the Description of the Carpenter's Young Wife:

*Winning she was, as is a jolly Colt,
Long as a Mast, and upright as a Bolt.*

I have almost done with *Chaucer*, when I have answer'd some Objections relating to my present Work. I find some People are offended that I have turn'd these Tales into modern *English*; because they think them unworthy of my Pains, and look on *Chaucer* as a dry, old-fashion'd Wit, not worth receiving. I have often heard the late Earl of *Leicester* say, that Mr. *Cowley* himself was of that Opinion; who having read him over at my Lord's Request, declar'd he had no Taste of him. I dare not advance my Opinion against the Judgment of so great an Author: But I think it fair, however, to leave the Decision to the Publick: Mr. *Cowley* was too modest to set up for a Dictator; and being shock'd perhaps with his old Style, never examin'd into the depth of his good Sense. *Chaucer*, I confess, is a rough Diamond, and must first be polish'd ere he shines. I deny not likewise, that living in our early Days of Poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but sometimes mingles trivial Things, with those of greater Moment. Sometimes also, tho' not often, he runs riot, like *Ovid*, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great Wits, besides *Chaucer*, whose Fault is their Excess of Conceits, and those ill sorted. An Author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observ'd this Redundancy in *Chaucer*, (as it is an easie Matter for a Man of ordinary Parts to find a Fault in one greater) I have not ty'd my self to a Literal Translation, but have often omitted what I judg'd unnecessary, or not of Dignity enough to appear in the Company of better Thoughts. I have presum'd farther in some Places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my Author was deficient, and had not given his Thoughts their true Lustre, for want of Words in the Beginning of our Language. And to this I was the more embolden'd, because (if I may be permitted to say it of my self) I found I had a

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Soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same Studies. Another Poet, in another Age, may take the same Liberty with my Writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve Correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the Sense of *Chaucer*, which was lost or mangled in the Errors of the Press: Let this Example suffice at present in the Story of *Palamon* and *Arcite*, where the Temple of *Diana* is describ'd, you find these Verses, in all the Editions of our Author:

*There saw I Danè turned unto a Tree,
I mean not the Goddess Diane,
But Venus Daughter, which that bight Danè.*

Which after a little Consideration I knew was to be reform'd into this Sense, that *Daphne* the Daughter of *Peneus* was turn'd into a Tree. I durst not make thus bold with *Ovid*, lest some future *Milbourn* should arise, and say, I varied from my Author, because I understood him not.

But there are other Judges who think I ought not to have translated *Chaucer* into *English*, out of a quite contrary Notion: They suppose there is a certain Veneration due to his old Language; and that it is little less than Profanation and Sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of Opinion, that somewhat of his good Sense will suffer in this Transfusion; and much of the Beauty of his Thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more Grace in their old Habit. Of this Opinion was that excellent Person, whom I mention'd, the late Earl of *Leicester*, who valu'd *Chaucer* as much as Mr. *Cowley* despis'd him. My Lord dissuaded me from this Attempt, (for I was thinking of it some Years before his Death) and his Authority prevail'd so far with me, as to defer my Undertaking while he liv'd, in deference to him: Yet my Reason was not convinc'd with what he urg'd against it. If the first End of a Writer be to be understood, then as his Language grows obsolete, his Thoughts must grow obscure, *multa renascuntur quæ nunc cecidere; cadentque quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus, quem penes arbitrium est & jus & norma loquendi*. When an ancient Word for its

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Sound and Significancy deserves to be reviv'd, I have that reasonable Veneration for Antiquity, to restore it. All beyond this is Superstition. Words are not like Land-marks, so sacred as never to be remov'd: Customs are chang'd, and even Statutes are silently repeal'd, when the Reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other Part of the Argument, that his Thoughts will lose of their original Beauty, by the Innovation of Words; in the first place, not only their Beauty, but their Being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present Case. I grant, that something must be lost in all Transfusion, that is, in all Translations, but the Sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maim'd, when it is scarce intelligible; and that but to a few. How few are there who can read *Chaucer*, so as to understand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with less Profit, and no Pleasure. 'Tis not for the Use of some old *Saxon* Friends, that I have taken these Pains with him: Let them neglect my Version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understand Sense and Poetry, as well as they; when that Poetry and Sense is put into Words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what Beauties I lose in some Places, I give to others which had them not originally; But in this I may be partial to my self; let the Reader judge, and I submit to his Decision. Yet I think I have just Occasion to complain of them, who because they understand *Chaucer*, would deprive the greater Part of their Countrymen of the same Advantage, and hoord him up, as Misers do their Grandam Gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no Man ever had, or can have, a greater Veneration for *Chaucer*, than my self. I have translated some part of his Works, only that I might perpetuate his Memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my Countrymen. If I have alter'd him any where for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him: *Facile est inventis addere*, is no great Commendation; and I am not so vain

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to think I have deserv'd a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one Remark: A Lady of my Acquaintance, who keeps a kind of Correspondence with some Authors of the Fair Sex in *France*, has been inform'd by them, that *Mademoiselle de Scudery*, who is as old as *Sibyl*, and inspir'd like her by the same God of Poetry, is at this time translating *Chaucer* into modern *French*. From which I gather, that he has been formerly translated into the old *Provençal*, (for how she should come to understand old *English* I know not.) But the Matter of Fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in 't like Fatality; that after certain Periods of Time, the Fame and Memory of Great Wits should be renew'd, as *Chaucer* is both in *France* and *England*. If this be wholly Chance, 'tis extraordinary; and I dare not call it more, for fear of being tax'd with Superstition.

Boccace comes last to be consider'd, who living in the same Age with *Chaucer*, had the same Genius, and follow'd the same Studies: Both writ Novels, and each of them cultivated his Mother-Tongue: But the greatest Resemblance of our two Modern Authors being in their familiar Style, and pleasing way of relating Comical Adventures, I may pass it over, because I have translated nothing from *Boccace* of that Nature. In the serious Part of Poetry, the Advantage is wholly on *Chaucer's* Side; for tho' the *Englishman* has borrow'd many Tales from the *Italian*, yet it appears, that those of *Boccace* were not generally of his own making, but taken from Authors of former Ages, and by him only modell'd: So that what there was of Invention in either of them, may be judg'd equal. But *Chaucer* has refin'd on *Boccace*, and has mended the Stories which he has borrow'd, in his way of telling; though Prose allows more Liberty of Thought, and the Expression is more easie, when unconfin'd by Numbers. Our Countryman carries Weight, and yet wins the Race at disadvantage. I desire not the Reader should take my Word; and therefore I will set two of their Discourses on the same Subject, in the same Light, for every Man to judge betwixt them. I translated *Chaucer* first, and amongst the

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rest, pitch'd on the Wife of *Bath's* Tale; not daring, as I have said, to adventure on her Prologue; because 'tis too licentious: There *Chaucer* introduces an old Woman of mean Parentage, whom a youthful Knight of noble Blood was forc'd to marry, and consequently loath'd her: The Crone being in bed with him on the wedding Night, and finding his Aversion, endeavours to win his Affection by Reason, and speaks a good Word for her self, (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollifie the sullen Bridegroom. She takes her Topicks from the Benefits of Poverty, the Advantages of old Age and Ugliness, the Vanity of Youth, and the silly Pride of Ancestry and Titles without inherent Virtue, which is the true Nobility. When I had clos'd *Chaucer*, I return'd to *Ovid*, and translated some more of his Fables; and by this time had so far forgotten the Wife of *Bath's* Tale, that when I took up *Boccace*, unawares I fell on the same Argument of preferring Virtue to Nobility of Blood, and Titles, in the Story of *Sigismonda*; which I had certainly avoided for the Resemblance of the two Discourses, if my Memory had not fail'd me. Let the Reader weigh them both; and if he thinks me partial to *Chaucer*, 'tis in him to right *Boccace*.

I prefer in our Countryman, far above all his other Stories, the Noble Poem of *Palamon* and *Arcite*, which is of the *Epique* kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the *Ilias* or the *Aeneis*: the Story is more pleasing than either of them, the Manners as perfect, the Diction as poetical, the Learning as deep and various; and the Disposition full as artful: only it includes a greater length of Time, as taking up seven Years at least; but *Aristotle* has left undecided the Duration of the Action; which yet is easily reduc'd into the Compass of a Year, by a Narration of what preceded the Return of *Palamon* to *Athens*. I had thought for the Honour of our Nation, and more particularly for his, whose Laurel, tho' unworthy, I have worn after him, that this Story was of *English* Growth, and *Chaucer's* own: But I was undeceiv'd by *Boccace*; for casually looking on the End of his seventh *Giornata*, I found *Diogene* (under

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which Name he shadows himself) and *Fiametta* (who represents his Mistress, the natural Daughter of *Robert King of Naples*) of whom these Words are spoken. *Dioneo e Fiametta gran pezza cantarono insieme d' Arcita, e di Palamone*: by which it appears that this Story was written before the time of *Boccace*; but the Name of its Author being wholly lost, *Chaucer* is now become an Original; and I question not but the Poem has receiv'd many Beauties by passing through his Noble Hands. Besides this Tale, there is another of his own Invention, after the manner of the *Provençals*, call'd *The Flower and the Leaf*; with which I was so particularly pleas'd, both for the Invention and the Moral; that I cannot hinder my self from recommending it to the Reader.

As a Corollary to this Preface, in which I have done Justice to others, I owe somewhat to my self: not that I think it worth my time to enter the Lists with one *M—*, and one *B—*, but barely to take notice, that such Men there are who have written scurrilously against me without any Provocation. *M—*, who is in Orders, pretends amongst the rest this Quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on Priesthood; if I have, I am only to ask Pardon of good Priests, and am afraid his Part of the Reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an Adversary. I condemn him, too much to enter into Competition with him. His own Translations of *Virgil* have answer'd his Criticisms on mine. If (as they say, he has declar'd in Print) he prefers the Version of *Ogilby* to mine, the World has made him the same Complement: For 'tis agreed on all hands, that he writes even below *Ogilby*: That, you will say, is not easily to be done; but what cannot *M—* bring about? I am satisfy'd however, that while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst Poet of the Age. It looks as if I had desir'd him underhand to write so ill against me: But upon my honest Word I have not brib'd him to do me this Service, and am wholly guiltless of his Pamphlet. 'Tis true, I should be glad, if I could persuade him to continue his good Offices, and write such another Critique on any

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thing of mine : For I find by Experience he has a great Stroke with the Reader, when he condemns any of my Poems, to make the World have a better Opinion of them. He has taken some Pains with my Poetry ; but no body will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the Church (as he affirms, but which was never in my Thoughts) I should have had more Sense, if not more Grace, than to have turn'd my self out of my Benefice by writing Libels on my Parishioners. But his Account of my Manners and my Principles, are of a Piece with his Cavils and his Poetry : And so I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician, I hear his Quarrel to me is, that I was the Author of *Abfalom* and *Achitophel*, which he thinks is a little hard on his Fanatique Patrons in *London*.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two Poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the Dead : And therefore Peace be to the *Manes* of his *Arthurs*. I will only say that it was not for this Noble Knight that I drew the Plan of an Epick Poem on King *Arthur* in my Preface to the Translation of *Juvenal*. The Guardian Angels of Kingdoms were Machines too ponderous for him to manage ; and therefore he rejected them as *Dares* did the Whirlbats of *Eryx* when they were thrown before him by *Enel-lus* : Yet from that Preface he plainly took his Hint : For he began immediately upon the Story ; tho' he had the Baseness not to acknowledge his Benefactor ; but instead of it, to traduce me in a Libel.

I shall say the less of Mr. *Collier*, because in many Things he has tax'd me justly ; and I have pleaded Guilty to all Thoughts and Expressions of mine, which can be truly argu'd of Obscenity, Profaneness, or Immorality ; and retract them. If he be my Enemy, let him triumph ; if he be my Friend, as I have given him no Personal Occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my Repentance. It becomes me not to draw my Pen in the Defence of a bad Cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that in many Places he has perverted my Meaning by his Glosses ; and interpreted my Words in-

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to Blasphemy and Baudry, of which they were not guilty. besides that, he is too much given to Horse-play in his Rail-
lery; and comes to Battel, like a Dictator from the Plough. I will not say, *The Zeal of God's House has eaten him up*; But I am sure it has devour'd some Part of his good Man-
ners and Civility. It might also be doubted, whether it were altogether Zeal, which prompted him to this rough manner of Proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his Function to rake into the Rubbish of Ancient and Modern Plays; a Divine might have employ'd his Pains to better purpose, than in the Nastiness of *Plautus* and *Aristophanes*; whose Examples, as they excuse not me, so it might be possibly suppos'd, that he read them not without some Pleasure. They who have written Commentaries on those Poets, or on *Horace*, *Juvenal*, and *Marshall*, have explain'd some Vices, which without their Interpretation had been unknown to Modern Times. Neither has he judg'd im-
partially betwixt the former Age and us.

There is more Baudry in one Play of *Fletcher's*, call'd *The Custom of the Country*, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the Stage in my remembrance. Are the Times so much more reform'd now, than they were Five and twenty Years ago? If they are, I congratulate the Amendment of our Morals. But I am not to prejudice the Cause of my Fellow-Poets, tho' I abandon my own Defence: They have some of them answer'd for themselves, and neither they nor I can think Mr. *Collier* so formidable an Enemy, that we should shun him. He has lost Ground at the latter end of the Day, by pursuing his Point too far, like the Prince of *Condé* at the Battel of *Senneph*: From Immoral Plays, to No Plays; *ab abusu ad usum, non valet consequentia*. But being a Party, I am not to erect my self into a Judge. As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such Scoundrels, that they deserve not the least Notice to be taken of them. B—— and M—— are only distinguish'd from the Crowd, by being remember'd to their Infamy.

— *Demetri, Teque Tigelli*
Discipularum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.



I. To Her GRACE the
Dutchess of ORMOND,
With the following POEM of
PALAMON *and* ARCITE,
From CHAUCER.

MADAM,



*HE Bard who first adorn'd our Na-
tive Tongue*

*Tun'd to his British Lyre this ancient
Song :*

*Which Homer might without a Blush rehearse,
And leaves a doubtful Palm in Virgil's Verse:
He match'd their Beauties, where they most excell;
Of Love sung better, and of Arms as well.*

*Vouchsafe, Illustrious Ormond, to behold
What Pow'r the Charms of Beauty had of old;
Nor wonder if such Deeds of Arms were done,
Inspir'd by two fair Eyes, that sparkled like your own.*

TO HER GRACE the

*If Chaucer by the best Idea wrought,
And Poets can divine each others Thought,
The fairest Nymph before his Eyes be set;
And then the fairest was Plantagenet;
Who three contending Princes made her Prize,
And rul'd the Rival-Nations with her Eyes;
Who left Immortal Trophies of her Fame,
And to the Noblest Order gave the Name.*

*Like Her, of equal Kindred to the Throne,
You keep her Conquests, and extend your own:
As when the Stars, in their Etherial Race,
At length have roll'd around the Liquid Space,
At certain Periods they resume their Place,
From the same Point of Heav'n their Course advance,
And move in Measures of their former Dance;
Thus, after length of Ages, she returns,
Restor'd in You, and the same Place adorns;
Or You perform her Office in the Sphere,
Born of her Blood, and make a new Platonick Year.*

*O true Plantagenet, O Race Divine,
(For Beauty still is fatal to the Line,)
Had Chaucer liv'd that Angel-Face to view,
Sure he had drawn his Emily from You:*

DUTCHESS of ORMOND.

*Or had You liv'd, to judge the doubtful Right,
Your Noble Palamon had been the Knight:
And Conqu'ring Theseus from his Side had sent
Your gen'rous Lord, to guide the Theban Government.*

*Time shall accomplish that; and I shall see
A Palamon in Him, in You an Emily.*

*Already have the Fates your Path prepar'd,
And sure Presage your future Sway declar'd:
When Westward, like the Sun, You took your Way,
And from benighted Britain bore the Day,
Blue Triton gave the Signal from the Shore,
The ready Nereids heard, and swam before
To smooth the Seas; a soft Etesian Gale
But just inspir'd, and gently swell'd the Sail;
Portuntus took his Turn, whose ample Hand
Heav'd up the lighten'd Keel, and sunk the Sand,
And steer'd the sacred Vessel safe to Land.
The Land, if not restrain'd, had met Your Way,
Projected out a Neck, and jutt'd to the Sea.
Hibernia, prostrate at Your Feet, ador'd,
In You, the Pledge of her expected Lord;
Due to her Isle; a venerable Name;
His Father and his Grandfire known to Fame:*

TO HER GRACE the

*Aw'd by that House, accusom'd to command,
The sturdy Kerns in due Subjection stand;
Nor bear the Reigns in any Foreign Hand.*

}

*At Your Approach, they crowded to the Port;
And scarcely Landed, You create a Court:
As Ormond's Harbinger, to You they run;
For Venus is the Promise of the Sun.*

*The Wastes of Civil Wars, their Towns destroy'd,
Pales unhonour'd, Ceres unemploy'd,
Were all forgot; and one Triumphant Day
Wip'd all the Tears of three Campaigns away.
Blood, Rapines, Massacres, were cheaply bought,
So mighty Recompence Your Beauty brought.*

*As when the Dove returning, bore the Mark
Of Earth restor'd to the long-lab'ring Ark;
The Relicks of Mankind, secure of Rest,
Op'd ev'ry Window to receive the Guest,
And the fair Bearer of the Message blest'd;
So, when You came, with loud repeated Cries,
The Nation took an Omen from your Eyes,
And God advanc'd his Rainbow in the Skies,
To sign inviolable Peace restor'd;
The Saints with solemn Shouts proclaim'd the new*

}

}

[accord.

DUTCHESS of ORMOND.

*When at Your second Coming You appear,
(For I fortell that Millenary Year)
The sharpen'd Share shall vex the Soil no more,
But Earth unbidden shall produce her Store:
The Land shall laugh, the circling Ocean smile,
And Heav'n's Indulgence bless the Holy Isle.*

*Heav'n from all Ages has reserv'd for You
That happy Clyme, which Venom never knew;
Or if it had been there, Your Eyes alone
Have Power to chase all Poyson, but their own.*

*Now in this Interval, which Fate has cast
Betwixt Your Future Glories, and Your Past,
This Pause of Pow'r, 'tis Ireland's Hour to mourn;
While England celebrates Your safe Return,
By which You seem the Seasons to command,
And bring our Summers back to their forsaken Land.*

*The Vanquish'd Isle our Leisure must attend,
Till the Fair Blessing we vouchsafe to send;
Nor can we spare You long, though often we may lend.
The Dove was twice employ'd abroad, before
The World was dry'd; and she return'd no more.*

*Nor dare we trust so soft a Messenger,
New from her Sickness, to that Northern Air;*

TO HER GRACE the

*Rest here a while, Your Lustre to restore,
That they may see You as You shone before ;
For yet, th' Eclipse not wholly past, You wade
Thro' some Remains, and Dimness of a Shade.*

*A Subject in his Prince may claim a Right,
Nor suffer him with Strength impair'd to fight ;
Till Force returns, his Ardour we restrain,
And curb his Warlike Wish to cross the Main.*

*Now past the Danger, let the Learn'd begin
Th' Enquiry, where Disease could enter in ;
How those malignant Atoms forc'd their Way, ^{Prey?}
What in the faultless Frame they found to make their
Where ev'ry Element was weigh'd so well,
That Heav'n alone, who mix'd the Mass, could tell }
Which of the Four Ingredients could rebel ;
And where, imprison'd in so sweet a Cage,
A Soul might well be pleas'd to pass an Age.*

*And yet the fine Materials made it weak ;
Porcelain, by being Pure, is apt to break :
Ev'n to Your Breast the Sickness durst aspire ;
And forc'd from that fair Temple to retire, }
Profanely set the Holy Place on Fire.*

DUTCHESS of ORMOND.

*In vain Your Lord like young Vespasian mourn'd,
When the fierce Flames the Sanctuary burn'd:*

And I prepar'd to pay in Verses rude

A most detested Act of Gratitude:

*Ev'n this had been Your Elegy, which now
Is offer'd for Your Health, the Table of my Vow.*

*Your Angel sure our Morley's Mind inspir'd,
To find the Remedy Your Ill requir'd;*

*As once the Macedon, by Jove's Decree,
Was taught to dream an Herb for Ptolomee:*

Or Heav'n, which had such Over-cost bestow'd,

As scarce it could afford to Flesh and Blood,

So lik'd the Frame, he would not work anew,

To save the Charges of another You.

Or by his middle Science did he steer,

And saw some great contingent Good appear,

Well worth a Miracle to keep You here:

And for that End, preserv'd the precious Mould,

Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;

And meditated in his better Mind

An Heir from You, who may redeem the failing Kind.

*Bless'd be the Pow'r which has at once restor'd
The Hopes of lost Succession to Your Lord,*

TO HER GRACE, &c.

*Joy to the first and last of each Degree,
Virtue to Courts, and what I long'd to see,
To You the Graces, and the Muse to me.*

}

*O Daughter of the Rose, whose Cheeks unite
The differing Titles of the Red and White;
Who Heav'n's alternate Beauty well display,
The Blush of Morning, and the Milky Way;
Whose Face is Paradise, but fenc'd from Sin:
For God in either Eye has plac'd a Cherubin.*

*All is Your Lord's alone; ev'n absent, He
Employs the Care of Chast Penelope.*

*For him You waste in Tears Your Widow'd Hours,
For him Your curious Needle paints the Flow'rs;
Such Works of Old Imperial Dames were taught;
Such, for Ascanius, fair Elisa wrought.*

*The soft Recesses of Your Hours improve
The Three fair Pledges of Your Happy Love:
All other Parts of Pious Duty done,
You owe Your Ormond nothing but a Son;
To fill in future Times his Father's Place,
And wear the Garter of his Mother's Race.*

PALA-



P A L A M O N

A N D

A R C I T . E :

O R , T H E

K N I G H T ' S T A L E .

I N T H R E E B O O K S .

B O O K I .



N Days of old, there liv'd, of mighty
Fame

A valiant Prince; and *Theseus* was
his Name:

A Chief, who more in Feats of Arms excell'd
The Rising nor the Setting Sun beheld,

B

Is this the Welcome of my worthy Deeds,
To meet my Triumph in Ill-omen'd Weeds?
Or envy you my Praise, and would destroy
With Grief my Pleasures, and pollute my Joy?
Or are you injur'd, and demand Relief?
Name your Request, and I will ease your Grief.

The most in Years of all the Mourning Train
Began ; (but swooned first away for Pain)
Then scarce recover'd, spoke : Nor envy we
Thy great Renown, nor grudge thy Victory ;
'Tis thine, O King, th' Afflicted to redress,
And Fame has fill'd the World with thy Success :
We wretched Women sue for that alone,
Which of thy Goodness is refus'd to none :
Let fall some Drops of Pity on our Grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve Relief :
For none of us, who now thy Grace implore,
But held the Rank of Sovereign Queen before ;
Till, thanks to giddy Chance, which never bears
That Mortal Bliss should last for length of Years,
She cast us headlong from our high Estate,
And here in hope of thy Return we wait :

And long have waited in the Temple nigh,
Built to the gracious Goddess *Clemency*.
But rev'rence thou the Pow'r whose Name it bears,
Relieve th' Oppress'd, and wipe the Widows Tears.
I, wretched I, have other Fortune seen,
The Wife of *Capaneus*, and once a Queen:
At *Thebes* he fell; curst be the fatal Day!
And all the rest thou seest in this Array,
To make their Moan, their Lords in Battel lost
Before that Town besieg'd by our Confed'rate Host:
But *Creon*, old and impious, who commands
The *Theban* City, and usurps the Lands,
Denies the Rites of Fun'ral Fires to those
Whose breathless Bodies yet he calls his Foes.
Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a Heap they lie;
Such is their Fate, and such his Tyranny;
No Friend has leave to bear away the Dead,
But with their Lifeless Limbs his Hounds are fed:
At this she skriek'd aloud, the mournful Train
Echo'd her Grief, and grov'ling on the Plain
With Groans, and Hands upheld, to move his Mind,
Besought his Pity to their helpless Kind!

The Prince was touch'd, his Tears began to flow,
And, as his tender Heart would break in two,
He sigh'd; and could not but their Fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.

Then lightly from his lofty Steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant Crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
That by the Faith which Knights to Knighthood
And what e'er else to Chivalry belongs, [bore,
He would not cease, till he reveng'd their Wrongs:
That *Greece* shou'd see perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel *Creon* find his just Reward.

He said no more, but, shunning all Delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd *Athens* on his Way:
But left his Sister and his Queen behind,
And wav'd his Royal Banner in the Wind:
Where in an *Argent* Field the God of War
Was drawn triumphant on his Iron Carr;
Red was his Sword, and Shield, and whole Attire,
And all the Godhead seem'd to glow with Fire;
Ev'n the Ground glitter'd where the Standard flew,
And the green Grass was dy'd to sanguine Hue,

High on his pointed Lance his Pennon bore
His *Cretan* Fight, the conquer'd *Minotaure*:
The Soldiers shout around with gen'rous Rage,
And in that Victory, their own presage.
He prais'd their Ardour: inly pleas'd to see
His Host the Flow'r of *Grecian* Chivalry.
All Day he march'd; and all th' ensuing Night;
And saw the City with returning Light.
The Process of the War I need not tell,
How *Theseus* conquer'd, and how *Creon* fell:
Or after, how by Storm the Walls were won,
Or how the Victor sack'd and burn'd the Town:
How to the Ladies he restor'd again
The Bodies of their Lords in Battel slain:
And with what ancient Rites they were interr'd;
All these to fitter Time shall be deferr'd:
I spare the Widows Tears, their woful Cries
And Howling at their Husbands Obsequies;
How *Theseus* at these Fun'rals did assist, [miss'd.
And with what Gifts the mourning Dames dis-
Thus when the Victor Chief had *Creon* slain,
And conquer'd *Thebes*, he pitch'd upon the Plain

His mighty Camp, and when the Day return'd,
The Country wasted, and the Hamlets burn'd;
And left the Pillagers, to Rapine bred,
Without Controul to strip and spoil the Dead:

There, in a Heap of Slain, among the rest
Two youthful Knights they found beneath a Load
oppress'd

Of slaughter'd Foes, whom first to Death they sent,
The Trophies of their Strength, a bloody Monument.
Both fair, and both of Royal Blood they seem'd,
Whom Kinsmen to the Crown the Heralds deem'd;
That Day in equal Arms they fought for Fame;
Their Swords, their Shields, their Surcoats were
the same.

Cloſe by each other laid they preſs'd the Ground,
Their manly Boſoms pierc'd with many a grievſly
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were, [Wound;
But ſome faint Signs of feeble Life appear:
The wandering Breath was on the Wing to part,
Weak was the Pulse, and hardly heav'd the Heart,
Theſe two were Siſters Sons; and *Arcite* one,
Much fam'd in Fields, with valiant *Palamon*.

From These their costly Arms the Spoilers rent,
And softly both convey'd to *Theſeus'* Tent;
Whom known of *Creon's* Line, and cur'd with care,
He to his City ſent as Pris'ners of the War,
Hopeleſs of Ranſom, and condemn'd to lie
In Durance, doom'd a lingring Death to die.

This done, he march'd away with warlike Sound,
And to his *Athens* turn'd with Laurels crown'd,
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and
more renown'd.

But in a Tow'r, and never to be loos'd,
The woful captive Kinſmen are inclos'd;

Thus Year by Year they paſs, and Day by Day,
Till once ('twas on the Morn of chearful *May*)
The young *Emilia*, fairer to be ſeen
Than the fair Lilly on the Flow'ry Green,
More freſh than *May* her ſelf in Bloſſoms new
(For with the Roſie Colour ſtrove her Hue)
Wak'd aſher Cuſtom was before the Day,
To do th' Obſervance due to ſprightly *May*:
For ſprightly *May* commands our Youth to keep
The Vigils of her Night, and breaks their fluggard
Sleep;

Each gentle Breast with kindly Warmth she moves;
Inspires new Flames, revives extinguish'd Loves;
In this Remembrance *Emily* ere Day
Arose, and dress'd her self in rich Array;
Fresh as the Month, and as the Morning fair:
Adown her Shoulders fell her length of Hair:
A Ribband did the braided Tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wanton'd in the Wind:
Aurora had but newly chas'd the Night,
And purpled o'er the Sky with blushing Light,
When to the Garden-walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in Cool of Day,
And offer Maiden Vows in Honour of the *May*. }

At ev'ry Turn, she made a little Stand,
And thrust among the Thorns her Lilly Hand
To draw the Rose, and ev'ry Rose she drew
She shook the Stalk, and brush'd away the Dew:
Then party-colour'd Flow'rs of white and red
She wove, to make a Garland for her Head:
This done, she sung and caroll'd out so clear,
That Men and Angels might rejoice to hear.
Ev'n wondring *Philomel* forgot to sing;
And learn'd from Her to welcome in the Spring.

The Tow'r, of which before was mention made,
Within whose Keep the Captive Knights were laid,
Built of a large Extent, and strong withal,
Was one Partition of the Palace Wall:

The Garden was enclos'd within the Square
Where young *Emilia* took the Morning-Air.

It happen'd *Palamon* the Pris'ner Knight,
Restless for Woe, arose before the Light,
And with his Jaylor's leave desir'd to breathe
An Air more wholesom than the Damps beneath.
This granted, to the Tow'r he took his Way,
Cheer'd with the Promise of a glorious Day:

Then cast a languishing Regard around,
And saw with hateful Eyes the Temples crown'd }
With golden Spires, and all the Hostile Ground. }

He sigh'd; and turn'd his Eyes, because he knew
'Twas but a larger Jayl he had in view:

Then look'd below, and from the Castle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing Sight:

The Garden, which before he had not seen, }
In Spring's new Livery clad of White and Green, }
Fresh Flow'rs in wide *Parterres*, and shady }
Walks between. }

This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with Arms across
He stood, reflecting on his Country's Loss;
Himself an Object of the Publick Scorn,
And often wish'd he never had been born.
At last (for so his Destiny requir'd)
With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,
He thro' a little Window cast his Sight,
Tho' thick of Bars, that gave a scanty Light:
But ev'n that Glimmering serv'd him to descry
Th' inevitable Charms of *Emily*.

Scarce had he seen, but seiz'd with sudden Smart,
Stung to the Quick, he felt it at his Heart;
Struck blind with overpow'ring Light he stood,
Then started back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud:

Young *Arcite* heard; and up he ran with haste,
To help his Friend, and in his Arms embrac'd;
And ask'd him why he look'd so deadly wan,
And whence, and how his change of Cheer began?
Or who had done th' Offence? But if, said he,
Your Grief alone is hard Captivity;
For Love of Heav'n, with Patience undergo
A cureless Ill, since Fate will have it so:

So flood our *Horoscope* in Chains to lie,
And *Saturn* in the Dungeon of the Sky,
Or other baleful Aspect, rul'd our Birth,
When all the friendly Stars were under Earth:
Whate'er betides, by Destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like Men, than vainly seek to shun.
Nor of my Bonds, said *Palamon* again,
Nor of unhappy Planets I complain;
But when my mortal Anguish caus'd my Cry,
That Moment I was hurt thro' either Eye;
Pierc'd with a Random-shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible Decay:
A Glance of some new Goddess gave the Wound,
Whom, like *Acteon*, unaware I found.
Look how she walks along yon shady Space,
Not *Juno* moves with more Majestick Grace;
And all the *Cyprian* Queen is in her Face. }
If thou art *Venus*, (for thy Charms confess
That Face was form'd in Heav'n) nor art thou less;
Disguis'd in Habit, undisguis'd in Shape,
O help us Captives from our Chains to 'scape;
But if our Doom be past in Bonds to lie
For Life, and in a loathsom Dungeon die;

Then be thy Wrath appeas'd with our Disgrace,
 And shew Compassion to the *Theban* Race,
 Oppress'd by Tyrant Pow'r! While yet he spoke,
Arcite on *Emily* had fix'd his Look;

The fatal Dart a ready Passage found,
 And deep within his Heart infix'd the Wound:
 So that if *Palamon* were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:

Then from his inmost Soul he sigh'd, and said,
 The Beauty I behold has struck me dead:
 Unknowingly she strikes; and kills by Chance;
 Poyson is in her Eyes, and Death in ev'ry Glance.
 O, I must ask; nor ask alone, but move
 Her Mind to Mercy, or must die for Love:

Thus *Arcite*: And thus *Palamon* replies,
 (Eager his Tone, and ardent were his Eyes.)
 Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting Vein?
 Jesting, said *Arcite*, suits but ill with Pain.
 It suits far worse (said *Palamon* again,
 And bent his Brows) with Men who Honour weigh,
 Their Faith to break, their Friendship to betray;
 But worst with Thee, of Noble Lineage born,
 My Kinsman, and in Arms my Brother sworn.