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THE

INFANT VISION

OF

SHAKSPEARE;

WITH

AN APOSTROPHE TO THE IMMORTAL BARD,

AND OTHER

POEMS.

BY

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HARRISON AND CO. N^o 18, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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THE
INFANT VISION
OF
SHAKSPEARE.

ON Avon's banks, as Nature lay,
And ey'd th' enchanting scene around;
Transported at the rich survey,
She smil'd, and bless'd the hallow'd ground.
For here each incense-breathing flow'r,
The goddess lov'd, spontaneous grew;
Each herb of salutary pow'r,
Each bloom of plain or mingled hue.

Now to her fond, maternal breast,
Shakspeare, her darling child, she folds;
Then gently lulls him into rest,
And weaves the vision he beholds.

The Globe itself a toy appears,
That's to his infant grasp consign'd;
Each spot he views, devoid of fears,
And sports at will with all mankind.

His eye, at one excursive glance,
Takes in each clime, from pole to pole;
He breathes! the seas their waves advance,
Or back their world of waters roll.

It's shades, in vain, the forest spreads,
And mountains pil'd on mountains rise;
The wildest maze with ease he threads,
And all that they would hide descries.

Each craft of man's insidious race,
Hid e'en in labyrinths of mind;
His gloom-dispelling eye could trace,
And ev'ry purpos'd project find.

Oft smiles he at the threat'ning train
Of bold designs the pigmies lay;
Assur'd each artifice is vain,
A breath shall blow them all away.

And oft, for mirth of fellow men,
Some craft-caught villain he displays;
Drags the lewd monster from his den,
And holds him to the public gaze.

But tho' the world's at his command,
And good or ill he may bestow;
Ne'er does he, with a wayward hand,
Establish vice, or worth o'erthrow.

E'en where, enthron'd, he guilt espies,
 Spite of the vice-concealing crown;
Enrag'd he at the culprit flies,
 And plucks the little despot down.

Yet, Justice, e'en thy blushing blade,
 Ne'er could his eye unweeping view;
For tho' each crime he saw display'd,
 He saw each foul temptation too.

By him angelick forms are seen,
 That round the earth in æther play;
And dæmons vile, in shapes obscene,
 That scare the modest sprites away.

The visage of the virgin moon
 Swift flies before the hideous sight;
And puts, e'en at her lustrous noon,
 The nimble-footed fays to flight.

For while they trip their airy round,
To dulcet pipe, in measures gay;
Sudden they miss the charming sound,
And vanish, as at dawn of day.

And, lo! the livid lightnings glare;
Hark! groaning Nature's thunder roars:
Rude havock fills her seas, her air,
And treach'rous earthquake whelms her shores.

Then is the world involv'd in gloom,
No ray of heav'nly light appears;
The fiends prevail, man meets his doom,
Till torrents pour of angel-tears.

And now the morn of mercy breaks,
And now the imps of darkness fly;
Nor wait to see repentant cheeks
Depicted in the crimson sky.

Yes, Shakspeare! Nature's richest stores
To thee, her son, were fondly shewn;
And while thine eye her wealth explores,
She bids thee make it all thy own.

For well she knew, her darling child
Would nobly act a brother's part;
And what he saw, in visions wild,
Give man in cultur'd scenes of art.

APOSTROPHE TO SHAKSPEARE.

DARLING of Nature! Britain's proudest boast,
And e'en the world's chief pride! since ne'er on earth,
In latter, or in times remote, was found
Mere mortal man who might with thee compare,
For science infinite in all her works,
And skill not less unbounded to convey
Thy varied knowledge to th' opposing heart,
Spite of each barrier rude, of ablest proof,
In rough and stubborn frames, with power malign,
To stem the intellectual flood, that flow'd
Copious from thee, bless'd Fount! and still shall flow,
In those rich pages, chaste satellites,
Bequeath'd the weeping earth, thyself withdrawn,
To shed mild beams of thy reflected lustre
O'er the dark regions of man's mental gloom;
While sun and moon their heav'nly influence pour,

Chearing, with streams of genial light refulgent,
An else benighted, miserable world,
That ne'er, without such aid, might hope to view
Pure Nature, and her many-colour'd scenes.
Thee would a bard, born in a diff'rent age,
Proudly aspire to hymn, in no mean strain;
But that his harp, strung for the lofty theme,
Bounds from his grasp presumptuous, and upsprings
To heights celestial, and celestial hands;
And ere thy name he speaks, myriads of tongues
Pour songs seraphick to th' accordant strings,
In thy just praise, Prime Poet of the World,
Where only praise that's meet may be bestow'd,
For more than human excellence, like thine.

TO POETRY.

SWEET Poësy, enchanting fair,
For whose chaste love, through life, I bear
 All ills, whose love each ill beguiles;
Thy fairy visions, heav'nly bright,
A cradled infant, bless'd my sight,
 Wreathing my little face with smiles.

Thus, ere I knew to lisp thy name,
My tender breast had caught the flame;
 Which still, if Heav'n permit, shall glow,
Tho' chilling care, with age, conspire
To damp the pure, celestial fire,
 And load me with their Alps of snow.
My upright form their cruel pow'r may bend,
Yet my warm love of thee shall never end.

TO MUSICK.

WHO, Musick, may resist thy pow'r!

That all the soul, at pleasure, leads:

To Care's dark cell, Joy's brightest bow'r;

Where revels Peace, where Valour bleeds.

The sprightly fife, the thund'ring drum,

I hear, and burn the foe to meet:

Shrill clarions blow; they come! they come!

Hoarse trumpets sound; hark! they retreat.

The moans of anguish now I hear,

And ev'ry plaint, of ev'ry grief:

My tortur'd soul no more can bear!

Thou breath'st, ere I can ask, relief.

O'er all my frame thy heav'nly influence creeps;

The storm is hush'd, and ev'ry sorrow sleeps.

TO PAINTING.

PAINTING, I hail thy plastick art;

I hail thy bless'd, creative hand:

The pulses of my subject heart

Thy magick pencil may command.

In tints, that glow with lovelier hue,

Thy fairy landscapes I behold;

Than Nature's self presents to view,

Yet unrefin'd her sterling gold.

Creation's proudest, fairest boast,

E'en Heav'n's own image, form'd divine,

Pourtray'd by thee, delights me most,

Charms more than from the native mine.

The eye of polish'd taste discerns, with thee,

Less what they are, than what they ought to be.

TO MRS. SIDDONS.

THY form of dignity, majestick tread,
And the veil'd lightning of thy piercing eye;
Fill Virtue's breast with awe, fill Guilt's with dread,
Ere from thy lips Fate's thund'ring mandates fly.

Yes, Siddons! in thy fine, expressive face,
I see the coming tempest of thy soul;
The livid bolts in ev'ry gesture trace,
Already hear the awful thunder roll.

Ah! now the torrent of thy grief descends,
As thy pang'd bosom labours with it's woes;
Each feeling breast congenial sorrow rends,
And ev'ry eye it's channel overflows.

Alas! thou art the comet of the stage:
A few nights seen; the wonder of an age!

TO THE REVEREND MR. PETERS.

With sweet simplicity and grace,
See PETERS on the canvas trace,
The cherub's form, the seraph's mind,
To shame and to amend mankind.

PROMETHEUS, ancient fables say,
Made human shapes in sordid clay;
Then warm'd to life each beauteous frame,
With pilfer'd sparks of heav'nly flame.
Your laurell'd heads, ye ancients, now,
To modern worth superior, bow!
Since we can, o'er th' ingenious tale,
Not less in skill, than truth, prevail.
Lo! our Prometheus gives to earth,
E'en forms of a celestial birth;
Tinting with ev'ry rainbow dye,
His brilliant tenants of the sky:
While Heav'n, to recompence such merit,
Freely bestows, both life and spirit.

TO HENRY FUSELI, ESQ. R. A.

Matchless, Imagination's forms to give,
With them, bless'd FUSELI, thy name shall live :
To thee her pencil Genius has consign'd ;
Art guides thy hand, and Science fills thy mind.

HURRYING thro' the murky air,

Hags and Fiends pestiferous ride ;

By their fiery eyeballs glare,

Pallid Ghosts are seen to glide.

Sleep, that scents the coming pest,

Seeks to fly their damning frown ;

Perching on his lab'ring breast,

Squabby Monsters press him down.

Guardian of Virtue! thou, chaste Moon,

Barst out, to bless the earth again!

She comes! they fly! and, lo! eftsoon,

Her dapper Elves light trip the plain.

To heav'nly airs, the tiny shapes advance ;

The dulcet strains I hear, and view the featly dance.

ENVY.

BLESS'D with Apollo's hallow'd fire,

Hark! Genius strikes his golden lyre,

And gives to earth the godlike strain:

Lo! there pale-visag'd Envy lies,

That shrouds in gloom her scowling eyes,

Nor seems to hear, yet looks disdain.

Swift to their source, in deadly ire,

The pulses of her heart retire;

She sickens, pines, but never dies:

Her mildew breath behold her shed,

On Merit's unsuspecting head,

To blast his laurels as they rise.

Pestiferous fiend! that preys on living worth;

Nor e'er quits Genius, till he quit the earth.

EXPERIENCE.

EACH rock, each shoal, each quicksand pass'd,
And ev'ry storm and danger o'er;
The tranquil haven reach'd, at last,
And happy on his native shore:
His well-worn bark, with plenty fraught,
The Sailor, in Experience grey;
Teaching the lessons she has taught,
Now wears his remnant life away.
With rev'rence to the hoary head,
Should ev'ry youthful bosom glow;
To see, o'er bending shoulders spread,
The decent scatter'd locks of snow.
Lo! heaven-ward he lifts his earth-wean'd eyes:
His lips speak wisdom; listen, and be wise.

HUMAN HAPPINESS.

MEN may be happy, if they will,

And so may women too;

Sages have said, they say so still,

And what they say is true.

But some are much too weak, to know

Where bliss substantial lies;

While others look for nought but woe,

These are so wond'rous wise!

Some with such venom'd envy swell,

At sight of human joy;

On earth they hate that peace should dwell,

And e'en their own destroy.

Others, by sentiment oppress'd,

No bliss e'er hope to gain;

While, through the world, a single breast

Can feel a single pain!

To one grand error is each heart,

Or more or less inclin'd:

Pleasures all want, devoid of smart;

Joys, with no sting behind.

If for delights we madly seek,

Which reason bids us shun;

What wonder, down the blushing cheek,

Contrition's torrents run!

When, eager for the blooming rose,

Our hands impetuous rush;

Who wonders that the blood o'erflows,

Torn by the guardian bush?

Yet such our folly, still we sigh,

Like infants for the moon:

Ask bliss for mortals much too high,

Or snatch the rose too soon.

MORAL REFLECTION.

SOON, beneath the brightest skies,
Clouds appear, and storms arise;
While the heav'ns, tempest torn,
Seem with earthly grief to mourn.

Where would human folly run,
From the gloom that dims the sun?
Can a sordid thing of clay
Soar above the orb of day?

Silly mortal, not to know,
Ev'ry bliss must have it's woe;
Ev'ry beam of light it's shade;
Ev'ry tint of beauty fade!

Silly mortal, to repine,
That the lot of Nature's thine.

PRAYER TO PEACE.

CELESTIAL Peace, from heav'n descend,
And bid the strife of mortals end;
Who, blind to all that's truly good,
Thirst madly for each other's blood.
No more let pow'r, usurp'd, controul
The freedom of th' immortal soul;
While proud Ambition's shifting form
Directs each sanguinary storm:
But, all her frauds to render vain,
Begin thy universal reign.

A MORNING THOUGHT.

TO hail the birth of chearful day,
Each work of Nature grateful vies;
The warblers pour their matin lay,
The flow'rs bid fragrant incense rise.

Wav'd by the fresh'ning breeze of morn,
Each tree it's pious arms extends;
Each blade of grass, each ear of corn,
With humble adoration bends!

JUVENILE RECOLLECTION.

OFT, when a boy, the woods among,
On some green mossy bank I've laid;
There listen'd to the throstle's song,
Till all around was sunk in shade.

My heart, rapt in the melting dream,
Soft beat within my tranquil breast;
As lifts the gently rising stream,
At each light wave, the halcyon's nest.

Ah! where may rapture long remain?

My ear the sweet vibrations leave;
In vain it waits an added strain,
Amid the silent gloom of eve!

The song had ceas'd, as day expir'd;
The minstrel, with the light, retir'd.
