

Nor wild nor deep our common way divide. 395
 When from the cave thou risest with the day,
 To beat the woods, and rouse the bounding prey;
 The cave with moss and branches I 'll adorn,
 And cheerful sit to wait my lord's return.
 And, when thou frequent bring'st the smitten deer 400
 (For seldom, archers say, thy arrows err),
 I 'll fetch quick fuel from the neighbouring wood,
 And strike the sparkling flint, and dress the food;
 With humble duty and officious haste,
 I 'll cull the furthest mead for thy repast; 405
 The choicest herbs I to thy board will bring,
 And draw thy water from the freshest spring;
 And, when at night with weary toil oppressed,
 Soft slumbers thou enjoy'st, and wholesome rest;
 Watchful I 'll guard thee, and with midnight prayer 410
 Weary the gods to keep thee in their care;
 And joyous ask, at morn's returning ray,
 If thou hast health, and I may bless the day.
 My thoughts shall fix, my latest wish depend,
 On thee, guide, guardian, kinsman, father, friend: 415
 By all these sacred names be Henry known
 To Emma's heart; and grateful let him own,
 That she, of all mankind, could love but him alone!

HENRY.

Vainly thou tell'st me, what the woman's care
 Shall in the wildness of the wood prepare: 420
 Thou, ere thou goest, unhappiest of thy kind,
 Must leave the habit and the sex behind.
 No longer shall thy comely tresses break
 In flowing ringlets on thy snowy neck;
 Or sit behind thy head, an ample round, 425
 In graceful braids with various ribbon bound:
 No longer shall the bodice, aptly laced,
 From thy full bosom to thy slender waist,
 That air and harmony of shape express,
 Fine by degrees, and beautifully less: 430
 Nor shall thy lower garments artful plait,
 From thy fair side dependent to thy feet,
 Arm their chaste beauties with a modest pride,
 And double every charm they seek to hide.

The ambrosial plenty of thy shining hair, 435
 Cropped off and lost, scarce lower than thy ear
 Shall stand uncouth: a horseman's coat shall hide
 Thy taper shape, and comeliness of side.
 The short trunk-hose shall show thy foot and knee
 Licentious, and to common eye-sight free: 440
 And, with a bolder stride and looser air,
 Mingled with men, a man thou must appear.
 Nor solitude, nor gentle peace of mind,
 Mistaken maid, shalt thou in forests find;
 'Tis long since Cynthia and her train were there: 445
 Or guardian gods made innocence their care.
 Vagrants and outlaws shall offend thy view;
 For such must be my friends, a hideous crew.
 By adverse fortune mixed in social ill,
 Trained to assault, and disciplined to kill; 450
 Their common loves, a lewd abandoned pack,
 The beadle's lash still flagrant on their back:
 By sloth corrupted, by disorder fed,
 Made bold by want, and prostitute for bread.
 With such must Emma hunt the tedious day, 455
 Assist their violence, and divide their prey:
 With such she must return at setting light,
 Though not partaker, witness of their night.
 Thy ear, inured to charitable sounds
 And pitying love, must feel the hateful wounds 460
 Of jest obscene and vulgar ribaldry,
 The ill-bred question, and the lewd reply;
 Brought by long habitude from bad to worse,
 Must hear the frequent oath, the direful curse,
 That latest weapon of the wretches' war, 465
 And blasphemy, sad comrade of despair.
 Now, Emma, now the last reflection make,
 What thou wouldst follow, what thou must forsake:
 By our ill-omened stars, and adverse Heaven,
 No middle object to thy choice is given. 470
 Or yield thy virtue to attain thy love;
 Or leave a banished man, condemned in woods to rove.

EMMA.

O grief of heart! that our unhappy fates
 Force thee to suffer what thy honour hates:

Mix thee amongst the bad; or make thee run 475
 Too near the paths which virtue bids thee shun.
 Yet with her Henry still let Emma go;
 With him abhor the vice, but share the woe;
 And sure my little heart can never err
 Amidst the worst, if Henry still be there. 480

Our outward act is prompted from within;
 And from the sinner's mind proceeds the sin;
 By her own choice free virtue is approved,
 Nor by the force of outward objects moved.
 Who has assayed no danger, gains no praise. 485
 In a small isle, amidst the widest seas,
 Triumphant Constancy has fixed her seat,
 In vain the Syrens sing, the tempests beat:
 Their flattery she rejects, nor fears their threat.

For thee alone these little charms I dressed: 490
 Condemned them, or absolved them by thy test.
 In comely figure ranged my jewels shone,
 Or negligently placed for thee alone;
 For thee again they shall be laid aside;
 The woman, Henry, shall put off her pride 495
 For thee: my clothes, my sex, exchanged for thee,
 I'll mingle with the people's wretched lee;
 O fine extreme of human infamy!
 Wanting the scissars, with these hands I'll tear
 (If that obstructs my flight) this load of hair. 500
 Black soot, or yellow walnut, shall disgrace
 This little red and white of Emma's face.
 These nails with scratches shall deform my breast,
 Lest by my look or colour be expressed
 The mark of aught high-born, or ever better dressed. 505
 Yet in this commerce, under this disguise,
 Let me be grateful still to Henry's eyes;
 Lost to the world, let me to him be known:
 My fate I can absolve, if he shall own,
 That, leaving all mankind, I love but him alone. 510

HENRY.

O wildest thoughts of an abandoned mind!
 Name, habit, parents, woman, left behind,
 Even honour dubious, thou prefer'st to go
 Wild to the woods with me: said Emma so?

Or did I dream what Emma never said? 515
O guilty error! and O wretched maid!
Whose roving fancy would resolve the same
With him, who next shall tempt her easy fame;
And blow with empty words the susceptible flame.
Now why should doubtful terms thy mind perplex, 520
Confess thy frailty, and avow the sex:
No longer loose desire for constant love
Mistake; but say, 'tis man with whom thou long'st to rove.

EMMA.

Are there not poisons, racks, and flames, and swords,
That Emma thus must die by Henry's words? 525
Yet what could swords or poison, racks or flame,
But mangle and disjoint this brittle frame!
More fatal Henry's words, they murder Emma's fame.
And fall these sayings from that gentle tongue,
Where civil speech and soft persuasion hung; 530
Whose artful sweetness and harmonious strain,
Courting my grace, yet courting it in vain,
Called sighs, and tears, and wishes, to its aid;
And, whilst it Henry's glowing flame conveyed,
Still blame the coldness of the Nut-brown Maid? 535

Let envious jealousy and canker'd spite
Produce my actions to severest light,
And tax my open day, or secret night.
Did e'er my tongue speak my unguarded heart
The least inclined to play the wanton's part? 540
Did e'er my eye one inward thought reveal,
Which angels might not hear, and virgins tell?
And hast thou, Henry, in my conduct known
One fault, but that which I must never own,
That I, of all mankind, have loved but thee alone? 545

HENRY.

Vainly thou talk'st of loving me alone:
Each man is man; and all our sex is one.
False are our words, and fickle is our mind;
Nor in love's ritual can we ever find
Vows made to last, or promises to bind. 550
By nature prompted, and for empire made,
Alike by strength or cunning we invade;

When armed with rage we march against the foe,
 We lift the battle-axe, and draw the bow;
 When, fired with passion, we attack the fair, 555
 Delusive sighs and brittle vows we bear;
 Our falsehood and our arms have equal use;
 As they our conquest or delight produce.
 The foolish heart thou gav'st, again receive,
 The only boon departing love can give. 560
 To be less wretched, be no longer true;
 What strives to fly thee, why shouldst thou pursue?
 Forget the present flame, indulge a new;
 Single the loveliest of the amorous youth;
 Ask for his vow; but hope not for his truth. 565
 The next man (and the next thou shalt believe)
 Will pawn his gods, intending to deceive;
 Will kneel, implore, persist, o'ercome, and leave.
 Hence let thy Cupid aim his arrows right;
 Be wise and false, shun trouble, seek delight; 570
 Change thou the first, nor wait thy lover's flight.
 Why shouldst thou weep? let nature judge our case;
 I saw thee young and fair; pursued the chase
 Of youth and beauty: I another saw
 Fairer and younger: yielding to the law 575
 Of our all-ruling mother, I pursued
 More youth, more beauty; blest vicissitude!
 My active heart still keeps its pristine flame;
 The object altered, the desire the same.
 This younger, fairer, pleads her rightful charms; 580
 With present power compels me to her arms.
 And much I fear, from my subjected mind
 (If beauty's force to constant love can bind),
 That years may roll, ere in her turn the maid
 Shall weep the fury of my love decayed; 585
 And weeping follow me, as thou dost now,
 With idle clamours of a broken vow.
 Nor can the wildness of thy wishes err
 So wide, to hope that thou mayst live with her.
 Love, well thou know'st, no partnership allows: 590
 Cupid averse rejects divided vows:
 Then from thy foolish heart, vain maid, remove
 An useless sorrow, and an ill-starred love;
 And leave me, with the fair, at large in woods to rove.

EMMA.

Are we in life through one great error led; 595
Is each man perjured, and each nymph betrayed?
Of the superior sex art thou the worst?
Am I of mine the most completely cursed?
Yet let me go with thee; and going prove,
From what I will endure, how much I love. 600

This potent beauty, this triumphant fair,
This happy object of our different care,
Her let me follow; her let me attend
A servant (she may scorn the name of friend).
What she demands, incessant I 'll prepare; 605
I 'll weave her garlands; and I 'll plait her hair:
My busy diligence shall deck her board
(For there at least I may approach my lord);
And, when her Henry's softer hours advise
His servant's absence, with dejected eyes 610
Far I 'll recede, and sighs forbid to rise.

Yet, when increasing grief brings slow disease;
And ebbing life, on terms severe as these,
Will have its little lamp no longer fed;
When Henry's mistress shows him Emma dead; 615
Rescue my poor remains from vile neglect:
With virgin honours let my hearse be decked,
And decent emblem; and at least persuade
This happy nymph, that Emma may be laid
Where thou, dear author of my death, where she, 620
With frequent eye my sepulchre may see.
The nymph amidst her joys may haply breathe
One pious sigh, reflecting on my death,
And the sad fate which she may one day prove,
Who hopes from Henry's vows eternal love. 625
And thou forsworn, thou cruel, as thou art,
If Emma's image ever touched thy heart;
Thou sure must give one thought, and drop one tear
To her, whom love abandoned to despair;
To her, who, dying, on the wounded stone 630
Bid it in lasting characters be known,
That, of mankind, she loved but thee alone.

HENRY.

Hear, solemn Jove; and conscious Venus, hear;
And thou, bright maid, believe me whilst I swear;
No time, no change, no future flame, shall move 635
The well-placed basis of my lasting love.

O powerful virtue! O victorious fair!
At least excuse a trial too severe:
Receive the triumph, and forget the war.

No banished man, condemned in woods to rove, 640
Intreats thy pardon, and implores thy love:
No perjured knight desires to quit thy arms,
Fairest collection of thy sex's charms,
Crown of my love, and honour of my youth!
Henry, thy Henry, with eternal truth, 645
As thou mayst wish, shall all his life employ,
And found his glory in his Emma's joy.

In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
Illustrious earl; him terrible in war
Let Loyre confess, for she has felt his sword, 650
And trembling fled before the British lord.
Him great in peace and wealth fair Deva knows;
For she amidst his spacious meadows flows;
Inclines her urn upon his fattened lands;
And sees his numerous herds imprint her sands. 655

And thou, my fair, my dove, shalt raise thy thought
To greatness next to empire; shalt be brought
With solemn pomp to my paternal seat:
Where peace and plenty on thy word shall wait.
Music and song shall wake the marriage-day: 660
And, whilst the priests accuse the bride's delay,
Myrtles and roses shall obstruct her way.

Friendship shall still thy evening feasts adorn,
And blooming peace shall ever bless thy morn.
Succeeding years their happy race shall run, 665
And age unheeded by delight come on;
While yet superior love shall mock his power,
And when old Time shall turn the fated hour,
Which only can our well-tied knot unfold;
What rests of both, one sepulchre shall hold. 670

Hence then for ever from my Emma's breast
(That heaven of softness, and that seat of rest)
Ye doubts and fears, and all that know to move
Tormenting grief, and all that trouble love,

Scattered by winds recede, and wild in forests rove. 675

EMMA.

O day the fairest sure that ever rose!
Period and end of anxious Emma's woes!
Sire of her joy, and source of her delight;
O! winged with pleasure take thy happy flight,
And give each future morn a tincture of thy white. 680

Yet tell thy votary, potent queen of love,
Henry, my Henry, will he never rove?
Will he be ever kind, and just, and good?
And is there yet no mistress in the wood?
None, none there is; the thought was rash and vain; 685
A false idea, and a fancied pain.

Doubt shall for ever quit my strengthened heart,
And anxious jealousy's corroding smart;
Nor other inmate shall inhabit there,
But soft Belief, young Joy, and pleasing Care: 690

Hence let the tides of plenty ebb and flow,
And fortune's various gale unheeded blow.
If at my feet the suppliant goddess stands,
And sheds her treasure with unwearied hands;
Her present favour cautious I'll embrace, 695
And not unthankful use the proffered grace:

If she reclaims the temporary boon,
And tries her pinions, fluttering to be gone;
Secure of mind, I'll obviate her intent,
And unconcerned return the goods she lent. 700

Nor happiness can I, nor misery feel,
From any turn of her fantastic wheel:
Friendship's great laws, and love's superior powers,
Must mark the colour of my future hours.
From the events which thy commands create 705
I must my blessings or my sorrows date,
And Henry's will must dictate Emma's fate.

Yet while with close delight and inward pride
(Which from the world my careful soul shall hide)
I see thee, lord and end of my desire, 710
Exalted high as virtue can require;
With power invested, and with pleasure cheered;
Sought by the good, by the oppressor feared;
Loaded and blest with all the affluent store,

Which human vows at smoking shrines implore; 715
Grateful and humble grant me to employ
My life subservient only to thy joy;
And at my death to bless thy kindness shown
To her, who of mankind could love but thee alone.

While thus the constant pair alternate said, 720
Joyful above them and around them played
Angels and sportive loves, a numerous crowd;
Smiling they clapped their wings, and low they bowed:
They tumbled all their little quivers o'er,
To choose propitious shafts, a precious store; 725
That, when their god should take his future darts,
To strike (however rarely) constant hearts,
His happy skill might proper arms employ,
All tipped with pleasure, and all winged with joy:
And those, they vowed, whose lives should imitate 730
These lovers' constancy, should share their fate.

The queen of beauty stopped her bridled doves;
Approved the little labour of the loves;
Was proud and pleased the mutual vow to hear;
And to the triumph called the god of war: 735
Soon as she calls, the god is always near.

Now, Mars, she said, let Fame exalt her voice,
Nor let thy conquests only be her choice:
But, when she sings great Edward from the field
Returned, the hostile spear and captive shield 740
In Concord's temple hung, and Gallia taught to yield;
And when, as prudent Saturn shall complete
The years designed to perfect Britain's state,
The swift-winged power shall take her trump again,
To sing her favourite Anna's wondrous reign; 745
To recollect unwearied Marlborough's toils,
Old Rufus' hall unequal to his spoils;
The British soldier from his high command
Glorious, and Gaul thrice vanquished by his hand:
Let her at least perform what I desire; 750
With second breath the vocal brass inspire;
And tell the nations, in no vulgar strain,
What wars I manage, and what wreaths I gain.
And, when thy tumults and thy fights are past,
And when thy laurels at my feet are cast, 755

Faithful mayst thou, like British Henry, prove:
And, Emma-like, let me return thy love.

Renowned for truth, let all thy sons appear;
And constant beauty shall reward their care.

Mars smiled, and bowed: the Cyprian deity 760
Turned to the glorious ruler of the sky;

And thou, she smiling said, great god of days
And verse, behold my deed, and sing my praise,
As on the British earth, my favourite isle,
Thy gentle rays and kindest influence smile, 765

Through all her laughing fields and verdant groves,
Proclaim with joy these memorable loves.

From every annual course let one great day
To celebrated sports and floral play
Be set aside; and, in the softest lays 770

Of thy poetic sons, be solemn praise
And everlasting marks of honour paid,
To the true lover, and the Nut-brown Maid.

1709

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