

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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