



An O D E to F A N C Y.

By the Same.

FANCY, whose delusions vain
 Sport themselves with human brain;
 Rival thou of Nature's pow'r,
 Can'st, from thy exhaustless store,
 Bid a tide of sorrow flow,
 And whelm the soul in deepest woe:
 Or in the twinkling of an eye,
 Raise it to mirth and jollity.
 Dreams and shadows by thee stand,
 Taught to run at thy command,
 And along the wanton air,
 Flit like empty Gossamer.
 Thee, black Melancholy of yore
 To the swift-wing'd Hermes bore:
 From the mixture of thy line,
 Different natures in thee join,
 Which thou chusest to express
 By the variance of thy dress.

Now like thy fire thou lov'st to seem
 Light and gay with pinions trim,
 Dipt in all the dyes that glow
 In the bend of Iris' bow :
 Now like thy mother drear and sad,
 (All in mournful vestments clad,
 Cypress weeds and fable stole,)
 Thou rushest on th' affrighted soul.
 Oft I feel thee coming on,
 When the night hath reach'd her noon,
 And darkness, partner of her reign,
 Round the world hath bound her chain,
 Then with measur'd step and flow,
 In the church-yard path I go,
 And while my outward senses sleep,
 Lost in contemplation deep,
 Sudden I stop, and turn my ear,
 And list'ning hear, or think I hear.
 First a dead and fullen sound
 Walks along the holy ground ;
 Then thro' the gloom alternate break
 Groans, and the shrill screech-owl's shriek.
 Lo! the moon hath hid her head,
 And the graves give up their dead :
 By me pass the ghastly crowds,
 Wrapt in visionary shrouds ;
 Maids, who died with love forlorn,
 Youths, who fell by maidens' scorn,

Helpless

Helpless fires and matrons old
 Slain for sordid thirst of gold,
 And babes who owe their shorten'd date
 To cruel step-dames ruthless hate;
 Each their sev'ral errands go,
 To haunt the wretch that wrought their woe:
 From their sight the caitiff flies,
 And his heart within him dies;
 While a horror damp and chill
 Thro' his frozen blood doth thrill,
 And his hair for very dread
 Bears itself upon his head.
 When the early breath of day
 Hath made the shadows flee away;
 Still possess'd by thee I rove
 Bosom'd in the shelt'ring grove,
 There, with heart and lyre new strung,
 Meditate the lofty song.
 And if thou my voice inspire,
 And with wonted frenzy fire,
 Aided by thee I build the rhyme
 Such, as nor the flight of time,
 Nor wasting flame, nor eating show'r,
 Nor lightning's blast can e'er devour.
 Or if chance some moral page
 My attentive thoughts engage,
 On I walk, with silent tread,
 Under the thick-woven shade,

While the thrush, unheeded by,
 Tunes her artless minstrelsy.
 Lift'ning to their sacred lore,
 I think on ages long past o'er,
 When Truth and Virtue hand in hand
 Walk'd upon the smiling land.
 Thence my eyes on Britain glance,
 And, awaken'd from my trance,
 While my busy thoughts I rear,
 Oft I wipe the falling tear.
 When the night again descends
 And her shadowy cone extends,
 O'er the fields I walk alone,
 By the silence of the moon.
 Hark! upon my left I hear
 Wild musick wand'ring in the air;
 Led by the sound I onward creep,
 And thro' the neighb'ring hedge I peep;
 There I spy the Fairy band
 Dancing on the level land,
 Now with step alternate bound,
 Join'd in one continu'd round,
 Now their plighted hands unbind,
 And such tangled mazes wind
 As the quick eye can scarce pursue,
 And wou'd have puzzled that fam'd clue,
 Which led th' Athenian's unskill'd feet
 Thro' the Labyrinth of Crete.

At the near approach of day,
 Sudden the musick dies away,
 Wafting in the sea of air,
 And the phantoms disappear,
 All (as the glow-worm waxes dim)
 Vanish like a morning dream,
 And of their revels leave no trace,
 Save the ring upon the grass.
 When the elphin show is fled,
 Home I haste me to my bed ;
 There if thou with magick wand
 On my temples take thy stand,
 I see in mix'd disorder rise
 All that struck my waking eyes :
 So when I stand, and round me gaze,
 Where the fam'd Lodona strays ;
 On the woods and thickets brown,
 That its sedgey margin crown,
 And watch the vagrant clouds that fly
 Thro' the vast desert of the sky,
 When adown I cast my look
 On the smooth unruffled brook,
 (While its current clear doth run,
 And holds its mirrour to the sun,)
 There I see th' inverted scene
 Fall, and meet the eye again.