ON the wild margin of the flood,
An airy structure gaily stood.
Its smiling queen with easy air,
Amuses there the young and fair:
And homage takes from every quarter,
E'en from the peasant to the garter.
For glowing in her brightest hours,
She vies with beauty's mighty powers,
All court her graces, wish her name,
And Wit they call'd the shining dame.
As holy pilgrims always bear
Some relic to inspire their prayer,
So did the votaries of our queen
Joy in her favours to be seen.
Numerous were the gifts they bore,
Which in as varied modes were wore.
They took their hints from fancy's eye,
And shone with many a sparkling dye.
Promiscuous tho' they still were thrown,
Each was delighted with his own.
Eager their presents to display,
They all went satisfied away.
The Pedant shew'd his pun with glee.
The Beau his brilliant repartee.
And Ridicule, the Cynic's treasure,
Was lavish'd with unsparing measure.
Whilst mimick'r'y, which all could fit,
Was valued as a gift from wit.
Various was the strange collection,
Where least studied, most perfection,
A medley odd of grave and gay,
That gleam'd around a sudden ray.
Which often by it's magic charm,
Grave reason quickly could disarm;
Triumphant to the thoughtless eye,
They bore unquestion'd victory.
But when to judgment they were shewn,
Few of their beauties he would own;
When tried by his dividing hand,
The false materials could not stand;
His separating art display'd,
The lasting charm from fleeting shade;
The different value each should share,
And in the eye of reason bear.
Puns were a senseless play with words,
Which to no rule of taste accords;
A repartee a forward hit,
Sprung from impertinent conceit;
And ridicule had scarce a feature,
Which was not copied from ill-nature;
Envy and apathy 'twas plain,
Had form'd the scorpions in her train;
And not the slightest part was found,
To touch on philanthropic ground;
Whilst all the mimic's varied art,
Betray'd suspicions of his heart;
In others characters he shone,
Then most unmindful of his own;
From every weakness he display'd,
His errors took a deeper shade;
How cruel to the tenderer sense,
Was felt th' illiberal low pretence;
A laugh to raise or plaudit gain,
By aught that gave another pain.
Thus were Wit's favours oft inspected,
And their slight value soon detected;
That judgement paid her little deference,
And ever merited a preference;
Run in swift murmurs thro' the crowd,
By whispers that were something loud.
Her ears the grating truth had caught,
And tho' she was no friend to thought,
It piqued her pride, and rais'd her fear.
A formidable foe so near.
Her power she knew she still could foil;
Or open force or hidden wile.
Yet ere she yielded to despair,
She rais'd her voice in ardent prayer;
Be every pitying power adored,
She said, and all their power implored,
If aught is in my origin,
Of ether pure or breath divine.
Sure some attendant spirit still,
Shall guard me from impending ill.
This equal aid be ever near.
Guardian! Protector! now appear,
Oh! save me from my dreaded foe,
Who plans my kingdom's overthrow.
She ceas'd, and o'er the trembling dame,
Hover'd a gleam of lambent flame.
While soft enchantments held her soul,
These cheering words her fears control;
Behold around the vivid ray,
That gave thee to the light of day,
And evermore, when negatives shall well restore,
The subtle essence of thy power,
Soaring above the low and vain,
E'en wisdom shall approve thy reign,
Then all inspiring thou shalt move,
Judgement, thy native charms to love,
And from your union shall arise,
The brightest form beneath the skies.

Tho' he conveys no golden dower,
Nor is with fortune seen,
He lights by his creative power,
A brighter world within,
The busy hours successive come,
With their enriching stores to bloom,
In intellectual light,
While he for ever bright and young,
Displays them in his magic song,
An ever new delight.

Adown the stream of following years,
The world's gay votaries pass,
Distinction vainly interferes,
To mark the common mass;

* "'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
  "Admir'd with laughter at a jest."*

Cowley.
When earth resumes the dust she gave,
The sons of genius from the grave,
Protracted life shall gain.
For undepress'd and unconfin'd,
The tuneful ardour of the mind,
Shall catch the breath of fame.

And scenes have shown thy morning's dawn,
Gave pure suppliant grace.