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AN EPISTLE

TO A LADY.

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*November, 1789.*

**W**HILE Morcham does your much  
lov'd presence share,

And Lydia's health claims your maternal care,

O Madam, deign with candour to peruse

A rustic lay, presented by the Muse.

From Loudoun's plains she now awakes the  
lyre,

And gladly would to arduous feats aspire.

On the smooth margin of the stream reclin'd,

She fondly hopes to please a taste refin'd.

What tho' she boast of no peculiar charm,

That would the critic of his force disarm?

She humbly deprecates your doom severe,

And fain would wish to find you partial here.

The Muse alone does this indulgence claim,  
Else it were impious such a thought to frame.

Would you from Morcham cast your men-  
tal eye,

And the recesses of our castle spy,  
You'd see Honoria, in her elbow chair,  
A mind at ease, thoughts unperplex'd with  
care ;

With aspect mild, explore the sacred page,  
Guide of her youth, and comfort of her age:  
In conduct prudent, and in counsel wise ;  
Her friendship ev'ry virtuous mind must  
prize.

Then view the pair, in bonds of Hymen blest,  
With little Cupid's flutt'ring round their  
breast.

The blifs that's mutual, all their thoughts  
employ,

Whose social hearts partake no selfish joy.  
To please each other proves their constant  
aim,

While ev'ry act endears the tender claim.

Matilda too, your notice must demand ;  
 To paint would here require a Raphael's  
 hand :

To trace the radiant beauties of her mind,  
 Shall be a task for nobler pens assign'd.  
 I'd rather far her little foibles scan,  
 Though strict inspection finds no more than  
 one.

Such anxious care on others she bestows,  
 She quite forgets what to herself she owes.  
 Vouchsafe the charming Celia next a look,  
 Her mind serene, and in her hand a book :  
 Eyes, which at will, can pleasure give or pain,  
 On stupid Humphry Clinker shine in vain.

As through the hall and kitchen now you  
 pass,  
 Pray deign to peep among the lower class :  
 The cook's at work ; but, madam, who can  
 know  
 Whether her hands or tongue more swiftly go ?  
 They're nimble both ; but diff'rent is th' ef-  
 fect ;  
 One merits praise, the other disrespect.

Poor Mary sighs beneath a load of woes,  
Hard and uneasy ev'ry turn she does:  
How light foe'er the task, she'll pond'ring  
say,

“ Ah! Is there not a lion in the way?”

Will seems in haste his master's boots to clean,  
Old James is driving Turkeys o'er the green,  
Our crazy-pated dairy-maid just now  
Is scribbling o'er these senseless lines to you.  
Hark! there's a call, O pardon what I've  
penn'd;

I'm sure you're glad my letter 's at an end.