

AN OCCASIONAL

PROLOGUE and EPILOGUE

T O

O T H E L L O,

As it was acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, on
Thursday the 7th of March 1751, by Persons of Di-
stinction for their Diverſion.

WHILE mercenary actors tread the ſtage,
And hireling ſcriblers laſh or lull the age,
Ours be the taſk t'inſtruct, and entertain,
Without one thought of glory or of gain.
Virtue's her own---from no external cauſe---
She gives, and ſhe demands the Self-applauſe :
Home to her breaſt ſhe brings the heart-felt bays,
Heedleſs alike of profit, and of praiſe.
This now perhaps is wrong---yet this we know,
'Twas ſenſe and truth a century ago :
When Britain with tranſcendent glory crown'd,
For high atchievements, as for wit renown'd ;

Cull'd

Cull'd from each growing grace the purest part,
 And cropt the flowers from every blooming art.
 Our noblest youth would then embrace the task
 Of comic humour, or the mystic masque.
 'Twas theirs t'incourage worth, and give to bards
 What now is spent in boxing and in cards :
 Good sense their pleasure---Virtue still their guide,
 And English magnanimity---their pride.
 Methinks I see with Fancy's magic eye,
 The shade of Shakespear, in yon azure sky.
 On yon high cloud behold the bard advance,
 Piercing all Nature with a single glance :
 In various attitudes around him stand
 The passions, waiting for his dread command.
 First kneeling Love before his feet appears,
 And musically sighing melts in tears.
 Near him fell Jealousy with fury burns,
 And into storms the amorous breathings turns ;
 Then Hope with heavenward look, and Joy draws near,
 While palsied Terror trembles in the rear.

Such Shakespear's train of horror and delight,
 And such we hope to introduce to-night.
 But if, tho' just in thought, we fail in fact,
 And good intention ripens not to act,
 Weigh our design, your censure still defer,
 When truth's in view 'tis glorious e'en to err.

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by DESDEMONA.

TRUE woman to the last---my peroration
 I come to speak in spight of suffocation ;
 To shew the present and the age to come,
 We may be choak'd, but never can be dumb.
 Well now methinks I see you all run out,
 And haste away to Lady Bragwell's rout ;
 Each modish sentiment to hear and weigh,
 Of those who nothing think, and all things say.
 Prudella first in parody begins,
 (For Nonsense and Buffoonery are twins)
 " Can beaux the court for theatres exchange ?
 " *I swear by Heaven 'tis strange, 'tis passing strange ;*
 " And very whimsical, and mighty dull,
 " *And pitiful, and wond'rous pitiful :*
 " *I wish I had not heard it---*Blessed dame !
 Whene'er she speaks her audience wish the same.
 Next Neddy Nicely---" Fye, O fye, good lack,
 " A nasty man to make his face all black."
 Then Lady Stiffneck shews her pious rage,
 And wonders we shou'd act---upon a stage.

I

" Why,

“ Why, ma’me, fays Coquetilla, a disgrace?
“ Merit in any form may fhew her face:
“ In this dull age the male things ought to play,
“ To teach them what to do, and what to fay.”
In fhort, they all with different cavils cram us,
And only are unanimous to damn us.
But ftill there are a fair judicious few,
Who judge unbiass’d, and with candour view ;
Who value honefty, tho’ clad in buff,
And wit, tho’ drefs’d in an old Englifh ruff.
Behold them here--I beaming fenfe defcry,
Shot from the living luftre of each eye.
Such meaning fmiles each blooming face adorn,
As deck the pleasure-painted brow of morn ;
And fhew the perfon of each matchlefs fair,
Tho’ rich to rapture, and above compare,
Is, even with all the fkill of heaven defign’d,
But an imperfect image of their mind ;
While chaftity unblemifh’d and unbrib’d
Adds a majestic mien that fcorns to be defcrib’d :
Such, we will vaunt, and only fuch as thefe,
’Tis our ambition, and our fame to please.