

Now deep in ashes sinks the myrtle bow'r,  
 O'er beds of flow'rs sulphureous torrents roar;  
 And exil'd demi-gods their ruin'd seats deplore.

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The L I N K. A B A L L A D.

**Y**E ladies that live in the city or town,  
 Fair Winton or Alresford so fine and so gay;  
 And ye neat country lasses in clean linen gown,  
 As neat and as blithe and as pretty as they:  
 Come away strait to Ovington, for you can't think  
 What a charming new walk there is made on the Link.

Look how lovely the prospect, the meadows how green,  
 The fields and the woods, in the vale or the hill:  
 The trees, and the cotage that peeps out between,  
 The clear stream that runs bubbling in many a rill,  
 That will show your fair face as you stand on the brink,  
 And murmurs most sweetly all under the Link.

How pleasant the morning, how clear the blue sky,  
 How pure the fresh air, and how healthy the place!  
 Your heart goes a pit-a-pat light as a fly,  
 And the blood circles briskly, and glows in your face:  
 Wou'd you paint your fair cheeks with the rose and the pink?  
 Throw your washes away, take a walk on the Link.

After dinner the 'squire ere the ladies retreat,  
 Marches off with some friends that will ply the brisk glass;  
 Gives us liquor enough, and a good pleasant feat,  
 And damns your fine taste, and your finical las:  
 Al fresco, my lads, we'll carouse and we'll drink,  
 Take your bottle each man, and away to the Link.

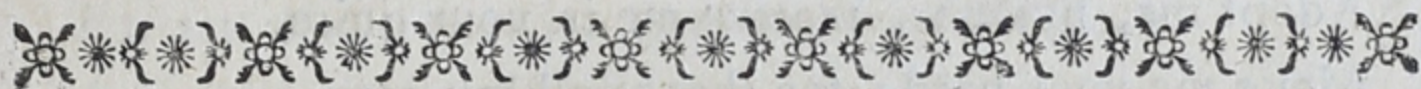
Not so gentle Collin, whom love holds in thrall,  
 To Molly he steals all in silence away;  
 And when nought can be heard but the rude water-fall,  
 And the woodbine breathes sweetest at close of the day,  
 He takes her soft hand, and he tips her the wink,  
 Come, my dear, let us take a cool walk on the Link.

But, O ye fair maidens, be sure have a care,  
 Nor lay yourselves open to love's cruel dart;  
 Of the hour and the place and the season beware,  
 And guard well each passage that leads to your heart;  
 Sly Cupid will steal in at some little chink,  
 If you walk in the evening too late on the Link.

Ye poets so lofty, who love to retire  
 From the noise of the town to the stream and the wood;  
 Who in epics and tragics, with marvellous fire,  
 Utter sounds by mere mortals not well understood:  
 Here mouthe your loud strain, and here ply pen and ink,  
 Quit Parnassus and Pindus, and come to the Link.

And

And come you, who for thought are at little expence,  
 Who indite gentle pastoral, ballad, or song;  
 You see with smooth numbers, and not too much sense,  
 How the verses run easy and glibly along;  
 And the rhyme at the close how it falls with a clink,  
 So kind are the Muses that sport on the Link.



T H E  
 S Q U I R E of D A M E S.  
 A P O E M.

In S P E N S E R's S T I L E.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

*In the seventh Canto of the Legend of Chastity, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, the Squire of Dames tells Satyrane, that by order of his mistress Columbel (after having served the ladies for a year) he was sent out a second time, not to return till he could find three hundred women incapable of yielding to any temptation. The bad success he met with in the course of the three years, which is slightly touch'd upon by Spenser, is the foundation of the following poem.*