



T H E
T O M B of S H A K E S P E A R.
A
V I S I O N.

By J O H N G I L B E R T C O O P E R, Esq;

WHAT time the jocund roſie-boſom'd HOURS
Led forth the train of P H O E B U S and the S P R I N G,
And Z E P H Y R mild profuſely ſcatter'd flowers
On Earth's green mantle from his muſky wing,

Th'r M O R N unbarr'd th' ambroſial gates of light,
Weſtward the raven-pinion'd Darkneſs flew,
The Landſcape ſmil'd in vernal beauty bright,
And to their graves the ſullen Ghoſts withdrew.

The nightingale no longer ſwell'd her throat
With love-lorn plainings tremulous and flow,
And on the wings of Silence ceas'd to float
The gurgling notes of her melodious woe:

The God of sleep mysterious visions led
 In gay procession 'fore the mental eye,
 And my free'd soul awhile her mansion fled,
 To try her plumes for immortality.

Thro' fields of air, methought, I took my flight,
 Thro' ev'ry clime, o'er ev'ry region pass'd,
 No paradise or ruin 'scap'd my sight,
 HESPERIAN garden, or CIMMERIAN waste,

On AVON's banks I lit, whose streams appear
 To wind with eddies fond round SHAKESPEAR's tomb,
 The year's first feath'ry songsters warble near,
 And vi'lets breathe, and earliest roses bloom.

Here FANCY sat, (her dewy fingers cold
 Decking with flow'rets fresh th' unsullied sod,)
 And bath'd with tears the sad sepulchral mold,
 Her fav'rite offspring's long and last abode.

Ah! what avails, she cry'd, a Poet's name?
 Ah! what avails th' immortalizing breath
 To snatch from dumb Oblivion other's fame?
 My darling child here lies a prey to Death!

Let gentle OTWAY, white-rob'd PITY's priest,
 From grief domestic teach the tears to flow,
 Or SOUTHERN captivate th' impassion'd breast
 With heart-felt sighs and sympathy of woe.

For not to these *his* genius was confin'd,
 Nature and I each tuneful pow'r had given,
 Poetic transports of the madding mind,
 And the wing'd words that waft the soul to heaven :

The fiery glance of th' intellectual eye,
 Piercing all objects of creation's store,
 Which on this world's extended surface lie ;
 And plastic thought that still created more.

O grant, with eager rapture I reply'd,
 Grant me, great goddess of the changeful eye,
 To view each Being in poetic pride,
 To whom thy son gave immortality.

Sweet FANCY smil'd, and wav'd her mystic rod,
 When strait these visions felt her pow'rful arm,
 And one by one succeeded at her nod,
 As vassal sprites obey the wizard's charm.

First a celestial form ^a (of azure hue
 Whose mantle, bound with brede ætherial, flow'd
 To each soft breeze its balmy breath that drew)
 Swift down the sun-beams of the noon-tide rode.

Obedient to the necromantic sway
 Of an old sage to solitude resign'd,
 With fenny vapors he obscur'd the day,
 Launch'd the long lightning, and let loose the wind.

^a *Ariel in the Tempest.*

He whirl'd the tempest thro' the howling air,
 Rattled the dreadful thunderclap on high,
 And rais'd a roaring elemental war
 Betwixt the sea-green waves and azure sky.

Then, like heav'n's mild embassador of love
 To man repentant, bade the tumult cease,
 Smooth'd the blue bosom of the realms above,
 And hush'd the rebel elements to peace.

Unlike to this in spirit or in mien
 Another form^b succeeded to my view;
 A two-legg'd brute which Nature made in spleen,
 Or from the loathing womb unfinish'd drew.

Scarce cou'd he syllable the curse he thought,
 Prone were his eyes to earth, his mind to evil,
 A carnal fiend to imperfection wrought,
 The mongrel offspring of a Witch and Devil.

Next bloom'd, upon an ancient forest's bound,
 The flow'ry margin^c of a silent stream,
 O'er-arch'd by oaks with ivy mantled round,
 And gilt by silver CYNTHIA's maiden beam.

On the green carpet of th' unbended grass,
 A dapper train of female fairies play'd,
 And ey'd their gambols in the watry glass,
 That smoothly stole along the shad'wy glade.

^b *Caliban in the Tempest.*

^c *Fairy-land from the Midsummer night's dream.*

Thro' these the queen TITANIA pass'd ador'd,
 Mounted aloft in her imperial car,
 Journeying to see great OBERON her lord
 Wage the mock battles of a sportive war.

Arm'd cap-a-pee forth march'd the fairy king,
 A flouter warrior never took the field,
 His threat'ning lance a hornet's horrid sting,
 The sharded beetle's scale his fable shield.

Around their chief the elfin host appear'd,
 Each little helmet sparkled like a star,
 And their sharp spears in pierceless phalanx rear'd,
 A grove of thistles, glitter'd in the air.

The scene then chang'd, from this romantic land,
 To a bleak waste by bound'ry unconfin'd,
 Where three smart sisters ^d of the *weird* band
 Were mutt'ring curses to the troublous wind.

Pale Want had wither'd every furrow'd face,
 Bow'd was each carcase with the weight of years,
 And each sunk eye-ball from its hollow case
 Distill'd cold rheum's involuntary tears.

Hors'd on three slaves they posted to the bourn
 Of a drear island, where the pendant brow
 Of a rough rock, shagg'd horribly with thorn,
 Frown'd on the boist'rous waves which rag'd below.

^d *The witches in Macbeth.*

Deep in a gloomy grot remote from day,
 Where smiling Comfort never shew'd her face,
 Where light ne'er enter'd, save one rueful ray
 Discov'ring all the terrors of the place,

They held damn'd myst'ries with infernal state,
 Whilst ghastly spectres glided slowly by,
 The scritch-owl scream'd the dying call of fate,
 And ravens croak'd their baleful augury.

No human footstep cheer'd the dread abode,
 Nor sign of living creature could be seen,
 Save where the reptile snake, or sullen toad,
 The murky floor had soil'd with venom green.

Sudden I heard the whirlwind's hollow sound,
 Each *weird* sister vanish'd into smoke.
 Now a dire yell of spirits ^e underground
 Thro' troubled Earth's wide yawning surface broke ;

When lo ! each injur'd apparition rose ;
 Aghast the murd'rer started from his bed ;
 Guilt's trembling breath his heart's red current froze,
 And Horror's dew-drops bath'd his frantic head.

More had I seen—but now the God of day
 O'er earth's broad breast his flood of light had spread,
 When Morpheus call'd his fickle dreams away,
 And on *their* wings each bright illusion fled.

^e *Ghosts in Macbeth, Richard III. &c.*

Yet still the dear ENCHANTRESS of the brain
 My waking eyes with wishful wand'rings fought,
 Whose magic will controuls th' ideal train,
 The ever-restless progeny of THOUGHT.

Sweet pow'r, I said, for others gild the ray
 Of Wealth, or Honor's folly-feather'd crown,
 Or lead the madding multitude astray
 To grasp at air-blown bubbles of renown.

Me (humbler lot !) let blameless bliss engage,
 Free from the noble mob's ambitious strife,
 Free from the muck-worm miser's lucrous rage,
 In calm Contentment's cottag'd vale of life.

If frailties there (for who from them is free ?)
 Thro' Error's maze my devious footsteps lead,
 Let them be frailties of humanity,
 And my heart plead the pardon of my head.

Let not my reason impiously require
 What heav'n has plac'd beyond its narrow span,
 But teach it to subdue each fierce desire,
 Which wars within its own small empire, man.

Teach me, what all believe, but few possess,
 That life's best science is ourselves to know,
 The first of human blessings is to bless,
 And happiest he who feels another's woe.

Thus

Thus cheaply wise, and innocently great,
 While Time's smooth sand shall regularly pass,
 Each destin'd atom's quiet course I'll wait,
 Nor rashly break, nor wish to stop the glass.

And when in death my peaceful ashes lie,
 If e'er some tongue congenial speaks my name,
 Friendship shall never blush to breathe a sigh,
 And great ones envy such an honest fame.

