

Postscript by J. Bisset

From Bisset's Magnificent Directory

POSTSCRIPT

THE various beauties from Labor spring,
The willing muse, in artless verse, would sing:
But nobler motives lay a stronger claim,
Important duties * damp the Muse's flame,
Or 'She'd a tale unfold!

What beauteous works from ORES refin'd arise,
To grace the HEAD and NECK, and charm the eyes;
To grace the HANDS, and FEET, the COAT, and VEST,
And ornament our Belles and Beaux, full drest;
The orient PEARLS, and blazing DIAMONDS, feel
Their lustre, oft, outvied by polish'd STEEL.
Witness each sparkling PLUME and radiant ZONE,
Some years ago, that grac'd Britannia's throne;
The EPAULETS, the STAR the PRINCE then wore,
And full plum'd CREST, that GEORGE AUGUSTUS bore; †
Then tens of thousands hail'd the jocund day,
And taste and fashion, bore the palm away.

* see the Apology

† These elegant ornaments were entirely compos'd of fine steel beads.

Then BUCKLES grac'd each shoe – then fancy reign'd,
And honors crown'd the laurels labor gain'd:
O! BIRMINGHAM then triumph'd- COMMERCE smil'd,
And Vulcan's sons from morn till e'vening toil'd:
Then whirling LATHES, and STAMPS' tremendous sound,
With tinkling HAMMERS, were in concert found;
Illuminations, grand, burst on the sight,
When workmens' lamps illum'd each shop at night.
THEN children carol'd songs, devoid of guile,
Responsive to the sound of forge or file.
THEN Art and Science, hand in hand were found,
And Vulcan seem'd to toil on magic ground.
O sad reverse – how many rue the day,
Since fickle FASHION wrought a TRADE's decay?
A FANCY TRADE – from whence the poor deriv'd
A constant bread – and thousands daily thriv'd.

Let not the GREAT, who now in splendour roll,
On ARTS fastidious gaze, with narrow soul;
O let not Av'rice sway the nobler mind!
To works of Art and Genius be not blind;
The poor look up, with confidence, to you,
Then grant to modest worth whate'er is due.
How many Men of Talents oft you'll meet,
With pensive looks, bare clothes and shoeless feet,
Who ne'er knew penury till trade grew dead,
Forlorn and wretched, pining now for bread:
How many Wives, alas, their Husbands mourn,
How many children, pant their Sires' return;

Nor Wives nor Children shall behold them more;
They've breath'd, perhaps, their last on * * *'s shore,
Or cross th' Atlantic, willing victims led,
In field of battle, unlamented, bled.
Oh! ruthless WAR, infuriate – madd'ning sense,
The Poor Man's scourge, Ambition's vain Pretence,
O sheath thy faulchion, let rude clamors cease,
O let us, once again, enjoy sweet Peace!
Then Trade and Commerce will again revive,
And BIRMINGHAM, once more, be seen alive.
O! could I say, with truth, each Lib'ral Art,
Alike was patroniz'd in ev'ry part;
O! could I say that such was HERE the case,
It would, with pleasure, this my essay grace;
But truth must ever guide my humble strain,
To praise, 'twould grateful be, to censure, pain;
My wish alone, is for the gen'ral weal,
And for the helpless poor I would appeal:
How many youths of Genius oft you'll see
Depress'd, neglected, chill'd by poverty;
Their Parents scarcely can supply them bread,
Whilst want and famine fills the mind with dread.
NECESSITY'S spur to GENIUS, true,
But sometimes goads INVENTION thro' and thro';
It lacerates its side, inflicts a wound,
And Genius, oft, lies bleeding on the ground;
Nipp'd in the bud, the blossoms fade away,
They droop, they sink, they languish and decay.

But if you would extend your friendly hand,
The buds might blossom and the flow'rs expand;
Rich fruit, in time, each goodly branch might bear,
And Children, yet unborn, the blessings share.
O! stretch your friendly arms each plant to save,
And snatch the genial blossoms from the grave;
O! prop each feeble stem, before it falls,
O! succour the distressed, 'tis duty calls;

Humanity's sweet voice calls, those who can
Support, protect, and cherish fellow man;
Remove the sapling plants to richer soil,
They'll grow, they'll flourish, and reward your toil.
Relieve the Poor, whose hearts with anguish bleed,
HEAV'N, and your CONSCIENCE, will approve the deed!

FINIS