

Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air !
 If e'er one Vision touch'd thy infant Thought,
 Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught, 30
 Of airy Elves by Moonlight Shadows seen,
 The silver Token, and the Circled Green,
 Or Virgins visited by Angel-pow'rs,
 With Golden Crowns and Wreaths of heav'nly Flow'rs ;
 Hear and believe! thy own Importance know, 35
 Nor bound thy narrow Views to things below.
 Some secret Truths, from Learned Pride conceal'd,
 To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd :
 What tho' no Credit doubting Wits may give?
 The Fair and Innocent shall still believe. 40
 Know, then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
 The light *Militia* of the lower sky :
 These, tho' unseen, are ever on the Wing,
 Hang o'er the *Box*, and hover round the *Ring*.
 Think what an Equipage thou hast in Air, 45
 And view with scorn *Two Pages* and a *Chair*.
 As now your own, our Beings were of old,
 And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous Mold ;
 Thence, by a soft Transition, we repair
 From earthly Vehicles to these of Air. 50
 Think not, when Woman's transient Breath is fled,
 That all her Vanities at once are dead.

Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
 And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the Cards.
 Her Joy in gilded Chariots, when alive, 55
 And love of *Ombre*, after Death survive.
 For when the Fair in all their Pride expire,
 To their first Elements their Souls retire :
 The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
 Mount up, and take a *Salamander's* name. 60
 Soft yielding Minds to Water glide away,
 And sip, with *Nymphs*, their elemental Tea.
 The graver Prude sinks downward to a *Gnome*,
 In search of Mischief still on Earth to roam.
 The light Coquettes in *Sylphs* aloft repair, 65
 And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.

Know further yet ; whoever fair and chaste
 Rejects Mankind, is by some *Sylph* embrac'd :
 For Spirits, freed from mortal Laws, with ease 70
 Assume what Sexes and what Shapes they please.
 What guards the Purity of melting Maids,
 In Courtly Balls, and Midnight Masquerades,
 Safe from the treach'rous Friend, the daring Spark,
 The Glance by Day, the Whisper in the Dark,
 When kind Occasion prompts their warm desires, 75
 When music softens, and when Dancing fires ?

'Tis but their *Sylph*, the wise Celestials know,
 Tho' *Honour* is the word with Men below.

Some Nymphs there are, too conscious of their Face,
 For Life predestin'd to the *Gnomes*' embrace. 80
 These swell their Prospects and exalt their Pride,
 When Offers are disdain'd, and Love deny'd.
 Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant Brain,
 While Peers, and Dukes, and all their sweeping Train,
 And Garters, Stars, and Coronets appear, 85
 And in soft sounds, *Your Grace* salutes their Ear.
 'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
 Instruct the eyes of young *Coquettes* to roll,
 Teach Infant Cheeks a bidden Blush to know,
 And little Hearts to flutter at a *Beau*. 90

Oft, when the World imagine Women stray,
 The *Sylphs* thro' Mystic mazes guide their Way,
 Thro' all the giddy Circle they pursue,
 And old Impertinence expel by new.
 What tender Maid but must a victim fall 95
 To one Man's Treat, but for another's Ball ?
 When *Florio* speaks what Virgin could withstand,
 If gentle *Damon* did not squeeze her Hand ?
 With varying Vanities, from ev'ry Part,

They shift the moving Toyshop of their Heart ; 100
 Where Wigs with Wigs, with Sword-knots Sword-knots
 strive,
 Beaux banish Beaux, and Coaches Coaches drive.
 This erring Mortals Levity may call,
 Oh blind to Truth ! the *Sylphs* contrive it all.

Of these am I, who thy Protection claim, 105
 A watchful Sprite, and *Ariel* is my name.
 Late, as I rang'd the crystal Wilds of Air,
 In the clear Mirror of thy ruling *Star*
 I saw, alas! some dread Event impend,
 Ere to the Main this morning's Sun descend, 110
 But Heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
 Warn'd by the *Sylph*, oh pious Maid, beware!
 This to disclose is all thy Guardian can.
 Beware of all, but most beware of Man!

He said : when *Shock*, who thought she slept too long,
 Leap'd up, and wak'd his Mistress with his Tongue. 116
 'Twas then, *Belinda*, if Report say true,
 Thy Eyes first open'd on a *Billet-doux* ;
Wounds, *Charms*, and *Ardors* were no sooner read,
 But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head. 120

And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
 Each Silver Vase in mystic Order laid.



First, rob'd in White, the Nymph intent adores,
 With Head uncover'd, the *Cosmetic* pow'rs.
 A heav'nly Image in the Glass appears, 125
 To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears ;
 Th' inferior Priestess, at her Altar's side,
 Trembling begins the sacred Rites of Pride.
 Unnumber'd Treasures ope at once, and here
 The various Off'rings of the World appear ; 130
 From each she nicely culls with curious Toil,
 And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring Spoil.
 This Casket *India's* glowing Gems unlocks,
 And all *Arabia* breathes from yonder Box.
 The Tortoise here and Elephant unite, 135
 Transformed to *Combs*, the speckled and the white.
 Here Files of Pins extend their shining Rows,
 Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
 Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms ;
 The Fair each moment rises in her Charms, 140
 Repairs her Smiles, awakens ev'ry Grace,
 And calls forth all the Wonders of her Face ;
 Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,
 And keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes.
 The busy *Sylphs* surround their darling Care ; 145
 These set the Head, and those divide the Hair,
 Some fold the Sleeve, whilst others plait the Gown ;
 And *Betty's* prais'd for labours not her own.