



# MEMOIRS

OF THE

SHAKESPEAR'S HEAD.

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BOOK I.

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CHAP. I.

*The Introduction. A Night-Scene in the Shakespear, embellished with the Appearance of an unexpected Guest. His Reasons for the Visit, and his Grievances amply set forth.*



Scholar of *Salamanca* having made his escape from some very imminent Danger over the Tops of the Houses, broke thro'

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the

the first Sky-light that offered to view, and fell into the Laboratory of a Magician; where, breaking a Phial (on being pressed by an In-  
 visible Voice) he set at liberty the famous little Gentleman, known by the Name of the *Devil upon Crutches*; who unveil'd to him the most secret Intrigues and Combinations in that City: These are to be found faithfully set down, by *Monsieur Le Sage*, in his Book intitled *Le Diable Boiteaux*.

I have mentioned this, because, the strange Accident which occasion'd the Relations, I am about to make, was something similar.

I had suppd merrily, with a few select Friends, in the Tavern, known by the Name of *the Shakespear's Head*, when, it growing late, my Compa-

nions departed to their several Man-  
sions, while, for my part, I chose  
to remain till I had emptied my last  
Pipe, and drawn to the Dregs, the  
remains of a Bottle of *Harry De-*  
*lamain's* Burgundy.

*And now the Bat had ta'en his cloister'd flight,  
And to black Hecate's summons the shard-born Beetle  
With its drowsy Hum, had rung Night's yawning Peal.*

I nodded over my Flask; nor  
did I feel interruption from the  
Noise made in the next Room,  
by *Poll French*, *Tom Squander*,  
and some other Bucks and Lasses  
of equal Spirit: Neither was I  
disturbed, by the hoarse Watch-  
man's bellowing, past one; nor the  
musical Voice and Art of the fair  
*Tyrolese*, who, in the Yard, *play'd*  
*over such Strains as had a dying*  
*Sound.* *Morpheus* had laid his Lead

Mace upon me, and clos'd my Eyes  
from care and mortal Coil.

When a hollow, but yet pleasing  
Voice, founding in my Ear, at once  
dispell'd my Slumber, and awak'd  
me; I rous'd, and, looking round,  
beheld at my Elbow, a Figure in  
every Part resembling that we see  
drawn for *Shakespear*: There ran a  
sacred Tremor thro' my Limbs, I  
rose confus'd, and, bowing, own'd  
the Presence of the laurel'd Shade;  
then address'd him, in his own  
Words, as *Hamlet* does his Father,

*What would thy gracious Figure?*

I would have proceeded, but he inter-  
rupted me, and thus began.

To you have I chosen to reveal  
my present Grievs; (for tho' a Spirit

I have my Griefs; which may be something abated in this Confidence) for I know you love *me*, and my Memory; besides, Nature has endowed you with a Curiosity that will lead you to listen with Patience to my Detail.

You have been informed by those who have written my Life, that in my Years of Nonage and of Folly, I was oblig'd to fly to *London*, for trespassing in a Park, not far from where I lived; and it has been lately revealed to the World, that my Distresses in *London*, consequential to my Elopement, reduc'd me to the Necessity of holding the Horses of Persons of Quality, who rode to the Play, as was then the Custom; from which Occupation my Diligence rais'd me to the Theatre; of

which I have since been stil'd the  
Father.

Yet, credit me, my Friend, in  
this low Scene of Life, which you  
may be sure press'd hard upon a  
Fancy so luxuriant; an Imagination  
so warm as mine: I felt not half the  
heart-corroding Cares, that have  
gnaw'd my Soul, since fix'd the  
Guardian of this *Bacchanalian Temple*,  
a Post allotted to punish me for the  
Errors of my youthful Conduct.  
Twenty Years have I here presid'd;  
nor will my Probation be compleated  
in twenty more; however at the End  
of every twenty Years I am allowed  
a Conference with some one Person.  
'Tis your Lot to be the first. Then  
listen attentively, until I recount  
such Things, as when revealed, will  
make my Spirits light as Air;  
until

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until a Train of newer Scenes arise again to weigh me down.

Lift! be attentive! interrupt me not! except a very necessary Question offers, while I unfold to you many strange Secrets, which will surprize the World. While I strip off their gaudy Plumage, who impose with the false Lustre of a splendid Outside on the Credulity of Mankind: Observe those whom I shall shew you in their native Characters; mark them as they pass; and you will find the sanctify'd Clergyman, an arch Hypocrite; the bluff Captain, a kick'd Coward; the noble Count, a *Swiss* Peasant; the assuming Doctor, an ignorant Quack; and the modest Matron, a most luscious Harlot; some Harlots Women of Virtue, tho' not of Chastity; and the Wo-

man of Chastity the most despicable Character ; you will find the Gamester often a fair Dealer, and the apparently fair Dealer an arrant Cheat; the Lord a Sharper ; the Gentleman a Mountebank ; and a Player a Gentleman ; an honest Man with a bad Character ; and the Villain with the Title of a Man of Honour : These, as they have pass'd before me, in a regular Succession, for two hundred and sixty Moons past, will I raise to your View, as they appear'd to me.

But pray, says I, much honour'd Shade, won't some of these heroic Folks, be for kicking me out of their Company, when they discover my Intrusion ? As for you, you need not fear their Anger, or their Malice ; you have your old Cloak  
of



of Air, to wrap yourself up in, which will keep you warm and safe. But consider, Sir, I have a handsom Nose, my Limbs are none of the worst, and it would be of no earthly Advantage to 'me to have these broke, or that flatten'd to my Face; and then, Sir, I have a mortal Aversion to *Cyclops*, I am so fond of my Eyes.

Hold, Sir, he cry'd, why this unnecessary Interruption? Depend on me, and all your Fears are groundless. Take this Wand, be silent, follow me, and observe; with this thou shalt become invisible to mortal Sight; but let not a single Circumstance thou see'st, a Word, I say, escape the Volume of thy Brain. Register it safely; that when we part thou may'st set it forth, and

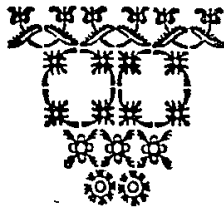
publish it to the wide extended World for Man's Improvement.

The Improvement of Man is indeed a hackney'd Theme; 'tis a Trumpet which every Adventurer in literature now claps to his Mouth, to deceive the unwary, and make Money at *their* Expence; but alas! how very few are there who keep up to the letter of their Proclamation; how often do we find the suppos'd Advocate for Virtue the real Champion of Vice; the Treatise of Morality, a Defence of Libertinism; the Essay on Religion, a Recommendation of Atheism; and Honour and Honesty specious Names for Villainy and Deceit.

It is generally allow'd, that no Man ever understood the Vestiges of the human Heart better than myself;  
yet

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yet I confefs to you, fince I have been by cruel Fate deftin'd to be the Genius of this Houfe, I have been Witnefs to Scenes of which I had not the leaft Notion of; you fhall fhare them with me, and do you apply them as I before ordain'd.



CHAP.