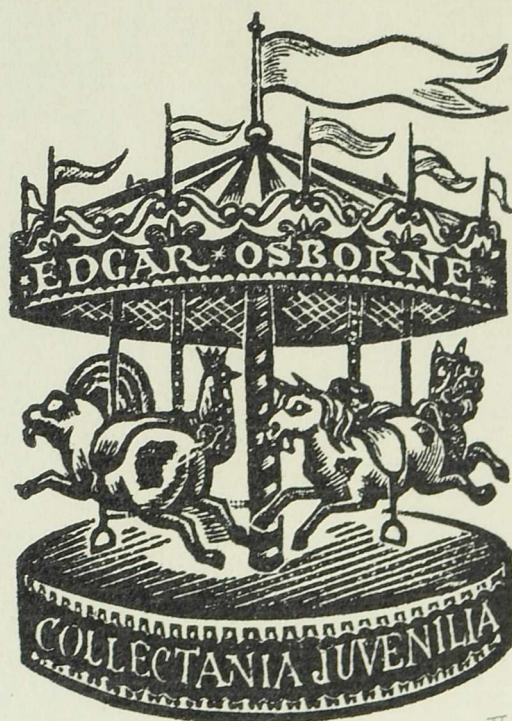


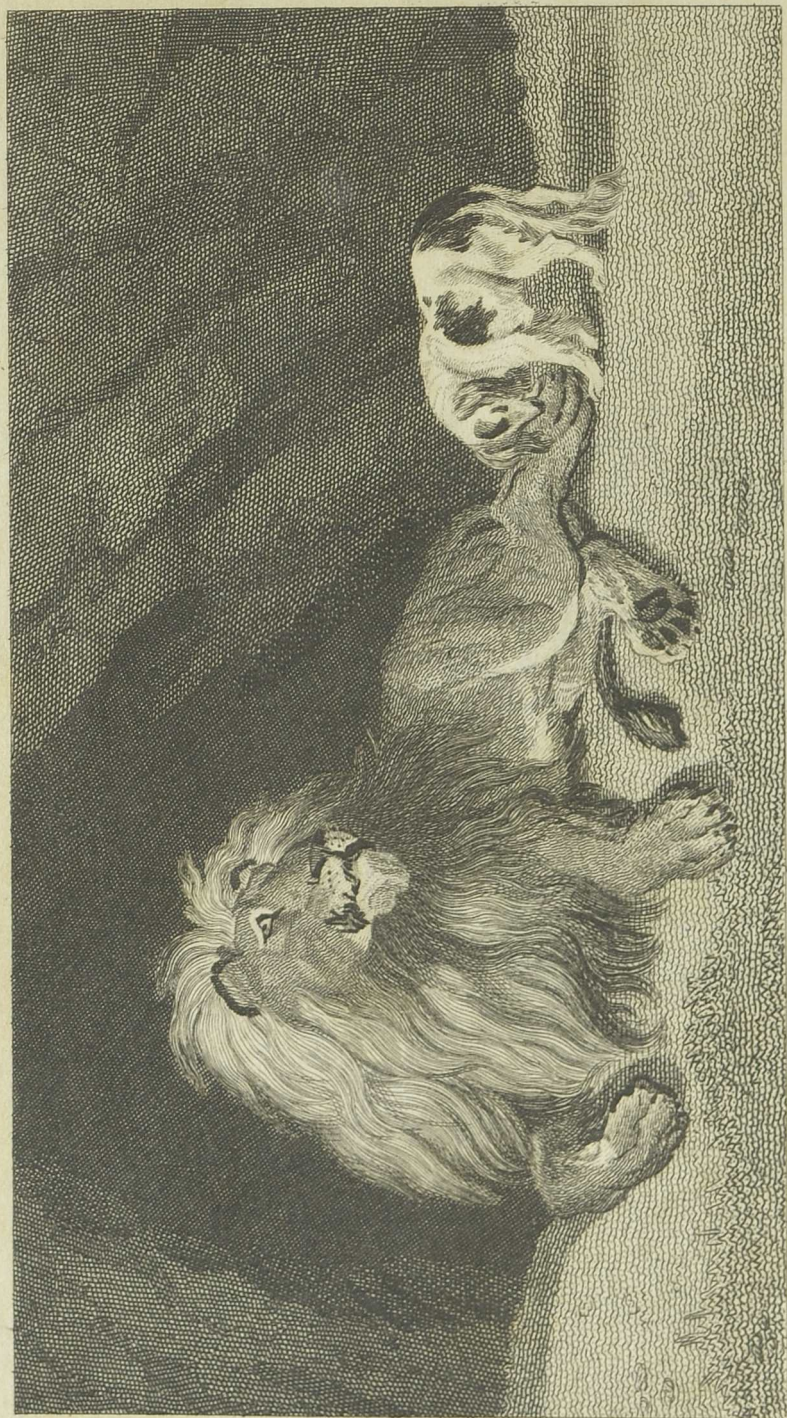
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Court of the Beasts.



H.R. Cook sculp.

and looking around.
He beheld the kind animal licking his wound.

Thomas John Burt.

THE

C O U R T

OF

T H E B E A S T S.



LONDON:

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1808.

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.

THE COURT OF THE BEASTS.

AS King Lion one morning was reading the news,
Which the Jackall in waiting had brought to amuse
His Sov'reign at breakfast; a cloud on his brow
Show'd some feeling indignant was rising. "What
now?"

Thought the Jackall; "what can he have seen
In those papers, which thus has excited his spleen?
I examin'd them well, nor discover'd a thing
Which to me seem'd unmeet for the eye of a King."—
—"Come hither, vile slave!"—quoth the Lord of the
Beasts—

"Say, what mean these descriptions of dances and feasts?
Here the dull Morning Post half his columns fills up
With a party the Peacock invited to sup;
Nor content with accounts of the tenants of air,
Even insects and grubs must come in for their share.
Shall a pitiful Bird, and contemptible Fly,
Thus figure in life, and engage the world's eye;

Whilst the Lords of the field in oblivion are thrown,
 Their fame unextoll'd, their bright actions unknown?
 Forbid it our dignity, pow'r, and dominion!
 Go, call in our Queen—we would ask her opinion.
 When Routs, Concerts, and Balls are the point in debate,
 A female some hint of importance may state.
 Summon also the Council;—our fame as a nation
 Is involv'd in the scheme under consideration.”

The mandate was issu'd—the members assembled,
 With fears for themselves all the ministers trembled;
 When the monarch thus spoke, in extreme agitation—
 “Attend to the cause of our just indignation.
 In vain do our actions with prowess abound;
 In vain is each contest with victory crown'd;
 Unnotic'd they pass, whilst the trumpet of fame
 To creatures unheard of has given a name.
 The Butterfly's Ball is in ev'ry one's mouth,
 And the Peacock's Assembly resounds north and south:
 But let the vile insects disport in the rays
 Of public applause; for ere long, the bright blaze
 Of the grand *Fête champêtre* we purpose to give
 Shall obscure their dim light, and for ages shall live!
 From the creatures of reason we'll borrow the plan,
 And in this entertainment will imitate man.



H. R. Cook sculp.

The Monarch thus spoke &c.

Published by Darton & Hargy, Grace Church Street

But what says our Consort?—her wishes, 'tis known,
Need only be mention'd, to make them our own.”—

Then in soft female accents, becoming and meek,
The Queen thus began :—“ Might I venture to speak,
Instead of a *Fête*, let our taste be display'd
In a brilliant Assembly and grand Masquerade.
This gives scope to the fancy, the talent, th' *esprit*,
Each aiming at conquest in smart repartee;
And in circles of *ton* would produce such *éclat*,
That our rivals eclips'd must to us yield the *pas*.”

“ Peace, peace!”—roar'd the Monarch—“ thou ignorant fool!

How dar'st thou dissent when we've settled the whole?
We'll abide by the voice of our Council alone,
Whose superior wisdom has ever been shown,
By approving our projects the moment they're known.” }

This hint for the Courtiers was more than sufficient,
Who had long in the secrets of place been proficient;
With unanimous voice all the members broke forth—
“ His Majesty's wit was unrivall'd on earth;
Nor e'er was a shadow of error detected,
In a plan by his marvellous wisdom projected.”

“ Enough,”—said the King—“ let our pleasure be known,

And all loyal subjects will flock to the throne.
 Be the swiftest of foot straight dispatch'd on the mission,
 To bid to our *Fête* ev'ry Beast of condition.
 And now to arrange the details of our plan,
 Adopting the customs of reasoning man,
 An ASS-RACE shall open the sports of the day ;
 Next, the Monkeys and Apes shall a PANTOMIME play ;
 But the DINNER's the object of chief contemplation,
 For I lately have heard of a certain great nation,
 Where eating's the science most studied in life,
 And to keep the best table the principal strife.
 Let the Jackalls and other providers take care
 That a varied abundance of viands are there ;
 And that wines are supplied of each country and kind ;
 Since, though boasting alone the distinction of mind,
 With men in these days has the pleasure of drinking
 Entirely suspended the labour of thinking.
 Cards, Music, and Dice, shall conclude the bright day,
 And vary the sports till the sun's parting ray.”

The news of the *Fête* spread delight through the land,
 All attending with joy to the royal command.

First, with dignified movement, majestic and slow,
 Each act from reflection appearing to flow,
 From the desarts of Asia, the noblest of Beasts,
 The ELEPHANT march'd at the head of the guests,
 With a grandeur of mien and a grace all his own,
 To his sov'reign he bent, and remain'd near the throne.

To pay his leige duty—their object the same—
 As next in degree the RHINOCEROS came.
 This guest was invested in armour complete,
 Prepar'd to repel ev'ry foe he should meet;
 But not to attack, for his nature was kind,
 And to peace and good-fellowship ever inclin'd.
 Though unvalu'd in life, yet to posthumous fame
 The Indian Physicians acknowledge his claim*.

The CAMEL to strength and docility join'd
 A temp'rance which rarely is found in mankind.
 Over deserts of sand he had journey'd whole days,
 Without water or food, 'neath the sun's parching rays;
 When by chance overtaking a female relation,
 Who travell'd that way on the same great occasion,

* Many parts of the body of the Rhinoceros are used in the Materia Medica of the Indians.

He gallantly offer'd to act as her guide,
And, on being presented, he knelt at her side.

The TIGER, who boasts of a beauty and grace
To which all the quadruped world must give place,
Is still but a proof of the justice of nature,
Who has shown in the mind of this mischievous creature,
An exact counterpoise to his beauty of skin,
By making him equally hideous within.
He, in treacherous guise, as allied to blood royal,
Next crouch'd to the monarch, to show he was loyal.

The PANTHER and LEOPARD had join'd in his train,
From relationship hoping some favour to gain,
As they bounded together from Hindostan's plain. }

Their Cousin, the keen-sighted LYNX, from the north,
With the rest of this numerous tribe, then came forth.

Monsieur WOLF, just return'd from a banquet of blood,
Prepared to appear at the royal abode.
But the murderous tokens were wash'd off in vain,
All the way he proceeded new crimes left their stain:
Nor pass'd unobserved; for the Fox came behind,
Who, on mischief intent, wav'd his brush in the wind;

And by signs, lest his speaking should cause a dispute,
Drew all eyes on his rival's *embroider'd* Court-suit.

The savage HYENA then joining the ring,
Grinn'd a horrible smile as he bow'd to the king.
From the torrid zone's arid and desolate plains,
Where, fierce and unsocial, by terror he reigns,
He surlily came; trav'ling chiefly by night,
His eyes serving better in dark than in light.

The DOG first enquir'd if his presence at Court
Would be greeted with smiles, should he thither resort;
For though he could noble progenitors boast,
Now extinct were their names, his nobility lost.
When, receiving an answer of high approbation,
He repair'd to the palace to make his prostration.

Much favour to Dogs did the Monarch extend;
Since in one of the kind he had found a true friend.
It chanc'd, that pursuing the chace in full force,
A wound in the foot put a stop to his course.
A cavern he sought, and endeavour'd to rest;
But, though sleeping, uneasiness still he express'd.
A Dog passing by, thither drawn by the sound,
Found the Lion outstretch'd in great pain on the ground,

A compassionate heart made his reasoning brief,
 And he instantly tried to afford some relief.
 On awaking, the king found his anguish appeased;
 But the genial warmth which his pain so much eased,
 Excited his wonder, and, looking around,
 He beheld the kind animal licking his wound.
 With the noblest of feelings, warm gratitude's glow,
 The noblest of bosoms will most overflow.
 This sentiment fully the Lion possess'd,
 Who the little benevolent creature caress'd.
 The Dog, in his turn, wagg'd his tail with delight
 At the mercy which spar'd, and reliev'd him from fright.
 Thenceforward, a friendship, which rarely is seen
 Among bipeds, existed these creatures between.
 One dwelling they shar'd, and the King's grateful heart
 Ne'er allow'd him to eat 'till his friend had a part.
 But alas! how fast-fleeting and vain are our joys!
 Scarce possess'd, ere a blast the frail fabric destroys:
 The dog became sick—death the fatal blow gave—
 And the tear of affection was shed o'er his grave.

Sir BRUIN had travell'd, 'mongst men he had been,
 And various misfortunes in life had he seen.
 The badge of a slave still remain'd on his neck,
 And greatly it seem'd his high spirit to check.

His pride, like his skin, by the collar was gall'd,
 Though "a Collar of merit" it now might be call'd;
 Since, when treated ignobly and wantonly pain'd,
 He broke from his prison and freedom regain'd.
 To his Sov'reign he bow'd, with profound veneration,
 In a manner which plainly evinc'd education.
 From her islands of ice, where sole Empress she reigns,
 His FAIR SISTER arriv'd, after infinite pains.
 To the element new, and regretting the water,
 No motive had sway'd, save presenting her daughter;
 But for this, she had certainly sent an excuse.
 —What will not maternal affection produce!—

In courage undaunted, unrivall'd in beauty,
 The HORSE came to answer the call on his duty.
 In his own native wilds, ere by slav'ry degraded,
 His natural rights by mankind uninvaded;
 Whilst with liberty bless'd, each perfection in nature
 Unites to embellish this elegant creature.
 What grace in each movement! what fire in his eye!
 With the swiftness of wind almost seeming to fly.
 Proudly raising his crest as he enter'd the presence,
 With peculiar grace he perform'd his obeisance.

Although from a like noble stock he descended,
 And their names in alliance had often been blended;
 Now, sunk by misfortune, neglect, and disgrace,
 To upstarts more favour'd the Ass must give place.
 For this, we are told, as th' ostensible reason,
 That an ancestor once had been charg'd with high treason,
 For merely in sport having acted the King;
 Which had pass'd with success; but, attempting to sing,
 His unfortunate voice had the project betray'd,
 And the *soi-disant* monarch, for roaring, had bray'd.

Though all were agreed that the wearer it grac'd,
 Still the dress of the next was in singular taste.
 In the ZEBRA were beauty and wildness united;
 From the Cape of Good Hope this rare guest came invited.

A Polish Grandee, proudly tow'ring in height,
 Count URUS* appear'd, all in sables bedight;
 His head was adorn'd with a garland of hair,
 And loud was the praise of his figure and air.
 'Twas surely this form which Imperial Jove
 Assum'd, to inspire fair Europa with love!

* The Urus or Wild-Bull is chiefly to be met with in the province of Lithuania, and grows to a size which scarcely any other animal, except the Elephant, is found to equal.

From all points of the compass the guests came in
shoals :

Each clime sent its share, from the line to the poles.

From his snow-cover'd mountains the Lapland REIN-
DEER,

In the circle of *ton* was the next to appear.

All we love and admire in this guest were combined ;

To the graces of form adding those of the mind.

Content under hardships which few could endure ;

His temper was gentle, his habits were pure ;

But unskill'd in the world and the customs of court,

His primitive manners excited much sport.

“ See that strange rustic quiz,” said a dame in high life ;

“ He brings as a trav’ling companion, his wife !”

’Twas true, and she envied her beauty and grace,

As she modestly bent and withdrew to her place.

With sudden wild movement and bright-glancing eye,
Quick starting in fear at th’ approach of a fly ;

With the grace of a Wood-nymph, scarce touching the
ground,

The ANTELOPE sprang o’er the crowd at a bound.

Then pass’d through the Court, like a meteor by night,

Which we scarcely behold ere it vanish from sight.

A contrast complete, then appear'd Baron BOAR;
 And after him follow'd so many guests more,
 That 'twere tedious to mention the Nobles by name,
 Who to prove their allegiance from all quarters came;
 And as to Plebeians, such myriads of these
 Came their duty to pay, or their vanity please,
 That they crowded each path to the regal abode,
 And, within *certain limits*, quite cover'd the road.
 For, knowing the turn of his subjects for war,
 Who, whenever they met, were but too apt to jar,
 The king had thought fit to establish a bound,
 Within whose mark'd line 'twas declared *neutral-ground*.
 On this joyous occasion, these precincts attain'd,
 All enmity ceas'd, and security reign'd.

The Drawing-room clos'd, to the Course they resort,
 Where the ASS-RACE afforded most excellent sport.
 There was betting and swearing, and swearing and betting,
 And wrangling and jangling, and fuming and fretting;
 And all were as eager to know how it ended,
 As if on the issue their lives had depended.

The PANTOMIME afterwards call'd their attention,
 Where merit was due to the Monkey's invention.



H. R. COOTE sculp.

*The Drawing-room closed, to the course they resort,
Where the Ass-race afforded most excellent sport.*

Published by Darton & Hargreaves, Grace Church Street.

The Theatre rais'd with the Beaver's assistance—
 Performers engag'd from a wonderful distance—
 An Orchestra containing a numerous band—
Corps de ballet divine—the *Spectacle* most grand!
 And though bustle and noise were kept up the whole time,
 Its obscurity prov'd that the plot was sublime.

But now what fine odours are borne on the gale!
 What exquisite fragrance their nostrils inhale!
 'Tis the DINNER they scent;—such a dinner, ye guests,
 No King ever gave, save the King of the Beasts!
 It were vain to attempt a description to give
 Of what words cannot paint, or the fancy conceive;
 Suffice it to say, that the plentiful board
 With the choicest of viands was sumptuously stored.
 Near each different guest was attentively placed
 The dish which peculiarly suited his taste;
 And as some of their tempers were rather impatient,
 Behind ev'ry seat a Monkey was station'd.
 The man OURANG OUTANG, as *Maitre d'hotel*,
 And as Cooks, the BABOONS all perform'd their parts well.

The Banquet was serv'd in a wide open plain,
 Where the air was refresh'd by a breeze from the main;

And where, time out of mind, undisputed dominion
 Of this King's divine right seem'd to warrant th' opinion.
 At the head of the table, the great Lords of state
 And the higher Grandees near his Majesty sat.
 To the Monarch they turn'd, and declared—"they would
 fain

Have conceal'd their just fears for his regal Domain;
 But, such were th' encroachments now making by Man,
 That his Empire would soon be reduced to a span;
 Unless in strict league, and without further pause,
 'Gainst that great common foe, they all made common
 cause;"

Concluding by loudly professing their zeal—
 "To defend his just rights, and promote public weal!"—

Lower down at the board greater liberty reign'd;
 There, ease, wit, and gaiety flow'd unrestrain'd.
 All were eager to publish the news of the day,
 Or their knowledge on various topics display;
 Such critical skill was in cookery shown,
 It would seem they had studied this science alone.
 But gallantry greatly prevail'd o'er the rest,
 And gave to the feast its most delicate zest.
 To trifles, 'tis known, many pleasures we owe;
 The order was such, that each Belle had her Beau.

The BISON declar'd, "'mongst the beauties he'd seen,
 That the Islands of Britain gave birth to the Queen."
 This flatt'ring distinction fair Io obtain'd,
 Who the Hottentot-heart of her lover had gain'd.
 The STAG's speaking eyes, skill'd in love's tender art,
 Ask'd in language distinct for the HIND's gentle heart;
 He sigh'd, as he waited her answer to hear—
 Ah! who can resist when love smiles through a tear!
 GRIMALKIN was plac'd near a young PERSIAN FAIR,
 And purr'd his applause of her fine silky hair.
 "Her eyes than the topaz more brilliantly shone,
 And the whiteness of snow by her skin was outdone."
 FELINA re-purr'd, in the like tender strain,
 "That his royal descent in his stripes appear'd plain."

Of the old world the natives, past times to review,
 Convers'd with their friends who now dwelt in the new.

Much wonder was rais'd tow'rds the end of the feast,
 By the Usher announcing a newly come guest.
 So slowly he moved, that his limbs seem'd scarce able
 To drag on their load to the head of the table.
 He was greatly distress'd at arriving so late,
 And requested the first Lord in waiting to state,
 "That he set off the moment he heard of the *Fête*."

But the journey was long, and Sir TORTOISE was old;
 Since the day of his birth had a century roll'd.
 He was press'd to partake of such food as he chose,
 But, his loyalty shown, he begg'd leave to repose.

Now ease and good-humour fill'd each happy breast,
 And mirth and hilarity reign'd at the feast.
 All were pleas'd with themselves, with their host, and
 their fare;
 And many among them were heard to declare,
 That no day of their lives with this day could compare. }
 But the sunshine of summer will not always last :
 When the tables were clear'd the gay glass circled fast;
 Its unusual effects were too speedily found.
 The air with loud voices began to resound,
 And two, 'bove the rest, in more eager dissension,
 Were o'erheard to declare their decided intention
 To meet the next morning, at dawn of the day,
 And settle the point in a summary way.
 But the quarrel proceeding, the beast of most pow'r
 Soon laid his antagonist dead on the floor.
 The example spread quick, and, oh ! dire to relate,
 Ere its force could be check'd many shar'd the same fate.
 The horrid confusion, the noise beyond bearing,
 The roaring, the growling, the biting, the tearing,



Milcock South

*The roaring, the growling, the biting, the tearing
No pen can relate*

No pen can relate;—or the scene which ensued
 Bedescribed without pain, without dread have been view'd!
 Mangled heads, limbs, and carcasses cover'd the ground,
 And the blood of the combatants stream'd all around.

As fire, which has long in deep caverns been pent,
 Upheaves the firm ground, inly murm'ring for vent;
 And surmounting all hindrance oppos'd to its course,
 At length breaks its bounds with impetuous force:
 So, swelling, with fury resistless burst forth
 The Lion's fierce rage;—he tore up the earth—
 His eyes flash'd disdain 'neath their dark low'ring brows;
 On his sides loud resounded his tail's lashing blows.
 His huge jaws oped tremendous, with foam cover'd o'er,
 And all animate nature recoil'd at his roar!—
 In thunder he utter'd the words—"Cease the fight!"—
 —Each bold beast shrunk appall'd;—all was still as the
 night.

A moment he paused, to gain time to respire.—
 When, suddenly, Reason appear'd to inspire
 His magnanimous mind;---the silence he broke,
 And in dignified accents the monarch thus spoke---
 "To my sovereign power all other must bow,
 My claim to the sceptre each Beast will allow;

To dispute it were vain, the proof is at hand,
 See the bones that lie scatter'd all over the land!
 Bears, Tigers, and Wolves, all the large savage Beasts
 Have been dragg'd to my den, and there served for my
 feasts.

Beyond the wide forest surrounding this plain
 Stretch the lands o'er whose surface sole Monarch I reign;
 But mere physical strength is the boast of a fool,
 Who possesses but this is unworthy to rule;
 'Tis justice alone which gives value to might,
 And mercy the star in the crown that's most bright!

“ For the dreadful events which have just taken place,
 And of th' erst happy day have so alter'd the face,
 I alone am to blame;---I alone gave the cause,
 By presuming to trifle with Nature's fix'd laws.
 This Wine, which on us has such fatal effects,
 No doubt differs widely as Man it respects;
 Did it thus fire his veins, it were idle to think
 That he ever again of the poison would drink.
 What!---sacrifice reason, the glorious line
 Which from our bounded sphere parts his nature divine!
 'Tis false;---the aspersion can ne'er be believed,
 And tho' such things I've heard, it is plain I'm deceived.

Then may we by our dear-bought experience be taught!
 To our feelings it speaks, and with precept is fraught.
 Our arrogant scheme has receiv'd its due meed,
 By the signal correction so justly decreed.
 And let Brutes, to whom Instinct is scarcely allow'd,
 Cease to imitate man with strong Reason endow'd!

“ For the high misdemeanours committed this day,
 The offenders may now all their terrors allay.
 A free pardon we grant;——our honour is sure---
 Their crimes are forgotten, their persons secure.
 In form let our will be proclaim'd through the nation,
 And may other Crown'd-heads copy our moderation!”

Then, as Herald, the Ass blew his clarion aloud,
 And on high, from a rostrum, address'd the vast crowd.
 “ Oyez!---Be it known---in the king's royal name,
 A GENERAL AMNESTY here I proclaim!---

The bursts of applause made the atmosphere ring,
 All roaring in chorus “ LONG LIVE OUR GREAT KING!”

THE END.

—December, 1807.

