

THE

Prologue and Epilogue,

TO THE LAST NEW PLAY;

Constantine the Great.

PROLOGUE, *Spoken by Mr. Goodman.*

WHat think ye meant Wise Providence, when first
POETS were made? I'de tell you if I durst,
 That 'twas in Contradiction to Heaven's Word,
 That when its Spirit o're the Waters stir'd,
 When it saw All, and said that All was good,
 The Creature *POET* was not understood.
 For were it worth the pains of Six long Days,
 To Mould Retailers of dull Third-Day-Plays,
 That starve out Three-score Years in Hopes of Bays.
 'Tis plain they ne're were of the First Creation,
 But came by meer Equiv'cal Generation.
 Like Rats in Ships, without Coition bred;
 As hated too, as they are, and unfed.
 Nature their Species sure must needs disown,
 Scarce knowing *POETS*, less by *POETS* known.
 Yet this Poor Thing so scorn'd, and set at nought,
 Ye all pretend to, and would fain be thought.
 Disabl'd waiting *Whore-Masters*, are not
 Prouder to own the Brats they never got;
 Then Fumbl'ing Itching Rhimers of the Town,
 T' Adopt some base Born Song that's not their own.
 Spite of his State, my Lord sometimes Descends,
 To please the Importunity of Friends.
 The dullest He thought most for business fit,
 'Twill Venture his bought Place, to Aim at Wit.
 And though He sinks with His Impleys of State,
 Till Common Sense forsake Him, He'l Translate.
 The *POET* and the *WHORE*, alike Complains
 Of Trading Quality, that spoils their Gains;
 The Lords will Write, and Ladies will have Swains.
 Therefore all you, who have Male Issue born,
 Under the Starving Sign of *CAPRICORN*;
 Prevent the Malice of their Stars in Time,
 And warn them Early from the Sin of Rhime.
 Tell 'em how *Spencer* starv'd, how *Cowley* mourn'd,
 How *Butler*'s Faith and Service was return'd;
 And if such Warning they refuse to take,
 This last Experiment, O Parents make!
 With Hands behind them see the Offender ty'd,
 The Parish Whip, and Beadle by his Side.
 Then lead him to some Stall that does Expose
 The Authors he loves most, there rub his Nose,
 Till like a Spannel lasht, to know Command,
 He by the due Correction understand,
 To keep his Brains clean, and not foul the Land.
 Till he against his Nature learn to strive,
 And get the Knack of Dulness how to Thrive.

A

EPILOGUE

