

**THE ADVENTURES OF  
JOHN OF GAUNT, DUKE  
OF LANCASTER. VOL. III**

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The Adventures of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Vol. III by James White

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THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF

JOHN OF GAUNT,  
DUKE OF LANCASTER.

By JAMES WHITE, Esq.  
AUTHOR OF EARL STRONGBOW, CONWAY  
CASTLE, &c.

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V O L. III.

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*V I S I T XXIII.*

THE following day the duke of Lancaster thus proceeded: The conversation was then shifted to dramatic affairs. The lord abbot, who had seen Chaucer at the

VOL. III.      B      palace

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palace of the bishop of Salisbury, asked him why he employed not his muse in inditing *Moralities* \* to be acted in the monasteries. My good lord, replied the poet, as long as the moralities are conducted in the present manner, my pen may assuredly find better occupation. Soon after I had completed my studies, an aged knight, who was my valuable adviser, thus

\* These rude essays at dramatic representation were the origin of our tragedy and comedy. In these, and in the *mysteries*, the Devil and the Fool were always important characters. —See the notes of Warburton and others on Shakespeare.

warned

warned me against engaging in that species of composition : Geoffrey, said he, I once translated a morality from the French tongue, and applied to one of the directors of the morality-men, who perform these pieces, to exhibit it to the people at a certain great monastery, famous for such diversions. The director, who happened to be a fiddler, took the work, and promised very fervently that it should be perused by his brethren. But, behold, when I desired to know what they had resolved upon concerning

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it, the fiddler informed me that my manuscript was lost. So I left off writing moralities.

This relation, my good lord, made an impression on my mind, and I determined to have no dealings with directors of morality-men. I cannot, said the lord abbot, refuse my approbation to the resolution you have formed, having had much experience, while superior of a convent, of the practices pursued by those directors of morality-men. I know not how the case may  
prove

prove at the present day, but some time ago the management of the moralities lay mostly in the hands of three great directors, who enjoyed the chief emoluments arising from such exhibitions. The first was a person of infinite wit and satire, who, accordingly, composed some moralities himself, which his underlings performed with great advantage and applause. But my monks, many of whom were authors, and indited divers pieces meet for representation, complained that, in the first place, it was

marvellously difficult to procure an interview with this same director, he affecting lordly company, yea, lordly behaviour; and that, when after a considerable lapse of time, they ventured to inquire what he had done with their dramatic labours, he would open a large chest, well filled with moralities, and, taking them out by bundles, would cry, "Is this your morality? or this? or this? take which of them you like, in the name of God, and be gone." It was likewise suspected that he was jealous