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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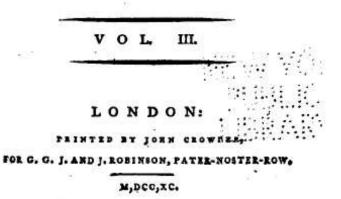
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JOHN OF GAUNT, DUKE OF LANCASTER.

By JAMES WHITE, Eso.

AUTHOR OF EARL STRONGBOW, CONWAY CASTLE, &C.



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DUKE OF LANCASTER.

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JOHN OF GAUNT,

VISIT XXIII.

T H E 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 ADVENTURES OF palace of the bifhop of Salifbury, afked him why he employed not his mufe in inditing *Moralities* * to be acted in the monafteries. My good lord, replied the poet, as long as the moralities are conducted in the prefent manner, my pen may affuredly find better occupation. Soon after I had compleated my ftudies, an aged knight, who was my valuable advifer, thus

 These rude effays 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

JOHN OF GAUNT. warned me againft engaging in that fpecies of composition : Geoffrey, faid 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 monaftery, famous for fuch diversions. The director, who happened to be a fiddler, took the work, and promifed very fervently that it should be perused by his brethren. But, behold, when I defired to know what they had refolved upon concerning

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

A HE L . LEADER

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, faid 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

JOHN OF GAUNT. prove at the prefent day, but fome time ago the management of the moralities lay mostly in the hands of three great directors, who enjoyed the chief emoluments arifing from fuch exhibitions. The first was a perfon of infinite wit and fatire, who, accordingly, compofed fome moralities himfelf, which his underlings performed with great advantage and applaufe. But my monks, many of whom were authors, and indited divers pieces meet for representation, complained that, in the first place, it was

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ADVENTURES O 6 marvelloufly difficult to procure an interview with this fame director, he affecting lordly company, yea, lordly behaviour; and that, when after a confiderable lapfe of time, they ventured to inquire what he had done with their dramatic labours, he would open a large cheft, 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 likewife fuspected that he was jealous