

## Anonymous, "A Picture taken from the Life"

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ANONYMOUS

### "A PICTURE *taken from the LIFE*"

NATURE and Fortune one day meeting  
Each other hail'd with courteous greeting.  
And Fortune first, "Where have you been,  
Sister! that you're so seldom seen?  
What youth, or what romantic fair, 5  
Is now the object of your care?"  
Nature reply'd, with accent grave,  
"A fav'rite charge indeed I have.  
A maid with every virtue grac'd,  
Is in a calm retirement plac'd. 10  
Her heart with goodness is replete,  
Her wit is keen, her temper sweet.  
Good-humour brightens ev'ry feature;  
She is a most engaging creature."  
"Indeed, cries Fortune, with a sneer, 15  
You know not what you say, my dear.  
You cannot think, in these our days,  
Virtue a modern female's praise.  
Send her to me, and I'll engage  
Three months shall fit her for the age. 20  
The glare of dress, the charms of play,  
Shall chace her sober thoughts away.  
Wealth and ambition shall combine  
To make this fair-one wholly mine."  
Says Nature, "You have my permission, 25  
But it must be on this condition:  
If, as I trust, she shall refine,  
And from temptation brighter shine,  
To me henceforth you'll quit the field,  
And Fortune shall to Nature yield." 30  
Things thus agreed, th' accomplish'd maid  
To distant regions is convey'd.  
Drawn from her scene of private life,  
The virgin soon became a wife:  
Her consort's brow, with laurel crown'd, 35

In chains the vanquish'd Nabob bound:  
Like Philip's son in warlike state,  
Thrice conquer'd India, owns him great.  
Returning home, what triumphs rise!  
Enough to dazzle female eyes: 40  
His riches Poland's crown would buy,  
His glories with his riches vie.  
Fortune enrag'd, to Nature hies,  
"I thought your paragon was wise;  
Sure such a mother, such a wife, 45  
Was never seen in courtly life.  
When I bestow'd a son and heir,  
I never dreamt 'twould be her care,  
That he not only should inherit  
His father's fortune, but his merit. 50  
She'd rather wipe the widow's tears,  
Than wear a province at her ears."  
Nature reply'd, "The contest end,  
Be Fortune once true Virtue's friend:  
And let it be our mutual care 55  
To bless thro' life this matchless pair.  
From us they must their joys derive:  
Nature and Fortune join for CLIVE."

**NOTES:**

**36** *Vanquished Nabob* A reference to Indian vassals under British rule.

**37** *Philip's son* A reference to Alexander the Great (356 BC-323 BC), who ruled Macedonia and conquered a large amount of land stretching from eastern Europe into Asia.

**38** *Thrice conquer'd India* Reference to the exploits of Robert Clive (1725-1774), known as "Clive of India," who established British colonial power in India.

**58** *CLIVE* This final statement implies that Robert Clive was the embodiment of all the best virtues given by Nature and Fortune.

**Source:** *The Gentleman's Magazine* (February, 1780), p. 91.

*Edited by Serena McNair*